

立法會
Legislative Council

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 6th meeting
held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 31 October 2014, at 4:00 pm**

Members present:

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Claudia MO
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent:

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP

Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Dennis KWOK
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

Public officers attending:

Professor K C CHAN, GBS, JP	Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Ms Elizabeth TSE Man-yee, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1
Mr Alfred ZHI Jian-hong	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr WONG Kam-sing, JP	Secretary for the Environment
Mr Howard CHAN Wai-kee, JP	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Dr Ellen CHAN Ying-lung, JP	Environmental Protection Department Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Environmental Infrastructure)
Mr Lawrence LAU Ming-ching	Environmental Protection Department Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Landfills and Development)
Mr Elvis AU Wai-kwong, JP	Environmental Protection Department Assistant Director (Nature Conservation and Infrastructure Planning)
	Environmental Protection Department

Clerk in attendance:

Mr Andy LAU	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Derek LO	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Daniel SIN	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Ken WOO	Senior Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Raymond SZETO	Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

Chairman's introductory remarks on procedural matters

The Chairman said that on 24 October 2014, 23 members jointly signed a letter requesting him to adjust the items on the agenda of the Finance Committee ("FC") meetings to allow less controversial or pressing proposals that affected people's livelihood to be given priority for deliberation by the Committee.

2. The Chairman said that having carefully considered members' views and arguments, the Administration's position and the established practice and precedents, he decided not to adjust the order of the agenda items. The Chairman said that he would conduct the meeting according to the agenda issued. He also referred members to his reply as well as the Administration's comments (issued vide LC Paper No. FC28/14-15 on 31 October 2014).

3. The Chairman said that members had asked him at a previous meeting how the word "meeting" in Rule 45(2) of the Legislative Council Rules of Procedure ("RoP") should be interpreted in the context of FC, and in particular, whether a member ordered to withdraw from the Committee at one meeting could return to any subsequent meetings scheduled on that day.

4. The Chairman said that according to Rule 45(2) of RoP, the FC Chairman would order a member whose conduct was grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Committee for the remainder of that meeting. The Chairman said that a meeting of FC lasted for two hours and each two-hour meeting of FC was regarded as a separate meeting for the purpose of Rule 45(2) of RoP. As such, a member who was ordered to withdraw immediately from the Committee could not return for the remainder of that two-hour meeting, but could be present at any subsequent meeting(s) that were scheduled on the same day.

Item No. 1 – FCR(2014-15)31A
HEAD 705 – CIVIL ENGINEERING
Environmental Protection – Refuse Disposal
164DR – Southeast New Territories Landfill Extension

Item No. 2 – FCR(2014-15)32A
HEAD 705 – CIVIL ENGINEERING
Environmental Protection – Refuse Disposal
163DR – Northeast New Territories Landfill Extension

Item No. 3 – FCR(2014-15)33A
HEAD 705 – CIVIL ENGINEERING
Environmental Protection – Refuse disposal
165DR – West New Territories Landfill Extension

Item No. 4 – FCR(2014-15)34A
HEAD 705 – CIVIL ENGINEERING
Environmental Protection – Refuse Disposal
177DR – Development of integrated waste management facilities phase 1

5. The meeting continued deliberation of the items FCR(2014-15)31A to 34A.

Speaking and voting arrangements

6. The Chairman said that members had expressed views on how the discussion on the three items on landfill extension and the item on Integrated Waste Management Facilities ("IWMF") phase 1 should be conducted. The Chairman said that he had considered members' views and had decided that discussion on the four items, i.e. FCR(2014-15)31A to FCR(2014-15)34A, should be combined, but they would be voted on separately.

7. The Chairman said that Mr Gary FAN had proposed five motions to be moved under paragraph 37A of the FC Procedure. The Chairman said that any such motions would be processed following the completion of discussion on the items. He reminded members that motions proposed to be moved under paragraph 37A of the FC Procedure must be directly related to one of the four items under deliberation, and that he would first put the proposed motions that he had ruled to be directly related to FCR(2014-15)31A to the Committee to decide whether they should be proceeded forthwith. After the Committee has dealt with those motions, he would put the item FCR(2014-15)31A to vote. For the remaining three items, i.e. FCR(2014-15)32A to 34A, he would deal

with the respective motions proposed to be moved under 37A of the FC Procedure and put the items to vote in the same manner.

