

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)192/18-19
(These minutes have been
cleared with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 11 October 2018, at 5:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-fai (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP

Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon AU Nok-hin
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members
absent** : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

**Clerk in
attendance** : Miss Josephine SO
Chief Council Secretary (2) 2

**Staff in
attendance** : Miss Flora TAI
Assistant Secretary General 2

Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Michelle TANG
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Cally LAI
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

Ms Camy YOONG
Clerical Assistant (2) 2

Action

I. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the 2018-2019 session

(Appendices II, III and IV to LC Paper No. CB(2)7/18-19)

Election of Chairman

Mr Steven HO, Chairman of the Panel for the 2017-2018 session, called for nominations for the chairmanship of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was nominated by Mr Andrew WAN and the

Action

nomination was seconded by Ms Claudia MO. Dr KWOK Ka-ki accepted the nomination.

2. As there was no other nomination, Mr Steven HO declared Dr KWOK Ka-ki elected as the Chairman of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session. Dr KWOK Ka-ki then took the chair.

Election of Deputy Chairman

3. The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel. Mr SHIU Ka-fai was nominated by Mr Martin LIAO and Mr Steven HO, and the nomination was seconded by Mr CHAN Chun-ying. Mr SHIU Ka-fai accepted the nomination.

4. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman declared Mr SHIU Ka-fai elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session.

II. Schedule of meetings for the 2018-2019 session

5. Members agreed to hold regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm. As special meetings of the Finance Committee would be held from 8 to 12 April 2019, members agreed to re-schedule the regular meeting in April 2019 to Tuesday, 16 April 2019 at 2:30 pm.

6. The Chairman informed members that taking into consideration that some of the Panel meetings held in the last session were extended to last for more than two hours due to the number of items discussed at those meetings, the Secretariat had reserved a three-hour timeslot, from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm, for each of the regular meetings scheduled for the months of December 2018 as well as February, April and June 2019. Members noted that the Chairman might adjust/change the end time of the meetings having regard to the number of discussion items on the agenda of respective meetings.

(Post-meeting note: The schedule of the regular meetings of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)44/18-19 on 12 October 2018.)

Policy briefing on 22 October 2018

7. The Chairman said that a meeting had been scheduled for Monday, 22 October 2018 from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm to receive a briefing by the Secretary for Food and Health on the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address in respect of the portfolio of food safety and environmental hygiene.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendices V and VI to LC Paper No. CB(2)7/18-19)

Regular meeting in November 2018

8. Members agreed to discuss the Administration-proposed item "Mosquito and rodent control" at the next regular meeting scheduled for 13 November 2018.

(Post-meeting note: The Chairman, after considering the concerns expressed and suggestions made by members during the ensuing part of this meeting, had decided after the meeting that the Panel should discuss "Post-typhoon follow-up efforts under the purview of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department" at the November meeting, in addition to the item "Mosquito and rodent control". Members were informed of the Chairman's decision vide LC Paper No. CB(2)86/18-19 on 16 October 2018.)

Items proposed for discussion at the next meeting/future meetings

Administration's prevention and control work against rodents, mosquitoes and biting midges

9. Mr Steven HO and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that the Administration should be requested to brief members at the meeting on 13 November 2018 on how it would step up prevention and control work against rodents, mosquitoes and biting midges (e.g. whether any new measures/methods would be introduced by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") to address pest problems). Mr HO considered it necessary for FEHD to improve the existing surveillance systems for rodents and mosquitoes, including reviewing how statistics/data could be collected for compiling more accurate and reliable rodent infestation rates surveys in rodent-infested areas and ovitrap indices under the dengue vector surveillance programme, so as to get hold of more comprehensive information in relation to the rodent and mosquito problems in the territory.

10. Dr Elizabeth QUAT said that according to her observation, the rodent problem in some public rental housing ("PRH") estates was very serious, causing much nuisance to residents. She expressed concern that many rubbish bins in PRH estates were not covered with lids, providing feeding and shelter for rodents. Mr Wilson OR, who was the Chairman of the Panel on Housing, said that members of the Panel on Housing had expressed concern about the deteriorating hygienic situation and rodent infestation problem in PRH estates. He considered that inter-departmental co-ordination in implementing pest control measures should be strengthened.

Action

11. Dr Pierre CHAN, who was the Chairman of the Panel on Health Services, said that members of the Panel on Health Services were also concerned about the mosquito and rodent infestation problems in public places and their adverse impact on public health.

12. The Chairman said that as members of the Panel on Health Services and Panel on Housing were also concerned about the mosquito and rodent infestation problems in various districts, he suggested inviting members of these two Panels to join the discussion on "Mosquito and rodent control", an agenda item for the November meeting. The Chairman further said that the Administration should be requested to enlist representatives from relevant bureaux and government departments (e.g. Housing Department and Department of Health) to attend the meeting, so as to ensure that members' questions on the Government's prevention and control work against rodents, mosquitoes and biting midges could be well addressed.

