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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 12 June 2018**

Issues relating to public cleanliness

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the services provided by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") in maintaining public cleanliness, and summarizes the views and concerns of members of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") on the subject.

Background

2. According to information available on FEHD's website, FEHD and its cleansing contractors have a total workforce of about 10 800 to keep the city clean and provide cleansing services (including street sweeping, waste collection and other cleansing work) in Hong Kong. All streets are manually swept at least once every day. In the main commercial and tourist areas, streets are swept an average of four times a day, and up to eight times a day in the busiest pedestrian areas. Complementing manual sweeping, seven contractor's mechanical sweepers are used to cleanse highways, flyovers and central road dividers as well as other high-use traffic areas. FEHD and its cleansing contractors altogether have a total of 109 street washing vehicles. Depending on the nature of the area served, FEHD will adjust the frequency of street washing which may be conducted on need or daily basis.

3. To help keep Hong Kong clean and tidy, about 14 600 litter containers and about 1 800 dog excreta collection bins are placed on the streets. They are cleared at least once a day. With a view to promoting public participation in waste reduction and environmental protection, recyclables collection bins are

also provided at 1 981 locations at public places including streets, refuse collection points ("RCPs"), public markets, bus termini, MTR exits etc. for the collection of waste paper, metal and plastic materials.

Members' concerns

4. Members have all along been concerned about issues relating to public cleanliness. Major views and concerns expressed by members at Panel meetings are summarized below.

Strengthening cleansing efforts

5. Many members expressed concern that the environmental hygiene condition and rodent problem in some districts were getting worse. They urged the Administration to reinforce its cleansing services and strengthen rodent disinfestation operations in a targeted manner to address the issues. There was also a view that the Administration should enhance the supervision of contractors' performance in street cleansing and pest control services.

6. According to the Administration, FEHD's frontline staff monitored the cleanliness of streets and public areas, hygiene blackspots in particular, by conducting regular site inspections. Besides, FEHD's District Environmental Hygiene Superintendents maintained close liaison with the District Councils ("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. From 2016-2017 onwards, FEHD had allocated additional resources, including deploying more street washing vehicle teams and high pressure hot water cleaner teams, to enhance street cleansing services. FEHD also had plans to enhance the service requirements for street washing when the street cleansing contracts in individual districts were next due for renewal. In parallel, FEHD had strengthened its supervision of the performance of in-house staff and outsourced workers on street cleansing duties, to ensure the provision of quality street cleansing services.

7. Regarding rodent prevention and control, the Administration advised that apart from combating rodent infestation in individual districts on a regular basis, FEHD had launched two 2-month anti-rodent operations in designated target areas (e.g. rear lanes, RCPs and peripheral areas of construction sites) in all districts in May and September 2017, and adopted multi-pronged strategies to combat the rodent problem, including elimination of food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blocking their passages, so as to work for a clean and hygienic community.

8. Some members held the view that FEHD should collaborate with DCs in respect of improving district environmental hygiene. There was a suggestion that the Administration should consider delegating FEHD's cleansing work (including management and supervision of outsourced street cleansing services) 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.

9. According to the Administration, to sustain the community's cleansing efforts, it had established a platform for regular exchange of views between the Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") and the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committees ("FEHCs") under DCs, through which the latest overall environmental hygiene situations (including key areas requiring attention and possible ways to tackle specific hygiene problems) could be discussed. 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 meetings between SFH and FEHCs.

Littering and waste disposal

10. Concern was raised that as most RCPs managed by FEHD were closed at night, refuse from residential buildings collected by private refuse collectors very often was stacked up outside RCPs or along the pavements pending collection by refuse collection vehicles. In some members' view, FEHD should consider extending the opening hours of RCPs, so as to cope with the demand for refuse collection service at midnight and in the early morning. There was also a suggestion that the Administration should explore the feasibility of introducing in Hong Kong automated/more advanced systems for refuse collection.

