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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 November 2017**

**Extension of the Internet Protocol Camera Scheme to all districts and
other keep clean measures for enhancing environmental hygiene and
eradicating rodent infestation**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the views and concerns of members of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") on the pilot scheme on installation of Internet Protocol ("IP") cameras and other keep clean measures for enhancing environmental hygiene as well as preventing rodent infestation.

Background

Pilot scheme on installation of IP cameras

2. The Administration launched a two-month "Keep Clean 2015 @ Hong Kong: Our Home" campaign ("the Campaign") in August 2015. To sustain the efforts and momentum of the Campaign and to tackle the environmental hygiene problems caused by illegal dumping of refuse at hygiene black spots, particularly at midnight or in early morning, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") launched a six-month pilot scheme ("the pilot scheme") on 30 December 2016, under which IP cameras are installed at six refuse dumping and/or fly-tipping black spots in Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts. The pilot scheme aims at enhancing surveillance on illegal dumping of refuse and facilitates planning of more effective enforcement actions. FEHD officers will closely monitor the targeted black spots and revise the action plans in light of actual circumstances.

Rodent prevention and control measures

3. According to the Administration, FEHD has been adopting a comprehensive approach in its rodent prevention and control work. Targeting districts with relatively high rodent infestation rates, FEHD will take a variety of measures, including poisoning and trapping of rodents and destroying rat holes in related rear lanes, strengthening street cleansing, encouraging active participation of the public in anti-rodent work, and stepping up publicity and education programmes in rodent prevention and control. FEHD has also been taking the lead in organizing territory-wide inter-departmental anti-rodent campaigns on an annual basis to raise public awareness about the importance of rodent prevention and control. When planning the campaigns, FEHD makes appropriate adjustments to its strategies and action plans in light of the actual state of rodent infestation across the territory and in different districts, as well as the effectiveness of previous anti-rodent campaigns.

Members' major views and concerns

4. Members' major views and concerns on the subject are summarized below.

Pilot scheme on installation of IP cameras

5. Members were in general supportive of the implementation of the pilot scheme. Some members, however, were concerned that only three districts were selected for conducting the trial. In these members' views, consideration should be given to extending the pilot scheme to cover all 18 districts across the territory, with sites selected for installation of IP cameras to be recommended by the relevant District Councils ("DCs"). It was also suggested that the Administration should install IP cameras to monitor the fly-tipping activities in rear lanes and private streets, with a view to improving the hygiene condition in those areas.

6. The Administration advised that in selecting sites for installation of IP cameras, FEHD's primary consideration was whether the site was technically suitable for installing IP cameras. FEHD had also taken into account the seriousness of the fly-tipping problem and the views of the DCs concerned. FEHD would examine the effectiveness of the pilot scheme upon its completion. Subject to positive outcome and DCs' endorsement of the scheme, FEHD would consider extending the scheme in a timely manner when circumstances and resources permitted.

7. Some other members pointed out that the installation of IP cameras at public places might give rise to privacy concerns. They enquired whether warning notices for public attention would be posted and guidelines be drawn up to regulate the use, disclosure, retention and destruction of footage recorded by IP cameras.

8. According to the Administration, FEHD had sought legal advice from the Department of Justice ("DoJ"). DoJ's advice was that the pilot scheme basically did not contravene relevant legislation. FEHD would install the cameras 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 the public that IP cameras were in operation. FEHD would also 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) ("PDPO"). All footage recorded would be kept and destroyed in accordance with PDPO. The disclosure of the footage recorded and relevant information was restricted to the extent necessary for the legal action to be taken. If no prosecution was instituted within six months, the footage so recorded would be deleted.

9. In response to members' enquiry on how the footage recorded by IP cameras would be used for taking legal actions, the Administration advised that FEHD would identify the time and patterns of the offences through the information captured from the footage recorded for the planning of enforcement actions. In parallel, on-site enforcement operations which allowed real-time surveillance on black spots would be carried out, enabling on-the-spot prosecutions against offenders by the law enforcement officers who stationed nearby.

Review of the cleansing contract tendering system

10. Members in general held the view that FEHD's practice of awarding cleansing service contracts under the existing service contract tendering mechanism to the lowest bidder was the root cause for inferior cleansing services. Enquiry was raised as to whether the Administration would consider revamping the service contract awarding system so as not to award cleansing service contracts merely on account of tender price. There was also a suggestion that the Administration should consider delegating more power and responsibilities to DCs in the management and supervision of outsourced street cleansing services, and exploring the feasibility of introducing in Hong Kong automated/more advanced systems for refuse collection. Noting that FEHD was reviewing the tendering system, members sought information on its work progress and timetable for completing the review.

11. The Administration advised that FEHD let out its cleansing service contracts through open tender in accordance with the procurement requirements and procedures of the Government and evaluated the tenders using the standard marking scheme ("SMS") approved by the Government's Central Tender Board. Under SMS, the relative weightings of technical score and price score were 30% and 70% respectively. The assessment criteria for technical score comprised, among others, the contractors' service experience and past performance track records for relevant government contracts. FEHD did not award service contracts simply on the basis of tender price. Appreciating that there was scope for improving the cleansing service contract tendering arrangements as well as contract supervision and management, FEHD agreed to review its cleansing contract tendering system, guided by the need to uphold the requirements on service quality and to observe the principle of value for money. At the same time, FEHD would strengthen its supervision of outsourced street cleansing services through the provision of additional supervisory staff and sustained efforts to keep the service performance of contractors under close monitoring, with a view to ensuring that the contractors delivered services in accordance with the contract requirements.

