

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of policy briefing cum meeting
held on Monday, 25 January 2016, at 2:00 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Dennis KWOK
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
- Members attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP

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Members absent : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : **For item III**

Mr WONG Kam-sing, JP
Secretary for the Environment

Ms Christine LOH, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

Ms Anissa WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Environment/
Director of Environmental Protection

Mr Vincent LIU, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Environment

Mr TSE Chin-wan, JP
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Howard CHAN, JP
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Andrew LAI, JP
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (3)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Donald NG
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (4)
Environmental Protection Department

For item IV

Ms Christine LOH, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

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Mrs Dorothy MA
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment
(Energy)

Mr Alfred SIT, JP
Deputy Director/Regulatory Services
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr Barry CHU
Chief Engineer/Energy Efficiency A
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel SHEK
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Ms Doris LO
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Ms Mandy LI
Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

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I. Information papers issued since last meeting

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting —

(LC Paper No. CB(1)433/15-16(01) — Joint submission from 大澳環境及發展關注協會、土沉香生態及文化保育協會、"救救土沉香，瀕危滅絕中"網上群組、一群新界區關注土沉香的居民、一群大嶼山關注土沉香的居民、一群南丫島關注土沉香的居民、一群西貢關注土沉香的居民 and 一群元

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朗關注土沉香的居民
regarding legislating against
the sale of and strengthening
protection of wild incense trees
(Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)444/15-16(01) — Information paper on "Updated Hong Kong Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants" provided by the Administration)

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 22 February 2016, at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Update on the protection of endangered species and biodiversity in Hong Kong (i.e. originally entitled as "Nature conservation policy" on the list of outstanding items for discussion); and
- (b) PWP Item No. 814TH — Retrofitting of noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road (Fu Tei Section).

3. Given that a three-month public consultation on Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Hong Kong had been launched, the Deputy Chairman suggested that the Panel should receive public views on relevant issues before the end of the consultation period on 7 April 2016. The Chairman directed that the suggestion be discussed at the Panel's next regular meeting after deliberation of the item in paragraph 2(a) above.

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III. Briefing by the Secretary for the Environment on the Chief Executive's 2016 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(03) — Administration's paper on "2016 Policy Address — Policy initiatives of Environment Bureau: Environmental protection")

Relevant papers

Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 13 January 2016

The 2016 Policy Agenda booklet

4. With the aid of a power-point presentation, the Secretary for the Environment ("SEN") briefed members on the key environmental initiatives in the following areas featured in the Chief Executive ("CE")'s 2016 Policy Address:

- (a) climate change and energy;
- (b) nature conservation;
- (c) waste management; and
- (d) environmental quality (air quality, water quality and external lighting).

(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation material was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)488/15-16(01) on 25 January 2016.)

Discussion

Climate change

5. Referring to the extreme weather condition on 24 January 2016 when Hong Kong experienced the coldest day in the past 59 years and the Hong Kong Observatory ("HKO")'s underestimation of the severity of the cold weather in its forecast, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about how the Administration would enhance the accuracy of HKO's weather forecasts and increase public awareness of extreme weather risks. The Deputy Chairman considered it imperative for

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the Administration to provide relief and assistance to the public, and vulnerable groups in particular, and open more 24-hour temporary shelters during extreme weather conditions.

6. SEN responded that extreme weather events, which had become more frequent due to global climate change, could result in deviations of the weather forecasts from the actual outturns, and such a phenomenon was not unique in Hong Kong. As an initiative under CE's 2016 Policy Address, an inter-departmental steering committee to be chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") would be set up to steer and co-ordinate the climate actions of various departments. The steering committee would, among others, formulate contingency plans for protecting the public from exposure to climate-related risks, including but not limited to opening temporary shelters in the event of extreme temperatures.

7. Mr Albert CHAN said that oversight of HKO's operations by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau ("CEDB") might lead to concerns as to whether HKO would be selective in releasing weather information or play down the severity of extreme weather conditions in its forecasts, taking into account the potential impact of adverse weather on economic activities. Given the expertise in and higher sensitivity of the Environment Bureau ("ENB") to climate issues, he considered it more appropriate to put HKO under the purview of ENB.