11. According to the Administration, in considering whether the opening hours of an RCP should be extended, it would take into account a number of factors such as the views of local residents and the respective DC as well as the demand for refuse collection service during midnight or in small hours of the day. To address the service demand of various districts, FEHD had already increased the number of RCPs providing 24-hour service in recent years.

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 refuse collectors to collect and deliver domestic waste to 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 hence discarded at the side or on the top of the litter containers as a result caused rodent infestation.

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 the 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. Members envisaged that improper disposal of refuse in public places might get worse after the implementation of the municipal solid waste ("MSW") charging policy. There was a suggestion that FEHD should deploy additional resources to improve environmental hygiene in the community. According to the Administration, FEHD was one of the enforcement departments of MSW charging to be introduced by the Environment Bureau. For MSW collected by FEHD, it was proposed that charging would be imposed through the purchase of pre-paid designated garbage bags or labels before disposal. FEHD would consider deploying additional resources to complement the implementation of relevant measures under MSW charging.

Enforcement strategies and related matters

15. Members were in general supportive of the Administration's decision to extend the Internet Protocol ("IP") Camera Scheme to all districts in Hong Kong, as the scheme had achieved considerable deterrent effect and was helpful in improving the hygiene condition at refuse dumping blackspots. Enquiry was raised about the Administration's considerations in deciding the locations for installing IP cameras and the number of IP cameras to be set up in each district. There was a suggestion that the Administration should consider installing IP cameras in rear lanes and private streets where illegal deposits of construction wastes and accumulation of disused articles were serious, so as to step up surveillance on illegal dumping of refuse and facilitate the planning of more effective enforcement actions.

16. The Administration advised that FEHD had decided to extend the scheme to all districts progressively on a trial basis for one year and aimed to install, in the first phase, some 40 IP cameras at hygiene blackspots across the territory (i.e. one to three cameras in each district) in the second quarter of 2018. An overall review would be conducted when the trial period ended. In

selecting locations for installation of IP cameras, FEHD had consulted and obtained the support from DCs on the locations suggested for and the priority of installing IP cameras with regard to the seriousness of illegal refuse dumping activity at the hygiene blackspots. Some of the locations proposed were rear lanes. If DCs requested changing the locations for camera installation in the future, FEHD would actively seek to meet their demands so long as the suggestions were technically feasible. If the hygiene conditions of a particular location showed improvement, FEHD might consider adding or relocating the cameras to other spots according to priority.

17. There was a view that FEHD should deploy additional manpower resources to each district to support the enhanced enforcement actions against illegal dumping of refuse by food premises and bars, particularly in the early hours of the morning. Besides, the Administration should review and examine whether the existing penalties for such offences should be increased to enhance the deterrent effect. The Administration advised that FEHD had flexibly deployed existing staff in carrying out enforcement actions. Since late June 2017, FEHD had set up six dedicated enforcement teams ("DETs") in six districts to step up enforcement actions against public cleanliness offences. It was the plan of FEHD to seek more resources to set up DETs for deployment to every district in the long run to support its work in this respect.

Review of the cleansing contract tendering system

18. 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. Noting that FEHD was reviewing the tendering system, members sought information on its work progress and timetable for completing the review.

19. 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.

Recent developments

20. The Administration announced in its press releases of 29 and 30 May 2018 (see **Appendix I**) that starting from 6 June 2018, the IP Camera Scheme will be extended to all districts covering about 80 refuse deposit blackspots. Besides, FEHD has launched the first round of the anti-rodent operation in designated target areas on 23 April 2018. It will also kick start the second phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign on 2 July 2018.

21. The Administration is exploring/putting on trial the use of a number of technologies and equipment, e.g. pressure washer surface cleaners, walk-behind mini-street sweepers, leaf blowers, solar-powered compacting refuse bins, etc. in a bid to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public cleansing services. The Administration will brief the Panel on FEHD's application of these technologies and equipment at the meeting on 12 June 2018.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 June 2018

Press Releases

FEHD to extend IP camera installation scheme to all districts

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will progressively extend the scheme on installation of Internet Protocol (IP) cameras at illegal refuse deposit blackspots to all districts starting from June 6 to combat illegal deposits of refuse and improve environmental hygiene.