8. The Chairman said that as discussion on four agenda items was to be combined, the time for the first two rounds of questions, including the Administration's response, should be limited to four minutes, and the speaking time for the third and fourth rounds of discussion should be three minutes. The speaking time for the fifth round onwards would be two minutes. He reminded members that members' questions on a proposal must relate directly to the contents of the agenda item. On wider questions of policy, members should raise them either in the Council or at an appropriate Panel.

Introduction by Secretary for the Environment on the items

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for the Environment ("SEN") introduced the four funding proposals under deliberation. SEN said that the proposed extension of the three landfills and the proposed IWMF phase 1 were fundamental infrastructure for municipal solid waste ("MSW") management that affected people's livelihood. In the "Hong Kong: Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" ("the Action Blueprint") released in mid 2013 the Administration set a target to reduce the per capita disposal rate of MSW by 40% by 2022. The Administration would embark on preparatory work for conducting a strategic study on future waste management facilities.

10. SEN briefly reported on the progress of work on waste reduction, including the implementation of quantity-based waste charging, food waste reduction, promotion of waste recovery, recovery of glass, building recycling network at 18 districts and launching of various waste reduction activities in collaboration with community organizations.

General comments on landfill extensions and waste incineration

11. Mr YIU Si-wing asked how much of Hong Kong's MSW could be disposed of in the extended landfills if the funding applications were approved. He also queried about the measures, and their implementation timetable, that the Administration would introduce to reduce the pressure on the landfills.

12. SEN advised that before the proposed IWMF phase 1 came into operation, all of the 9 000 tonnes of MSW generated in Hong Kong each day would have to be disposed of in the three landfills. When IWMF phase 1 came into operation, it could treat about 3 000 tonnes of MSW each day. The Administration would start planning on the waste disposal infrastructure that would be required in the long term. The Administration would keep an open

mind on options such as the construction of artificial islands for landfilling purposes. SEN also said that measures would be implemented to reduce the reliance on landfills for disposal of MSW.

13. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan commented that the Administration should provide more resources on large-scale territory-wide campaign to promote waste reduction, recovery and recycling, which, in doing so, would help create employment opportunities. The Administration had so far committed only about \$1 billion to be made available under various funds to finance piecemeal projects. On the other hand, the Administration spent large amount of resources on the operation of landfills and other waste management hardwares. Mr LEE queried the Administration's sincerely in waste reduction, recovery and recycling efforts.

14. SEN explained that the Action Blueprint had set out holistic waste management strategy including promoting waste reduction, recovery, recycling as well as end-of-pipe waste treatment. Suitable resources were allocated on different aspects of waste management.

15. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked how much recurrent resources were to be provided on the operation of the three landfills and the proposed IWMF phase 1. Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Environmental Infrastructure) ("AD(EI)") said that the recurrent operation cost of the three landfills would be around \$600 million per year, whereas the operation cost of IWMF phase 1 would be about \$400 million per year.

16. Dr LO Wai-kwok commented that he had long experience in the previous investigation and discussion of the development of waste incineration facilities in Hong Kong. The technology being adopted for IWMF phase 1 was quite matured in terms of safety and emission control. Dr LO said that it was the view of the engineering sector that the proposed IWMF phase 1 project should be expedited. While there were environmental problems associated with the operation of three landfills, their further extension would still be necessary before IWMF was commissioned. Meanwhile, Dr LO considered that more mitigation measures should be implemented to reduce the impact of various waste management facilities on the community.

17. Mr Gary FAN commented that the public generally doubted the Administration's ability to achieve the targets of waste separation, reduction and recovery. With the implementation of the proposed landfill extension and IWMF phase 1, the Administration would have no incentive to step up efforts in these aspects.

Municipal solid waste recovery and recycling

18. Mr WU Chi-wai asked how SEN co-ordinated with Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") to promote MSW recovery through the cleaning contracts of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") and the Housing Department ("HD").

