

For information
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Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**The Secretary for Food and Health's Meetings with
the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committees of 18 Districts
on Keeping Hong Kong Clean**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the outcomes and follow-up actions of the meetings held between the Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committees (FEHCs) of the 18 Districts on keeping Hong Kong clean.

Background

2. The Government launched the “Keep Clean 2015 @ Hong Kong: Our Home” Campaign (the Keep Clean Campaign) in August to September 2015, which garnered the full support of the 18 District Councils (DCs) and different sectors in the community, achieving a certain degree of success. From the experience concluded, we appreciate the important role played by the local communities in keeping the environment of Hong Kong clean. The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) has thus established a mechanism with the FEHCs of DCs for regular meetings, through which the latest overall environmental hygiene situations in Hong Kong could be discussed. This allows the Government to review and adjust our strategies of improving environmental hygiene in a timely manner. In this connection, SFH met with representatives of FEHCs under the 18 DCs on 18 September 2015, 1 February 2016 and 20 September 2016 respectively. At the meetings, the DC members made a number of suggestions to the Government on how to improve district environmental hygiene, such as stepping up enforcement actions as well as publicity and public education, and improving the

procurement, management and supervision of cleansing service contracts. The follow-up actions of some of the major issues discussed are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Pilot scheme on installation of IP cameras

3. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) often conducts reviews on operations against hygiene blackspots in various districts, with a view to tackling the environmental hygiene problems caused by frequent deposits of refuse at individual sites, in particular at midnight or in the early morning. Apart from stepping up publicity, education and enforcement efforts, FEHD proposed to launch a pilot scheme under which Internet Protocol (IP) cameras would be installed at certain refuse dumping blackspots to facilitate the monitoring of the offences and planning of more effective enforcement actions. Being a pilot scheme, FEHD identified one district each in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories which had relatively more fly-tipping blackspots and environmental hygiene complaints received for conducting the trial. Accordingly, the pilot scheme had been launched in the Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts since end 2016. On the selection of sites for installation of IP cameras, the primary consideration of FEHD was whether the site was technically suitable for installing IP cameras. FEHD would also take into account the seriousness of the fly-tipping problems and also the views of the DCs concerned. FEHD will examine the effectiveness of the pilot scheme upon its completion. Subject to positive outcome and DCs' endorsement of the scheme, FEHD would consult respective DCs on the hygiene blackspots for installation of IP cameras and consider the extension of the scheme in a timely manner when circumstances and resources permit.

4. FEHD would adopt a multi-pronged approach against illegal dumping of refuse at hygiene blackspots. Enforcement strategies include identifying the time and patterns of the offences through the information captured from the footage recorded for the planning of more effective enforcement actions. In parallel, on-site enforcement operations could allow real-time surveillance on blackspots to enable on-the-spot prosecutions against offenders by the law enforcement officers who station

nearby.

5. FEHD has sought legal advice on the pilot scheme on installation of IP cameras from the Department of Justice, which remarked that the scheme basically did not contravene relevant legislation. FEHD would formulate clear guidance notes and operational guidelines in order to comply with the provisions on the manner of collecting personal data under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). All footage recorded would be kept in accordance with the provisions. The disclosure of the footage recorded and relevant information is restricted to the extent necessary for the legal actions to be taken. Should no prosecution be instituted against the offences within six months, the footage so recorded would be deleted.

6. IP cameras are proposed to be installed on the external walls of private buildings, FEHD's refuse collection points or street furniture, such as street lamps and sign posts. If installation is to be made on private buildings, prior consent will be sought from the owners or occupiers; if it is to be made on street furniture, prior consultation will also be made with the relevant departments. FEHD will implement the arrangements in accordance with the Guidance on CCTV Surveillance Practices issued by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, including posting notices within the coverage of the IP cameras to warn offenders that IP cameras are in operation so as to achieve deterrent effect.

7. The pilot scheme has commenced since 30 December 2016, whereby IP cameras had been installed at six fly-tipping blackspots in Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts to step up surveillance on illegal dumping of refuse and plan more effective enforcement actions. The initial responses to the pilot scheme from the three Districts were positive. There was also media coverage that after the implementation of the scheme, the fly-tipping situations have been improved at sites installed with IP cameras, while residents and tenants nearby considered that the measure could achieve a deterrent effect. The Government will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the measure.

Enforcement arrangements of Fixed Penalty System against obstruction of public places caused by shop front extension

8. Representatives at the meeting noted that the Fixed Penalty System against shop front extension had been implemented since 24 September 2016. This is an additional enforcement tool which can tackle the shop front extension problem more efficiently and effectively, and can help address the deficiency of the existing summons system, i.e. the long lead time involved in the prosecution process and the light penalties that carry insufficient deterrence.

Enhancing street washing services

9. FEHD increased street washing services in the 18 Districts as part of the enhanced cleansing efforts during the Keep Clean Campaign. The feedback has been positive. There have been views from different Districts requesting the Government to maintain the enhanced cleansing services after the Campaign by deploying additional street washing vehicles to the relevant Districts.