A spokesman for the FEHD today (May 29) said, "The FEHD launched a six-month pilot scheme on installation of IP cameras at six refuse deposit blackspots in Central and Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long districts in late December 2016, which has effectively curbed illegal deposits of refuse through targeted surveillance and enforcement actions.

"In view of these encouraging results, the FEHD, after consulting all District Councils, will extend the scheme to cover about 80 refuse deposit blackspots in the territory for a trial period of one year. When the scheme commences next week, IP cameras installed at 46 blackspots in various districts will be ready for use (see Annex), and installation work at the remaining blackspots will be conducted progressively. FEHD officers will closely monitor the targeted blackspots and suitably adjust its action plans in light of actual circumstances, including the change of IP camera locations in a timely manner, so as to enhance the effectiveness of enforcement actions."

The spokesman said that the FEHD is implementing the arrangements in accordance with the Guidance on CCTV Surveillance and Use of Drones issued by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, including posting notices in the areas covered by the IP cameras. In addition, the department has formulated clear operational guidelines, and requires staff to strictly comply with the provisions on the manner of collecting personal data under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486) and to handle privacy matters properly. The disclosure of images captured is restricted to the extent necessary for legal action to be taken. Should no prosecution be instituted against irregularities within six months, the images so captured will be deleted.

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD would continue to combat illegal refuse deposits in a multi-pronged manner. Members of the public are urged to observe the laws and be civic-minded. They should deposit refuse properly or may be prosecuted. Since mid-2017, the department has set up six dedicated enforcement teams to step up enforcement actions against various public cleanliness offences.

The scheme will be reviewed one year after implementation. The installation locations of the IP cameras will be uploaded to the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk).

Ends/Tuesday, May 29, 2018
Issued at HKT 19:34

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Installation Locations of Internet Protocol Cameras

District	Installation Locations
Central / Western	Junction of Hollywood Road and Mee Lun Street, near Police Married Quarters
	Outside Yin Tak Building, 69 High Street
	Outside Bowen Road Refuse Collection Point
Wanchai	Tin Hau MTR Station near Lau Sin Street Sitting Out Area
	Victoria Park Exit near Gloucester Road and Paterson Street Fashion Walk
	Junction of Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road, near Craigengower Cricket Club
Eastern	In the vicinity of telephone booth opposite Hang Ying Building, North View Street, North Point
	Pavement opposite to No. 38 Kam Ping Street, North Point
	Junction between Kam Wa Street and Mong Lung Street
Southern	Lee Nam Road Refuse Collection Point
	San Wai Village Temporary Refuse Collection Point
Islands	Pa Mei Refuse Collection Point, Tung Chung
Yau Tsim	Vicinity of Man Cheong Street Refuse Collection Point
	Junction of Reclamation Street and Nanking Street (Major portion of Reclamation Street)
	Pavement and carriageway of the vicinity at No.28 Kimberley Street
Mong Kok	Junction of pavement at Kok Cheung Street/Wai On Street, Tai Kok Tsui
	In front of Sai Yee Street (Flower Market Road) Refuse Collection Point
Sham Shui Po	Junction of King Lam Street and Tai Nan Street West
	Tat Yeung Road
	Area underneath the flyover and Mount Sterling Mall at Mei Foo rear lane beside Mount Sterling Mall
Kowloon City	Carriageway in front of I-Feng Mansion, Chi Kiang Street
	Rear lane of No. 20 Wuhu Street (Hung Wu Building)
	Junction of Mei King Street and Mei Kwong Street