8. SEN responded that weather conditions had impact on multiple aspects including the economy, people's livelihood and the environment. As such, HKO's work would by nature involve cross-bureaux and inter-departmental collaborations. Despite HKO's reporting line under CEDB, ENB had all along been closely collaborating with HKO on various issues relating to climate change, such as compilation of the Hong Kong Climate Change Report 2015, and formulation of policy and measures in relation to climate change.

9. Mr Albert CHAN further criticized CE's 2016 Policy Address for lacking new environmental initiatives to combat climate change and enhance waste management, etc. He opined that the progress of Hong Kong's environmental initiatives was lagging behind that of many other places. In this connection, he expressed disappointment about ENB's lacking of determination in dealing with environmental issues, and that the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD"), as an executive arm of ENB, could not provide adequate support for taking forward environmental initiatives.

10. Ms Cyd HO shared the view that there was a lack of new environmental initiatives in CE's 2016 Policy Address. She was worried that the sluggish progress in taking forward environmental initiatives in Hong Kong could not

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meet the quickly evolving challenges brought by climate change. She urged the Administration to formulate as soon as possible mitigation measures pursuant to the recommendations of the Paris Climate Conference held in December 2015, and set out specific work plans, schedules and quantifiable targets with a view to pressing ahead such measures. Ms HO remarked that in taking forward the environmental initiatives, it was crucial for the Administration to ensure effective inter-departmental collaborations, and engage and mobilize various stakeholders in the community including the business sector which was generally less committed in environmental protection.

11. The Under Secretary for the Environment ("USEN") acknowledged that combating climate change was no simple task and involved the concerted efforts of various stakeholders of all sectors of the community. The inter-departmental steering committee to be chaired by CS would be tasked with formulating long-term climate strategy and actions, and it was envisaged that a specific work plan and schedule could be worked out by the end of 2016. On Mr Kenneth LEUNG's enquiry about the composition and terms of reference of the steering committee, SEN advised that it would comprise representatives from various bureaux, such as the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Home Affairs Bureau and the Security Bureau, so as to facilitate coordination of relevant initiatives under their respective purview. The Chairman asked if the steering committee would include members of the public or representatives from green groups, SEN replied in the negative but said that the steering group would engage public participation through various means.

Energy

12. In reply to Ms Cyd HO, SEN advised that a target for reducing energy intensity by 40% by 2025 had been set in the Energy Saving Plan for Hong Kong's Built Environment 2015~2025+. Mr TANG Ka-piu urged the Administration to announce the schedule for finalizing the new Scheme of Control Agreements with the two power companies as soon as possible in view that the current ones would expire in 2018.

13. Referring to the slow adjustment of the local retail prices of auto-fuel following the significant drop in the international oil prices, Mr TANG Ka-piu asked about whether ENB would step up monitoring of the auto-fuel retail pricing mechanism of local oil companies to enhance transparency. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment ("DSEN") replied that the Administration had all along been monitoring whether changes in local retail prices of auto-fuel were in line with the movements of international oil prices, and relevant information was posted onto ENB's website. The Chairman suggested Mr TANG further follow up his concerns at the meetings of the Panel on Economic Development.

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Nature conservation

14. Dr Elizabeth QUAT enquired about the specific timetables in respect of the initiatives under CE's 2016 Policy Address to initiate the legislative procedures to ban the import and export of elephant hunting trophies, enact legislation to further ban the import and export of ivory and phase out the local ivory trade, and impose heavier penalties on smuggling and illegal trading of endangered species. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) ("DDEP(2)") advised that in view of the potentially complex and lengthy legislative process, it was unlikely that the relevant legislative proposals could be introduced within the 2015-2016 legislative session. Meanwhile, EPD would strengthen enforcement actions against the smuggling and illegal trading of ivory in collaboration with the Customs and Excise Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and law enforcement agencies outside Hong Kong.

15. Mr TAM Yiu-chung urged the Administration to step up efforts in combating illegal felling of incense trees, including enhancing collaborations with law enforcement agencies on the Mainland. In this regard, DDEP(2) advised that the local enforcement departments had been stepping up efforts in combating illegal felling of incense trees, and had liaised with their counterparts outside Hong Kong as appropriate. The Administration would brief the Panel on the details of the relevant initiatives on the protection of endangered species and biodiversity in Hong Kong at the next regular meeting in February 2016.