Littering and waste disposal

12. Some members pointed out that residents living in "three-nil" buildings (i.e. buildings without Owners' Corporations, residents' organizations or property management companies) might have difficulties in engaging garbage collectors to collect and deliver domestic waste to the public refuse collection points ("RCPs"). Residents living in "three-nil" buildings might therefore throw domestic waste into litter containers on the streets. There were concerns that the newly designed litter containers with smaller openings had made it inconvenient for the public to put large-sized refuse into the containers, and refuse discarded at the side or on the top of the litter containers might then cause rodent infestation. Members cautioned that the improper disposal of refuse might get worse after the implementation of the Municipal Solid Waste ("MSW") Charging Policy.

13. The Administration advised that through the newly designed litter containers coupled with publicity, the Government hoped that the public would understand that litter containers were 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 would be gradually changed. Residents living in "three-nil" buildings should arrange for the delivery of the domestic waste to the nearby RCPs.

14. Some members enquired about the measures to be taken by FEHD in tandem with the implementation of the MSW Charging Policy. They were particularly concerned as to whether there would be changes to the functions of RCPs and the duties of outsourced cleansing contractors. According to the Administration, FEHD would discuss with the Environment Bureau arrangements to complement the MSW Charging Policy. The Administration would keep an open mind towards proposals to be put forward by the consultant engaged by the Environment Bureau to study, among others, the modification of RCPs to complement the MSW Charging Policy.

Rodent prevention and control measures

15. Concern was raised about the worsening rodent infestation problem in various districts, e.g. Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok, Central & Western and Yuen Long, and places bustling with human activities such as public markets, public rental housing estates close to construction sites and piers. Members strongly requested the Administration to strengthen rodent disinfection operations in districts and areas where rodent problem was acute. Information was also sought on how FEHD monitored the situation of rodent infestation in public markets and the targeted measures taken by FEHD to control the rodent problem therein.

16. According to the Administration, FEHD had carried out specific anti-rodent work in districts recorded with relatively high rodent infestation rates. Apart from strengthening FEHD's rodent prevention and control measures, inspections were made by staff of the Pest Control Advisory Section of FEHD to review the work and measures in place. Target areas mainly included markets/municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters and rear lanes adjacent to food premises, and other rodent-infested locations and their vicinity. Given the high adaptability and reproductive rate of rodents, the state of rodent infestation in individual districts often varied with changes in the environmental hygiene conditions and the level of public participation in rodent prevention and control work. FEHD would continue to undertake more intense rodent prevention and control operations jointly with relevant stakeholders.

Sustaining cleansing efforts

17. Some members held the view that FEHD should collaborate with DCs in respect of improving district environmental hygiene. It was suggested that the Administration should consider delegating FEHD's cleansing work to the 18 DCs, as DC members fully appreciated the environmental hygiene problems in their districts and could assist in monitoring the cleansing services.

Consideration should also be given to providing additional funding to DCs for setting up "Funds for Improving Community's Environmental Hygiene" so that individual DCs might make use of the additional resources to address environmental hygiene problems unique to their districts.

18. The Administration advised that FEHD's frontline staff continued to monitor the cleanliness of streets and public areas, hygiene black spots in particular, by conducting regular site inspections. Besides, FEHD's District Environmental Hygiene Superintendents maintained close liaison with DCs and district personalities in tackling hygiene problems identified in various districts. They could flexibly deploy the resources readily available, such as street washing teams and roving cleansing teams, to tackle particular hygiene problems. The Government would provide an additional funding of about \$119 million to FEHD in 2017-2018 to intensify the cleansing efforts. The Administration assured members that it would endeavor to keep track of community feedback and act on the views and suggestions received through the regular meeting mechanism between the Secretary for Food and Health and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committees under DCs.

19. Responding to some members' comments that the effect of collaboration among bureaux and departments in improving environmental hygiene was not sustainable after the Campaign and that the environmental hygiene condition of some areas had even got worse, the Administration advised that while FEHD would continue to play its coordinating role in sustaining the community's cleansing efforts after the Campaign, it would follow up with the bureaux/departments concerned on environmental hygiene issues and would continue to communicate with DCs, the community and stakeholders in various sectors to explore measures for keeping the environment clean in a more effective way.

Recent developments

20. The Chief Executive has announced in the 2017 Policy Address the Administration's plan to extend in the first quarter of 2018 the pilot scheme on the installation of IP cameras at hygiene black spots to cover all the 18 districts. The Chief Executive has also announced that the Government would deploy additional resources to enhance environmental hygiene through specific measures, including setting up additional dedicated enforcement teams to strengthen law enforcement against public cleanliness offences and enhancing the supervision and management of outsourced cleansing contracts.

21. The Administration will brief the Panel on the proposed extension of the pilot scheme and other keep clean measures at the meeting on 14 November 2017.

Relevant papers

22. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 November 2017

Relevant papers on extension of the Internet Protocol Camera Scheme to all districts and other keep clean measures for enhancing environmental hygiene and eradicating rodent infestation

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	8.12.2015 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
	10.1.2017 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	24.1.2017 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	14.3.2017 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
	31.10.2017 (Item I)	Agenda