19. SEN advised that an interdepartmental working group had been set up and chaired by the Director of Environmental Protection ("DEP") to co-ordinate the implementation of the waste charging scheme. Under the auspices of the working group, FEHD had included contractual provisions to optimize the arrangements for waste recovery from the recycling bins, whereas HD had introduced plans and quantitative targets on waste reduction in all the public housing estates in Hong Kong.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted that according to the Administration, the recovery rate of plastic waste would increase from 48% in 2011 to 55% in 2022. However, according to media reports, about 1 694 tonnes of plastic waste were disposed of in landfills each day, or about 618 310 tonnes a year. According to the Administration, only about 3 900 tonnes of plastic waste were recovered each year; the recovery rate was less than 1% rather than 48% as forecast. He doubted how the Administration could achieve the target since huge amounts of plastic waste were disposed of in landfills each day and the present recovery rate was less than 1% rather than 48% as claimed.

21. Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) ("DDEP(2)") explained that the discrepancy in plastic recovery rates mentioned by Dr Fernando CHEUNG was due to misreporting of plastic waste destined for re-export by some waste collection operators locally generated plastic waste. DDEP(2) supplemented that the amount of plastic waste disposed of in landfills remained stable and that there was room for improvement in recovery rate by stepping up public education. SEN added that the general direction of the Action Blueprint in promoting at-source waste separation, waste reduction and waste recovery remained valid.

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG noted that the Administration's explanation that there were errors in the plastic waste recovery statistics. He asked the Administration to provide latest statistics on the plastic waste recovery rate. AD(E1) undertook to provide the information separately.

[Post-meeting note: Information on the recovery rate of plastic wastes in Hong Kong provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC33/14-15(01) on 6 November 2014.]

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired how the Administration had tackled the widely reported problem that materials collected from recycling bins had been delivered to landfills rather than to recycling facilities.

24. SEN said that contaminated materials in recycling bins were unsuitable for recycling. The Administration had launched publicity campaign to raise the community's awareness to put clean materials into the recycling bins, and had introduced better logistics arrangements to improve the effectiveness of material recovery and recycling processes.

West New Territories landfill extension

25. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the need for the study under the present funding proposal for the extension of the West New Territories ("WENT") landfill since technical feasibility studies and environmental impact assessment for the extending the WENT landfill had already been conducted.

26. SEN said that the opportunities would be taken to examine in the proposed consultancy study, the feasibility of reducing the scale of extension and increasing greening area to address local residents' concern.

27. AD(E1) supplemented that the proposed consultancy study for the extension of the WENT landfill would cover development of the design outline, site investigation and procurement aspects (such as the preparation of tender document and related matters). The Administration would thereafter seek funding approval from FC for carrying out the construction works as necessary.

28. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung noted that the project cost of the present consultancy study for the WENT landfill extension had increased substantially in comparison with that quoted in the previous submission (FCR(2014-15)33) in July 2014. He asked by how much it would increase further if the funding application was not approved.

29. AD(E1) attributed the cost escalation in the WENT landfill extension consultancy study to inflation. In response to Mr LEUNG Che-chueng, AD(EI) explained that the reduction in the scale of the proposed extension of the WENT landfill would not result in reduction of the cost of the consultancy study because the associated technical and geographical issues would still need to be examined despite the reduction in scale.

30. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung asked whether the use of barges would be increased for transporting MSW from RTSs to the WENT landfill in order to

reduce the traffic impact on the road network due to refuse collection vehicles ("RCVs"). AD(E1) added that sea routes would continue to be encouraged for transportation of waste for disposal at the WENT landfill.

31. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired about the mitigation measures undertaken by the Administration to address the complaints by the residents of Pak Nai about the odour problem due to the operation of the WENT landfill. AD(E1) said that the Administration had maintained a close dialogue with residents of Ha Pak Nei and had introduced various measures to improve the conditions of the WENT landfill which included spreading soil over waste to reduce odour, constructing barriers to reduce visual impact and stepping up cleansing activities.

32. Mr Albert HO queried whether the large-scale extension of the WENT landfill was justified as the Administration planned to implement waste reduction measures which would reduce MSW by 40%.