Waste management

16. Mr Tony TSE asked if the Administration would put in place measures to support the operations of private food waste recyclers in converting food waste into useful materials like organic fertilizers. He relayed the difficulties faced by these recyclers including keen competition and high land costs, etc. He observed that not many members of the trade had sought financial assistance under the Recycling Fund owing to the high application thresholds and strict compliance requirements.

17. Mr TAM Yiu-chung stated that members belonging to the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong supported the development of the local recycling industry. He reflected the operational difficulties faced by many private recyclers due to the soaring operation costs including manpower costs and rents, which could hardly be covered due to the very low economic values of many recyclables. He urged the Administration to liaise with the recycling trade with a view to providing suitable assistance to them and supporting the development of "light recycling industry" in Hong Kong.

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18. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed disappointment about the lack of resolve of the Administration to build up a territory-wide waste collection network through the refuse collection points operated by government contractors. He believed that this could help absorb the high transportation costs which were one of the major constraints to the development of the local recycling industry.

19. Taking note of members' views, SEN reiterated the Administration's support to the development of the local recycling industry. Among other measures, a Steering Committee to Promote the Sustainable Development of the Recycling Industry had been set up to step up efforts in reducing waste at source and promoting the development of the local recycling industry through close liaison with the trade. Further, various initiatives under the Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022 ("the Blueprint") would create opportunities for the local recycling industry. DDEP(2) supplemented that such initiatives included promoting source separation of waste and "clean recycling" in the community to increase the quantity and quality of recyclables available for recyclers, developing the EcoPark to provide long-term land at an affordable cost to recyclers as well as providing short-term tenancy sites to them for their operations, etc. He added that more opportunities for local recycling would arise with the implementation of the producer responsibility schemes on various products. Regarding the effectiveness of the Recycling Fund in assisting the recycling trade, he advised that the Administration would review the implementation in the first quarter of 2016.

Admin 20. At the request of Mr KWOK Wai-keung, the Administration agreed to provide relevant statistics, including the actual/projected (a) increase in output value, and (b) employment opportunities created, to illustrate how the development of the local recovery and recycling industries had been/would be fostered along with the implementation of the various waste management initiatives under the Blueprint.

21. Reflecting the problem of traffic congestion caused by private recyclers' trucks occupying the roads in Cheung Sha Wan and Shum Shui Po districts to collect waste electrical and electronic equipment, Mr WONG Ting-kwong urged the Administration to, while supporting the development of the recycling industry, take measures to mitigate the possible nuisance caused by their operations to the local community. The Administration took note of his views.

Air quality

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the existing number of electric vehicles ("EVs") in the government fleet and whether the Administration had planned to procure additional EVs in 2016. In reply, the Deputy Director of

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Environmental Protection (3) ("DDEP(3)") advised that as at the end of December 2015, there were about 240 EVs in the government fleet, which included saloons, motorcycles and vans. Given the technology advancement for EVs that had enhanced their reliability and performance (e.g. increase in the number of miles per charge), the Administration had planned to procure more than 20 EVs for the government fleet in 2016.

23. Some members expressed concern over the sufficiency of EV charging facilities which was critical to promoting a wider adoption of EVs in Hong Kong. Mr Tony TSE urged the Administration to adopt a multi-pronged approach to expand the EV charging network, through providing more EV charging facilities at government premises (including quarters for public servants) as well as increasing public EV charging facilities. He also suggested introducing multi-purpose metered parking spaces on roadside that supported EV charging. Mr Kenneth LEUNG suggested the Administration develop mobile applications (commonly known as "mobile Apps") to disseminate real-time information on where parking spaces with EV charging facilities were available. He also considered it necessary to prohibit or dissuade non-EVs from occupying parking spaces with EV charging facilities through legislative means and/or publicity and education efforts. Mr Charles Peter MOK took the view that EPD should initiate inter-departmental collaborations to take forward relevant supportive measures, such as developing the suggested mobile Apps jointly with the Transport Department ("TD"), and serve as a central contact point for referring issues and suggestions concerning the installation of EV charging facilities to relevant departments for follow-up as appropriate.

