

For Information

Panel on Environmental Affairs Subcommittee on Refuse Collection and Resource Recovery

Support for Waste Reduction and Recycling at the Local Community Level

Purpose

The Government is determined to proactively engage the community in tackling the waste challenges in Hong Kong. We have laid out a clear strategy for taking multiple and concurrent actions to encourage waste reduction at source, enhance recycling efficiency by strengthening the collection network and upgrading the recycling industry, as well as promote clean recycling. This paper sets out the measures that the Government has been taking in providing support for waste reduction and recycling at the local community level.

Source Separation of Waste

2. Since 2005, the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) has launched the Source Separation of Waste Programme (“the SSW Programme”) to encourage and promote public participation in waste reduction and source separation. Over 2 000 housing estates and residential buildings have joined the SSW Programme, covering over 80% of Hong Kong population. The Programme has also been extended to cover commercial and industrial (“C&I”) buildings since 2008, with over 950 buildings participated. To appeal for wider support of the SSW Programme, we have sought the approval of the Environmental Campaign Committee (“ECC”) to relax relevant rules and facilitate participants to apply for funding to place additional recycling bins at suitable common areas. Applicants will need to demonstrate that the bins will be put to good use and the recyclables so collected will be channelled to proper outlets.

Community Recycling Network

3. Besides, we have over the years set up a Community Recycling Network (“CRN”) comprising 18 Community Recycling Centres (“CRCs”) funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund (“ECF”) and about 60 collection points managed by non-governmental organisations. The CRN aims to facilitate waste source separation by residents of single-block buildings particularly those in older districts which are lack of any management by property management companies (“PMCs”), owners/ residents’ associations, or sufficient space for provision of recycling facilities.

Community Green Stations

4. In addition, a network of Community Green Stations (“CGSs”) is being progressively developed in each of the 18 districts to promote environmental education and enhance recycling support for the local community for low-value recyclables, such as electrical appliances, computers, glass beverage bottles, compact fluorescent lamps and tubes, and rechargeable batteries, with a view to promoting green living at the community level. As at mid-2017, four CGSs have commissioned service at Sha Tin, Eastern District, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long, and have established extensive service network within their respective districts. The CGS in Sham Shui Po will soon commission its service later this year.

5. We will continuously monitor the effectiveness of individual CGSs and review from time to time their works on environmental education and recycling support, and make adjustment as appropriate. For instance, on the basis of the experience of collaboration with some volunteer groups after Lunar New Year Fairs this year, we will review and explore further collaboration opportunity with a view to enhancing CGSs’ services on the premise that the core operation of the CGSs is not affected.

Provision of Collection Service

6. To facilitate the operation of CGS including its collaboration

with different stakeholders to collect recyclables and enhance the community collection network, the operators are equipped with collection trucks to facilitate collection of recyclables from collection points set up at housing estates and other suitable sites, such as schools and social service organisations. Besides, mobile collection points are operated in various public places within the district to facilitate residents, particularly those from single-block buildings, to participate in the waste reduction efforts. In addition, other reusable resources such as used clothing and books are collected in the community and swap events are organised from time to time to encourage exchange and reuse of suitable items. These events are always well-received by local residents.

7. To strengthen support for collection and recycling of recyclables, particularly waste plastic bottles which have been properly separated at source, we plan to, by early 2018, expand the scope of service of the CRCs to receive also waste plastic bottles delivered from other private housing estates and residential buildings (i.e. buildings with some form of property management) on a need basis.

8. In the longer term, to achieve better operational efficiency and cost effectiveness, we are examining the possibility of introducing a service to centrally collect the waste plastic bottles received by the CRCs and as necessary, from the sources (the individual residential estates) direct, across the territory for delivery to competent recyclers for onward processing.

Clean Recycling

9. We will collaborate with the ECC to step up the current promotional and public education efforts on clean recycling which has an important bearing on recycling value and recyclability. The new round of promotional campaign will focus on educating the public on how to minimise “contaminants” and “impurities” in waste plastic bottles, in particular plastic containers carrying beverages or personal care products, with a view to enhancing their recyclability and recycling value.

Outreach Service

10. We are considering setting up outreach teams in the EPD to help step up our education efforts and render outreach service as well as on-the-spot assistance to the PMCs and residents in practising proper waste source separation and clean recycling and in ensuring the collected recyclables are channelled to proper recycling outlets.

Enhance Recycling Efficiency through Recycling Fund

11. Besides, many community members are used to participate in recycling through commercial recyclers close to where they live or work. These recyclers often provide financial incentives to encourage collection of more sorted and clean recyclables. To facilitate these recyclers to elevate their operational standards and upgrade their capability thereby strengthening the recycling network, the Government has launched the \$1 billion Recycling Fund in October 2015, under which matching fund is provided to recyclers to improve or expand their business operations e.g. purchase small equipment for enhancing operation efficiency, reduce nuisances to the neighbourhood. With our support, a number of small scale recyclers have also expanded their networks on a trial basis to collect more waste plastic bottles from the community. In addition, a dedicated scheme has been launched recently to support recyclers in using compactor trucks for collecting recyclables in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. We will continue to roll out more facilitation measures to promote development of local recyclers which contributes to enhancing the quantity and quality of recyclables at the community level.

Phase II development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre

12. The Home Affairs Bureau (“HAB”), which is the project proponent, has advised that the phase II development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre (“YMTT”) aims at improving the supporting facilities of the existing YMTT to enable it to better serve its functions as a centre for nurturing new talents for Cantonese opera and to improve the overall environment in the area of the YMTT. There is a genuine need to reprovision the Shanghai Street refuse collection point (“RCP”) and the street sleepers’ services units (“SSSUs”) adjoining the YMTT to Hau Cheung Street in order to vacate the original site for the phase II development of the YMTT.

13. The proposal for the reprovisioning project was first put forward to the Panel on Home Affairs (“HA Panel”) for discussion in April 2013. In the light of Members’ suggestions raised at subsequent meetings of the HA Panel, Public Works Subcommittee (“PWSC”) and the Finance Committee (“FC”), the design of the reprovisioned building on Hau Cheung Street has been revised several times, including the construction of two additional floors between the RCP and the SSSUs. This would not only increase the vertical distance of the two facilities, but also provide storage and office space for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The reprovisioning project was endorsed by the PWSC on 28 June 2017 and was later included in the agenda of the FC held on 19 July 2017. The reprovisioning project has already been delayed for around five years and PWSC Members as well as stakeholders all urged for its early implementation.

14. On the suggestion by the Honourable Chu Hoi-dick to turn part of the reprovisioned building on Hau Cheung Street for provision of recycling facilities, if the design of the reprovisioned building is to be revised at this stage, the reprovisioning project will be further delayed. This would not only delay the phase II development of the YMTT, but also impede the improvement of the environment of the SSSUs. The construction costs would also increase due to expansion in project scope and delay of construction works.

Support for Waste Reduction and Recycling in the Yau Tsim Mong District

15. In terms of the support for waste reduction and recycling in the Yau Tsim Mong district, the ECF has been supporting the operation of one CRC in that district since 2014. Through waste-gift exchanges and face-to-face education, the CRC helps to arouse public awareness about waste recycling and encourage public participation in waste reduction and recycling. To facilitate public participation, the CRC also sets up mobile, kerb-side recyclable collection booths. In addition, the CRC has equipped itself with a baler to facilitate collection and recycling of waste plastic bottles. In the meantime, we have also identified a suitable site for constructing a CGS and have sought the views of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (“DC”) on it. We are following up taking into account the comments received and will further consult the DC on the site selection.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

**Environmental Protection Department
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