33. Mr Albert HO expressed doubt whether the capacity of sea transport was sufficient to accommodate the large amount of MSW to be delivered to the WENT landfill. Mr Albert HO also queried whether the Administration had assessed the environmental impact arising from the diversion of sludge from the SENT landfill to the Tuen Mun Sludge Treatment Facilities.

34. SEN said that delivering a proportion of MSW to the WENT landfill by sea would help reduce the number of trips of RCVs. The corresponding increase in sea traffic would be manageable. SEN said that with the implementation of waste reduction measures and the commissioning of IWWMF phase 1, the daily amount of MSW requiring disposal would be reduced significantly. The actual increase in the amount of MSW to be disposed of in the WENT landfill should not be as large as expected. The Administration would instruct the consultant to examine measures to minimize the extension area and to phase in the future extension projects.

Integrated Waste Management Facilities phase 1

35. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed support for the IWWMF phase 1 proposal and asked whether provision of fresh water supply to remote villages in South Lantau would be included as one of the compensatory measures to address the needs of the local community.

36. Assistant Director (Nature Conservation and Infrastructure Planning) ("AD(NC&IP)") said that EPD would continue to liaise with departments concerned to follow up the local community's requests. Liaison groups

comprising local residents would be formed to maintain communication between the Government and the local community.

37. Mr TANG Ka-piu asked whether the estimated recurrent expenditure for the operation of IWMF phase included the cost of transporting waste from refuse transfer stations ("RTS") to IWMF and enquired about the pricing of the electricity exported from IWMF.

38. AD(NC&IP) said that the estimated recurrent expenditure did not include the cost of transporting waste from RTSs to IWMF, but would include the cost of sending the ashes or residue of IWMF treatment to landfills. AD(NC&IP) added that the Administration considered it feasible to export surplus electricity from IWMF through the existing power grids and would discussed with the relevant electricity company on details regarding electricity tariff or charging mode.

39. Mr Steven HO criticized the Administration's approach of designating marine parks as a compensatory measure for the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") of the IWMF phase 1 project on the ground that they would adversely affect the fisheries industry. He enquired about the measures that the Administration would implement to support the local fisheries industry.

40. AD(NC&IP) said that the Administration maintained dialogue with the fisheries sector regarding the designation of marine parks, and would review their licensing system. The Administration would also launch an enhancing scheme for the fisheries industry as required under EIA of IWMF phase 1.

41. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether the proposed IWMF phase 1 would further aggravate the air pollution problem. SEN advised that the Administration had set targets for reducing air pollutants through control of emission from major sources including vehicles, vessels and power plants in "A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong". The improvement in air quality would far offset the increase in emission from IWMF phase 1. Further mitigation measures would be introduced to minimize the emission of nitrogen oxides which was the major component of air pollution.

42. AD(NC&IP) supplemented that the emission standard imposed on IWMF phase 1 was more stringent than the European Union standards for similar facilities. Besides, the Administration adopted the latest technologies which would minimize the negative impact of the facilities on air quality, and allow IMWF phase 1 to meet the air quality objectives.

43. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether the air quality and emission requirements could still be met without first having achieved a high degree of waste separation at source. SEN explained that the requirements applied to the emission from IWMF phase 1 and did not depend on the conditions or types of waste being treated. However, he conceded that better degree of waste separation should be achieved.

44. Mr Albert HO criticized the Administration for the sluggishness in putting forward policies and measures to reduce waste at source. Mr HO enquired about reason for the sharp increase in the project cost of IWMF phase 1 within a short period of time and the capital expenditure per tonne of waste treated being far higher than those in the United Kingdom ("UK"), the Netherlands or Beijing.

45. SEN said that the proposed IWMF phase 1 needed to meet certain requirements specified in the EIA report. For example, construction of IWMF phase 1 could only take place in a few months of a year. A slight delay in the funding approval might lead to months of delay in the commissioning date.

46. AD(NC&IP) supplemented that the cost hike of IWMF phase 1 was mainly due to inflation. As regards the cost disparity between the proposed IWMF phase 1 and similar facilities overseas, AD(NC&IP) said that a large part of the cost was attributed to land reclamation, net of which the capital cost per tonne of waste treated would be comparable to the two recent facilities in Denmark. AD(NC&IP) added that the construction and operation expenditure per tonne of waste treated of the proposed IWMF phase 1 would be lower than that in the UK.