24. DDEP(3) explained that the Administration had set up a Steering Committee on the Promotion of Electric Vehicles chaired by the Financial Secretary to steer the relevant work of promoting the wider use of EVs. For example, in 2016, EPD would jointly explore with TD on restricting the use of parking spaces with EV charging facilities to EVs in government car parks, and would kick start a study on developing mobile Apps to provide information on and facilitate reservation of parking spaces with EV charging facilities. It would consider exploring with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") the suggestion on introducing metered parking spaces with EV charging function.

25. Mr WONG Ting-kwong reflected the problems encountered by some EV owners that some owners' corporations ("OCs") refused to install EV charging facilities at the car parks of their private housing estates or buildings. He asked whether the Administration would consider legislating for mandating installation of EV charging facilities in private housing estates and buildings.

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26. DDEP(3) advised that Gross Floor Area ("GFA") concessions had been granted to car parks which were EV charging-enabling in new housing estates and buildings. As a result of this measure, over 90% of newly constructed housing estates/buildings were installed with EV charging facilities. For existing housing estates/buildings, EPD had been working closely with the two power companies and EMSD to provide assistance to EV owners, property management companies and car park operators concerned in the installation of EV charging facilities. For example, the two power companies and EMSD had respectively been operating designated hotlines to handle enquiries on technical issues regarding installation of EV charging facilities, and providing assistance in setting up EV chargers at strata-titled car parks. It was also noted that there were companies in the market that provided one-stop service, including installation of charging facilities and provision of charging service, to private housing estates requiring such service. Recently, EPD had, in collaboration with EMSD and the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies, organized a seminar for major property management companies on the installation of EV charging facilities. In the above connection, Mr Charles Peter MOK urged the Administration to make known to the public relevant information on the available support for installation of EV charging facilities. The Administration took note of his views.

27. Citing the incident in which an electric bus designed by the Hong Kong Productivity Council caught fire in December 2015 and the reported technical issues of some electric buses on trial use by local franchised bus companies, the Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the safety of using EVs in the public transport system. He opined that further technical advancement to improve the operational efficiency of EVs would be critical for promoting the use of EVs by the transport sector. SEN advised that the Administration would review the trial of electric buses in about a year's time.

28. The Deputy Chairman further enquired about whether the Administration would set up more pedestrian precincts with zero or low vehicle emission, and whether it had set any standard or target ratio of pedestrian precincts in redevelopment or new development projects. SEN responded that developing more pedestrian precincts would continue to be a leading direction in the planning of new development areas, while expanding pedestrian precincts in old districts had been a challenge. He stressed that CE's 2016 Policy Address had put forth specific measures to improve the pedestrian environment. For example, along with the concept of "walkable" Kowloon East, an additional footbridge network next to Kowloon Bay MTR station would be encouraged. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to step up efforts in enhancing pedestrian accessibility in old districts despite the challenge faced. SEN took note of the member's views.

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29. Mr WU Chi-wai proposed the use of "electric personal transporters" for connections over short distance. SEN responded that given the high accessibility of most places in Hong Kong, it would be more pragmatic to improve pedestrian facilities to facilitate lesser use of road transportation.

Water quality

30. Dr Priscilla LEUNG welcomed the measures in this year's Policy Address relating to improving the water quality of Victoria Harbour and promoting a water-friendly culture. Given that urban residual pollution discharge had led to near shore pollution and odour problem in many areas along the Victoria Harbour, she asked whether ENB would take the lead to coordinate with relevant bureaux/departments to carry out rectification measures. In particular, she enquired about the schedule and exact locations under planning for installing dry weather flow interceptors ("DWFIs"), and whether and when DWFIs would be installed in problem areas prone to coastal odour including the areas along the Hung Hom Promenade. In addition, with a view to more widely promoting a water-friendly culture across the territory, Dr LEUNG urged the Administration to plan for water-friendly activities and developments in West Kowloon, apart from those on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon East.

31. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1) replied that the Administration had been paying close attention to the water quality of the Victoria Harbour. Following completion of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme Stage 2A, overall water quality had shown obvious improvement. For example, the level of Escherichia coli decreased by 74% in 2015. EPD had been working with the Drainage Services Department ("DSD") on the detailed designs for the commissioning of new DWFIs to intercept the urban residual pollution discharge along the coast of West Kowloon and Tsuen Wan. For example, a DWFI would be installed at Cherry Street Box Culvert in Tai Kok Tsui to improve the water quality of the New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter. Apart from that, rehabilitation works for the trunk sewers in Ngau Chi Wan and To Kwa Wan were under planning and design by DSD to deal with pollution discharge caused by leakage of trunk sewers. The relevant works would be carried out as soon as possible subject to approval of funding applications in 2016-2017.

32. Quoting the Central Government's plan to build 16 "sponge cities" on the Mainland and similar plans in other places of the world, Dr Elizabeth QUAT asked whether the Administration had any plan or would conduct study on strategically capturing and reusing rainwater, and achieving the effect of flood control and reducing carbon emission through better rainwater management. In reply, SEN advised that there were measures and establishments currently in

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place to maximize the use of rainwater. For example, rainwater harvesting systems in development projects were among the environmentally friendly features promoted by the green building certification scheme BEAM Plus which was in turn associated with the system of GFA concessions, and the Happy Valley Underground Stormwater Storage Scheme consisting an underground stormwater tank was designed to not only control flood in the area but also facilitate utilization of rainwater (e.g. for plant irrigation).

External lighting

33. Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the way forward for enhancing control over external lighting after launching the Charter on External Lighting ("the Charter"). They asked whether and when the Administration would consider introducing more vigorous measures including statutory control on external lighting, if the Charter could not effectively tackle light nuisance and energy wastage problem. Mr KWOK urged the Administration to set clear objectives for assessing the effectiveness of the Charter in future and introduce statutory control if the objectives could not be met.

34. DSEN explained that the Administration adopted a multi-pronged approach to mitigate the problems associated with external lighting, which included measures to complement the Charter, such as re-launching the Guidelines on Industry Best Practices for External Lighting Installations ("the Guidelines") to encourage both the private and public sectors to adopt good practices in the design, installation and operation of external lighting installations, and other public education and publicity campaigns to raise awareness of light nuisance among the public. The Administration would assess the effectiveness of the multi-pronged approach in about two to three years' time by reviewing the responses towards the Charter, and conducting a survey to gauge public views on the effectiveness of the multi-pronged approach, etc.

35. Mr WONG Ting-kwong took the view that a careful balance should be struck between alleviating the problems of external lighting, and meeting the operational need of the business sector using external lighting for promotional or advertising purposes. He suggested the Administration consider legislating for external lighting control by phrases to first limit the excessive use of external lighting through requirements on switching off external lighting after a specified time at night, and maintaining only essential lighting at an acceptable level taking into account the ambient brightness condition and positioning of the external lighting, etc.

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36. SEN stated that as there were still divergent views in the community on the issue of external lighting, it was more appropriate at this stage to take forward the voluntary Charter rather than imposing statutory regulation on external lighting right away. That said, the Administration would not rule out the possibility of introducing legislation in the event that the review of the Charter indicated strong justifications for statutory control of external lighting.

37. The Deputy Chairman suggested the Administration consider taking the initiative to liaise with and persuade owners of properties and shops located in districts where complaints related to external lighting were prominent to sign the Charter. This could facilitate more focused actions to minimize the light nuisance in such problem areas. SEN agreed on the suggestion and undertook to take follow-up actions accordingly. He added that, for instance, the Administration had been liaising with the two power companies which would help encourage small to medium-sized enterprises to adopt good practices on external lighting installations that best suited their operations.

Concluding remarks

38. To conclude, the Chairman urged the Administration to take heed of members' views and concerns when formulating relevant policies and measures, particularly in respect of stepping up support for small to medium-sized private recyclers and promoting the development of the recycling industry, promotion of EVs and provision of sufficient EV charging facilities, and enhancing control over external lighting.