10. To this end, FEHD has plans to reinforce street washing services provided to the 18 Districts by enhancing the service requirements for street washing when the street cleansing contracts in the respective districts are next due for renewal. From 2016-17 onwards, FEHD has allocated additional resources, including more street washing vehicle teams and high pressure hot water cleaner teams, to enhance street washing services. In parallel, FEHD has strengthened its supervision of the performance of in-house staff and outsourced workers on street cleansing duties for the provision of quality street cleansing services to the public.

Cleansing of central road dividers

11. Staff of FEHD and its street cleansing contractors provide daily cleansing services including street sweeping and waste collection. All streets are manually swept at least once, up to eight times, every day. In the main commercial and tourist areas, streets are swept an average of four

to five times a day. As regards some central road dividers located in streets with high traffic flow, staff of FEHD and its contractors, for safety's sake, can only perform cleansing services within specific time slots or under the assistance of relevant departments.

12. According to observations, some residents, including drivers, are used to littering on roads when riding on vehicles or waiting for traffic signals, which will be carried by air flows to central road dividers. In this light, FEHD has stepped up enforcement actions against such offences. Separately, FEHD will continue to perform targeted cleansing services in places where needs arise. District staff will rearrange the frequencies of cleansing services for central road dividers according to their locations and actual circumstances. FEHD will regularly review the frequencies of cleansing services for individual sites, and if necessary, consider allocating additional resources to reinforce the services. In parallel, to combat public cleanliness offences, FEHD will continue to take enforcement actions on blackspots of littering from vehicle.

Marine and coastal cleanliness

13. Much public attention has been directed to the problems of floating refuse in the harbour waters and refuse on beaches. To ensure that the Government's strategies in keeping the shorelines clean would keep abreast with latest developments and be effective, the Government set up in November 2012 an inter-departmental working group to review and formulate measures to improve the cleanliness of our shorelines.

14. To support the inter-departmental working group, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) commissioned a consultancy study on marine refuse to collect, collate and analyse up-to-date information on the sources, distribution and movement of marine refuse in Hong Kong waters and also make proposals on further improvement of the cleanliness of our shorelines. In the light of the findings, departments have strategically stepped up the frequencies of clearing marine refuse at 27 priority sites.

15. EPD also briefed the meeting on the unusual increase in marine

refuse at beaches along the southern part of Lantau Island (including Pui O, Lower Cheung Sha, and a small part of Tong Fuk) in July 2016, as well as the Government's follow-up actions by enhancing clean-up efforts at affected sites and also co-ordination with the Mainland to tackle marine environmental problems, including marine refuse.

Enhancing civic education

16. For effective improvement of environmental hygiene, it is necessary for the public to have a strong sense of civic mindedness and self-discipline. As such, it is of paramount importance to strengthen civic education to enhance the civic awareness of the public, which is also an effective strategy of improving environmental hygiene in the long run. FEHD appointed Ah Tak (清潔龍阿德) as the Keep Clean Ambassador on 5 June 2016 and promoted the message of "Clean Hong Kong" to the public through various channels, including setting up Ah Tak's Facebook page as well as a TV Announcement in the Public Interest (API) and a poster featuring Ah Tak.

17. FEHD will continue to disseminate messages about keeping the environment clean and hygienic through APIs on TV and radio, posters, stickers, leaflets and publicity vehicles. As in the past, FEHD will render assistance to organisations or bodies in organising cleaning activities. FEHD's Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre, located at Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui holds regular seminars for the public and schools on themes including knowledge on household hygiene, pest control and food safety. The Centre also organises outdoor weekend activity days for greater publicity.

Newly designed litter containers

18. To educate the public on the proper use of litter containers in tandem with the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Policy to be introduced by the Environment Bureau, FEHD introduced newly designed litter containers with smaller openings in June 2016. Through the newly designed litter containers coupled with publicity, the Government hopes that the public will

understand that litter containers are placed for pedestrians to discard small refuse, and that the bad habits of disposing domestic or industrial waste into (or even at the side or on top of) litter containers will be gradually changed.

Sustaining cleansing efforts by departments

19. At the meetings, DC members put forward their opinions not only on FEHD's efforts in environmental hygiene and pest control but also on issues concerning other departments. For instance, on construction waste fly-tipping problems, members requested EPD to step up inspections and enforcement actions to enhance awareness of proper waste disposal in their communities. Some members mentioned about the cleansing work of footbridges and lifts and requested the Highways Department to conduct regular inspections and cleansing of footbridges and subways. Some requested the Marine Department to strengthen marine refuse cleansing services to alleviate the environmental hygiene problems in typhoon shelters / bays / waterways. It was also pointed out that street sleepers occupying areas had caused obstructions to pedestrians in respective districts, and that the Housing Department had to step up action against throwing objects from height in housing estates. FEHD had referred the cases to relevant departments for follow-up actions and responses.

20. The Government will continue to communicate with the DCs, the community and stakeholders in various sectors to study ways of keeping the environment clean in a more effective way. We will also step up publicity and public education activities to arouse public awareness of the importance of concerted, incessant efforts in making possible a healthy and clean living environment for everyone.

Conclusion

21. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

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Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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