47. Dr Kenneth CHAN questioned why the Administration would not wait for more advanced technologies (such as plasma gasification) for the incinerator project, which might have less impact on the public. Dr CHAN said that the public was worried as the Administration's reluctance to rule out further extending existing landfills in future and building more IMWFs.

48. SEN said that a large scale waste management infrastructure project was a process from site selection through project planning, detailed studies to commissioning which often took ten to twenty years to complete. The current IWMF phase 1 proposal had already taken more than ten years and had undergone EIA process. SEN said that time was of the essence given the pressing need for waste treatment facilities. AD(NC&IP) supplemented that facilities using latest technologies were still in experimental stage and their daily waste treatment capacity was only a fraction of that of the proposed IWMF phase 1 only treat from 200 to 500 tonnes of waste per day.

49. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired if there were penalties on the IWMF phase 1 operator if it could not meet the emission requirements of the facilities.

50. SEN advised that the European Union ("EU") emission standards were adopted as a baseline for IWMF phase 1 and additional requirements were imposed on the regulation of emission from IWMF phase 1. The Administration had adopted international best practice which included monitoring mechanism and requiring on-line report of emission situations. Alarm mechanism would also be triggered if accidents occurred which led to excessive leakage of pollutants. AD(NC&IP) said that there were statutory provisions to regulate emissions from IWMF phase 1. Third party contractors would be engaged to monitor the facilities' performance, and emission indicators were to be displayed on-line. Penalty would also be imposed under the contract if the IWMF phase 1 operator failed to meet the requirements.

51. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about the effectiveness of waste separation system and whether toxic items such as batteries might be mixed with ordinary waste for incineration. SEN said that it would take about eight years following FC's funding approval for IWMF phase 1 to come into full operation. During this period, public education and publicity programmes would be launched to raise community awareness on the proper waste separation.

52. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked if there had been major incidents in countries that adopted moving grate incineration technology for waste treatment. She also asked if better technologies would be adopted for future IWMFs. She also asked whether the land reserved for landfill extension would be fully used.

53. SEN said that moving grate incineration was adopted as the core technology for MSW treatment because the technology was mature, reliable, able to meet the required emission standards, and could be applied in large MSW treatment facilities. AD(NC&IP) supplemented that moving grate incineration was also adopted in recent MSW treatment facilities in many countries without major dioxin leakage incidents. SEN further explained that there would be a need for landfills to dispose of wastes (such as inert material from construction waste) that could not be recycled or treated in IWMF.

54. Dr Kenneth CHAN commented that the Administration had not provided detailed comparison of the moving grate incineration and plasma gasification technologies. He asked if the Administration had any contractual obligation to favour the moving grate incineration technology in IWMF phase 1.

55. SEN explained that the technology for use in IWMF phase 1 was selected through a rigorous process. Findings and analyses of relevant consultancy studies had been forwarded to the Advisory Council on the Environment for comments. Overseas visits had also been conducted to survey the latest development of technologies. The Panel on Environmental Affairs had also been briefed on the choice of the moving grate incineration technology for IWMF phase 1. The whole selection process had been conducted systematically and was properly documented.

56. AD(NC&IP) added that technical feasibility had been conducted on the application of moving grate incineration technology in IWMF phase 1 and the adoption of such technology had been affirmed in the context of the EIA process. The Administration would prepare tender document on the basis of such technology.

South East New Territories landfill extension

57. Mr Gary FAN commented that the Administration's paper on the proposed extension of the SENT landfill (FCR(2014-15)31A) had not reflected the latest progress and effectiveness of mitigation measures since the Southeast New Territories ("SENT") landfill extension proposal was last submitted for members' consideration.

58. AD(E1) explained that mitigation measures had been implemented to improve the conditions of the SENT landfill. Since September 2014, the Civil Engineering Development Department had used barges to transport fill materials to the SENT landfill, resulting in reduction about 100 vehicle trips along Wan Po Road each day. The Sludge Treatment Facilities in Tuen Mun were undergoing various stages of testing since mid-2014, and more than 12 000 tonnes of sludge had been diverted from the SENT landfill to the facilities in Tuen Mun for treatment. Not only had the amount of sludge disposed of in the SENT landfill been reduced, but the odour problem had also improved.