IV. Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(04) — Administration's paper on "Proposed Third Phase of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme"

LC Paper No. CB(1)459/15-16(05) — Updated background brief on "Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

Briefing by the Administration

39. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, the Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

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("DD/RS, EMSD") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to include five types of prescribed products, i.e. televisions, electric storage water heaters, induction cookers, washing machines (7 kg < washing capacity ≤ 10 kg) and room air conditioners (heat pump) in the proposed third phase of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme ("MEELS"), and the details of implementation.

(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation materials was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)488/15-16(02) on 25 January 2016.)

40. USEN put forth for members' consideration the Administration's initial plan to submit the relevant legislative amendments in respect of the proposed third phase of MEELS for vetting by the Legislative Council within the 2016-2017 legislative session.

Discussion

Coverage of Mandatory Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme

41. Mr Kenneth LEUNG welcomed the proposal to implement the third phase of MEELS. He enquired about the Administration's plan, if any, to include other electrical/electronic appliances, particularly office equipment such as photocopiers, computers and fax machines, in the subsequent phases of MEELS. DD/RS, EMSD advised that the coverage of MEELS after implementation of its third phase, which would account for about 70% of the annual electricity consumption in the residential sector, compared favourably to those of other advance economies. The Administration would take into account factors including overseas practices, availability of test standards and testing laboratories, as well as energy consumption and energy saving potential of the products, in considering the inclusion of additional types of products (e.g. electric rice cookers) into MEELS in future.

42. The Deputy Chairman indicated support for the implementation of the third phase of MEELS as it would expand the coverage of the scheme to more prescribed products and facilitate the public in choosing energy efficient appliances. He however expressed concern that the Administration might have adopted a passive approach to implement the scheme by merely following the available international standards and overseas practices instead of actively developing or participating in the international discussion of energy performance requirements and testing standards for potential products. The Deputy Chairman considered it important for the Administration to convey clearly its stance on the introduction and wider usage of energy efficient appliances in Hong Kong, with a view to driving the relevant trades towards

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manufacturing or importing more such products for the local market.

43. USEN emphasized that the Administration would explore and take the lead to implement new environmental initiatives in the region if practicable, and enacting legislation to require ocean-going vessels to switch fuel at berth was an example. DD/RS, EMSD reiterated that the inclusion of additional products into MEELS should take into account, inter alia, the availability of internationally accepted testing standards for energy efficiency, so as to provide a level playing field for all manufacturers or importers of prescribed products, and facilitate introduction of new energy-efficient products into the local market. At the same time, the Administration would give due regard to the local market conditions such as market penetration rates and thus the energy saving potential, in considering the suitability and worthiness of including particular products into MEELS, ahead of some other major economies. For instance, Hong Kong was among the forerunners in the international arena to include induction cookers into MEELS as proposed for the third phase.

Phasing out incandescent light bulbs

44. Since light-emitting diode ("LED") lamps had been increasingly used for general lighting applications as a more energy efficient alternative to incandescent light bulbs ("ILB"), Mr Kenneth LEUNG enquired whether the Administration would phase out ILB by banning the import of ILB and earlier models of compact fluorescent lamps in the next 5 to 10 years with a view to facilitating full adoption of LED lighting products in Hong Kong.

45. The Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Energy) replied that the Government had adopted a dual-pronged approach by expediting the phasing out of ILB instead of leaving it to market forces, while launching a Charter Scheme with suppliers and retailers to reduce the supply of ILB to the local market. As the overall sales of ILB had been decreasing significantly in recent years, it might not be necessary to ban the sale of ILB altogether. The Administration would closely monitor the effectiveness of the current approach having regard to market development and other relevant factors. DD/RS, EMSD added that, in view of the rapid technological advancement, short product life in the market due to changing models and relatively long serviceable life of LED lighting products, such products would not be proposed for inclusion into the scheme at this stage.

Admin 46. At the request of Mr Kenneth LEUNG, the Administration agreed to provide statistics on the market share of ILB in the local market, vis-à-vis other more efficient lighting such as LED lamps in recent years.

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(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1)596/15-16(02) on 24 February 2016.)

Conclusion

47. The Chairman concluded that members in general were supportive of the Administration's proposal to implement the proposed third phase of MEELS. He urged the Administration to take heed of members' views and suggestions for taking the scheme further forward in future.

V. Any other business

48. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:02 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 April 2016