District	Installation Locations
Wong Tai Sin	Junction between Sam Chuk Street and Tsat Po Street, San Po Kong
	Kam Fung Street
Kwun Tong	Pavement outside Kei Yip Street Refuse Collection Point
	Rear lane at Horse Shoe Lane, Lai Yue Building
	Kai Tin Road between Lam Tin Estate Welfare Building (West) and Kai Tin Tower
Kwai Tsing	Outside Ta Chuen Ping Street Refuse Collection Point
	Outside Tam Kon Shan Road Refuse Collection Point
Tsuen Wan	Gemini Beach Refuse Collection Point
	Lung Yue Road Refuse Collection Point
Tuen Mun	Public place outside Yip Wong Road Public Toilet & Refuse Collection Point
Yuen Long	Yau Cha Po Tsuen Refuse Collection Point
	Ma Fung Ling Road Refuse Collection Point
	Fung Kong Tsuen Refuse Collection Point
North	Choi Fat Street Carpark, Sheung Shui
	Kam Tsin (Fung Shui Grave) Refuse Collection Point
Tai Po	Cheung Shue Tan Village Refuse Collection Point near Dragon Fountain
	Shan Liu Road Bin Site Refuse Collection Point I, Tin Kwok Village
	Side of Tai Po Tau Village Refuse Collection Point
Sha Tin	Siu Lek Yuen Village Refuse Collection Point at Siu Lek Yuen, Kwong Sin Street
	Sha Tin Wai Village Refuse Collection Point at Sha Tin Wai, Sha Tin Wai Road
Sai Kung	Tong Ming Street and Po Hong Road (Outside the Beverly Garden)
	Yi Chun Street Refuse Collection Point
	Tseung Kwan O Village Refuse Collection Point

Ends

Press Releases

FEHD strengthens rodent prevention and control work during anti-rodent operation in designated target areas

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) launched the first round of its anti-rodent operation in designated target areas in various districts on April 23 to sustain the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control work at the district level.

An FEHD spokesman said today (May 30), "The FEHD is conducting two rounds of the anti-rodent operation, each lasting for two months, in designated target areas again this year, with multi-pronged strategies including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfection and enforcement actions, to continue targeted rodent prevent and control work in those areas. Since the launch of the first round of the operation on April 23, the FEHD, in the past month, has strengthened district rodent disinfection work at problematic spots such as rear lanes, refuse collection points, markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and peripheral areas of construction sites. As at May 22, the department placed poisonous bait at 2 773 locations and placed 4 185 traps, and destroyed 190 rat holes, with 354 dead rodents collected and 294 rodents caught in traps.

"During the operation, the FEHD has also stepped up inspections of food premises, markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets. Enforcement action against food premises causing poor environmental hygiene conditions, food preparation and scullery at rear lanes and improper handling and disposal of rubbish were strengthened. As at May 22, the FEHD conducted 6 950 inspections and issued 2 247 health advisories, 1 059 verbal warnings, 15 warning letters, 30 statutory notices and 293 fixed penalty notices and took out 145 prosecutions.

"Furthermore, FEHD staff have enhanced street cleaning services and cleaning of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas, including sweeping and cleaning of streets and rear lanes and clearing of refuse and waste in streets, public markets and hawker bazaars, so as to keep the environment clean."

The spokesman stressed that effective rodent prevention and control hinges on the active participation of the community. During the operation, the FEHD has strengthened public education and publicity to remind members of the public to eliminate the three survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, i.e. the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blocking their dispersal routes, so as to combat the rodent problem. The department also arranged 69 health talks for building management offices of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control.

The first round of the anti-rodent operation in designated target areas will end on June 22, while the second phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign, which lasts for 10 weeks, will commence on July 2.

Ends/Wednesday, May 30, 2018
Issued at HKT 16:00

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Appendix II

Relevant papers on issues relating to public cleanliness

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	8.12.2015 (Item VI)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	10.1.2017 (Item V)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	24.1.2017 (Item I)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	31.10.2017 (Item I)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
	14.11.2017 (Item IV)	<u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u>
Legislative Council	25.4.2018	<u>Official Record of Proceedings</u> <u>Pages 8804 to 8808 (Written</u> <u>question raised by Hon Wilson</u> <u>OR on "Rodent prevention and</u> <u>control")</u>
	30.5.2018	<u>Oral question raised by Hon</u> <u>Vincent CHENG on</u> <u>"Prevention and control of</u> <u>mosquito and rodent problems"</u>