59. As regards illegal dumping, AD(E1) said that between January and September 2014, EPD had handled 12 illegal dumping cases resulting in four prosecutions. The amount of illegal dumping that needed to be cleared had been reduced from more than 90 tonnes per day to about two to three tonnes a day.

60. Dr Elizabeth QUAT asked when the sludge and household waste would not be allowed to be disposed of in the SENT landfill. DDEP(2) said that a trial operation would be carried out for the Tuen Mun Sludge Treatment

Facilities between end 2014 to early 2015. Subject to the outcome of the trial, all sludge would be diverted from the SENT landfill to the Sludge Treatment Facilities for disposal in future.

61. Dr Elizabeth QUAT also asked whether the Administration would confirm that there would no further extension of the SENT landfill in future. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen raised similar queries.

62. DDEP(2) said that when the funding application for extension of the SENT landfill was approved and when private waste haulers had re-routed their collection operations, the SENT landfill would stop accepting household wastes. SEN said that the Administration would carry out a study on the long-term infrastructure needs for end-of-pipe waste treatment which would examine ways to minimize the need to dispose of waste in landfills.

63. Ms Emily LAU raised concerns about the odour problem of the SENT landfill and asked when and how the Administration would tackle the problem. SEN said that when the Tuen Mun Sludge Treatment Facilities was commissioned in early 2015, all sludge currently disposed of at the SENT landfill would be diverted there in sealed containers and by barge.

64. SEN said that the SENT landfill would, in future, only accept construction waste. The vehicle trips along Wan Po Road would be reduced from 1 000 to 500 trips each day. The Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") would liaise with FEHD and private sector refuse collectors to divert some of their RCVs to RTSs where the waste would be compressed before delivery to the SENT landfill.

65. DDEP(2) supplemented that relevant legislation had been amended to allow the SENT landfill to accept only construction waste. The provision would become effective when the funding application for extension of the SENT landfill was approved and after the waste haulers had rearranged their collection routes. DDEP(2) expected that the new arrangement could take effect in end-2015.

66. Ms Emily LAU criticized the Administration for not admitting the problem of odour in Tseung Kwan O was caused by the operation in the SENT landfill. She asked whether the Administration had identified the source of odour and whether the problem could only be resolved in end-2015 when sludge would no longer be disposed of in the SENT landfill.

67. AD(E1) said that the odour problem in Tseung Kwan O area near to the SENT landfill had improved following the diversion of the sludge from the

SENT landfill. She said that an on-site odour monitoring team was deployed to monitor the situation. Odour problem had not been found in most of the inspections conducted between January and September 2014. The situation was considered to have improved during the period between June and September 2014 as compared with the same period in 2013. The Administration also received fewer complaints against the odour problem from local residents.

68. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that he had heard complaints from many local residents that the Administration failed to honour its undertaking that it would not extend the SENT landfill. He asked why the local residents had been given the impression the the SENT landfill would not be extended.

69. AD(E1) said that the Administration had formulated strategic plans as early as year 2000 on waste management, and the conclusion of the plans was that the extension of existing landfills was necessary. Separate EIAs had been conducted in respect of the proposed extension of the three landfills and the messages on the need for the extension of the SENT landfill should have been conveyed through consultation exercises with respective District Councils since 2004-2005. All along, the Administration had not ruled out the extension of the SENT landfill.

70. Mr Gary FAN pointed out that according to a report by EPD, there were 18 days between December 2013 and end-March 2014 in Tseung Kwan O when the PM 2.5 level of air exceeded the statutory limit of 75 micrograms and there were nine days when the level exceeded the maximum level recorded among all monitoring stations in Hong Kong. He queried whether the Administration considered such level of air quality acceptable.

71. AD(E1) explained that EPD had explained the situation to the Sai Kung District Council that the PM 2.5 level of 75 micrograms was not a statutory limit but an air quality objective. In fact, the PM 2.5 level was exceeded over the whole territory during the period mentioned due to regional climatic factors.

72. The Chairman said that discussion on the items would continue at the meeting that followed.

73. The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.