Post-typhoon follow-up efforts under the purview of FEHD

13. Ms Starry LEE expressed concern that FEHD had failed to deploy sufficient manpower and resources to follow up on the clearance of typhoon debris and wood waste on roads and roadside after the passage of Super Typhoon Mangkhut. Mr Steven HO said that he had received complaints that some facilities in public cemeteries under the management of FEHD were damaged by the typhoon. He considered it necessary for FEHD to review its preparation and recovery efforts in dealing with tropical cyclones, with a view to minimizing the impacts brought about by inclement weather. Ms LEE and Mr HO suggested that the Administration should be requested to brief the Panel on the post-typhoon follow-up efforts under the purview of FEHD at a future meeting.

Environmental hygiene

14. Ms Starry LEE said that many local residents had relayed to her that the environment hygiene conditions of various districts were getting worse. In her view, FEHD should strengthen its cleansing efforts and launch both territory-wide and district-based cleansing operations to improve the environmental hygiene conditions and to eliminate hygiene blackspots. Mr Wilson OR considered that FEHD should also enhance the monitoring of the performance of its cleansing contractors. Ms Starry LEE shared a similar view, adding that FEHD should review its cleansing contract tendering system (including the practice of using the "standard marking scheme" for evaluating the tenders received) with a view to ensuring that the contractors' performance could meet the requirements on service quality.

Action

15. Mr Steven HO expressed concern about the effectiveness of the solar-powered compacting refuse bins introduced by FEHD for trial use at 12 bin sites in rural areas for collecting household waste from the nearby residents. He hoped that the Administration would continue to apply innovation and technologies in providing cleansing services and explore the wider use of suitable machines and automation for the purpose of improving environmental hygiene, having regard to local circumstances. Ms Starry LEE echoed his view.

16. Mr SHIU Ka-chun considered that the Administration should review FEHD's enforcement strategy and operational guidelines for frontline staff in handling street obstruction/environmental hygiene issues involving scavengers. In his view, the Administration should adopt a "friendly policy" towards scavengers. He suggested that the matter be brought up for discussion at a future meeting.

Implementation of the five-year Hawker Assistance Scheme for hawkers in fixed-pitch hawker areas ("Hawker Assistance Scheme")

17. Mr SHIU Ka-chun noted that as at 2 June 2018 (i.e. the expiry date of the Hawker Assistance Scheme), among the 4 330 hawker stalls, 854 applications for surrender of hawker licences for an ex-gratia payment had been received. Mr SHIU expressed concern as to whether the Administration would consider issuing new fixed-pitch hawker licences, so as to fill the vacant pitches in the hawker areas. He considered it necessary for the Panel to follow up with the Administration on the outcome of the review of the Hawker Assistance Scheme.

Food safety issues

18. Dr Helena WONG suggested that the following subject matters should be brought up for discussion at future Panel meetings:

- (a) outcome of the review of the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF);
- (b) certification system for organic food;
- (c) progress/outcome of the study on "cooking oils in use" and the formulation of the guidelines on good practice of using frying oils;
- (d) food safety and hygiene issues relating to online food selling activities/platforms, including the potential food safety risks

Action

involved in the delivery process of food products sold through these platforms; and

- (e) outcome of the wholesale market consultancy study (including the timetable, proposed sites and detailed plan for relocating Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market and Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market).

19. Dr Elizabeth QUAT also proposed that the Panel should discuss the certification system for organic food. In her view, the Administration should consider putting in place a certification system of organic products through legislative measures. Mr Steven HO hoped that when the outcome of the wholesale market consultancy study was discussed by the Panel, the Administration would also brief members on how it would assess the impact of the relocation of the poultry market on the live poultry supply chain and the measures to address the trade's concern in this regard.

20. Mr Steven HO expressed concern that during peak hours, it often took a long time for lorries carrying vegetables to undergo customs clearance at Man Kam To Food Control Office if a large number of lorries were selected for inspection. In his view, the Administration should make it a mandatory requirement for all imported vegetables (including vegetables directly distributed to retail outlets for sale immediately after their import from the Mainland) to be transported to the same wholesale vegetable market for centralized wholesaling, as this would facilitate the collection of samples for testing by the Centre for Food Safety. He suggested that the matter be followed up and discussed in the future.

21. Dr Helena WONG and Mr Steven HO considered it necessary for the Administration to update members on the import arrangements for hairy crabs for the current hairy crab season. Mr HO said that local hairy crab traders could make contributions towards the management and operation of registered aquaculture farms in the Mainland to help ensure that the hairy crabs raised by the farms for export purpose could meet Hong Kong's food safety standards. The Chairman said that the Administration should be requested to provide the Panel with an information paper first, reporting on matters relating to the import arrangements for hairy crabs.

Issues relating to animal welfare

22. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed concern that there had been an increase in the number of animal abandonment cases in recent years. She and Dr Elizabeth QUAT were of the view that the Administration should consider enacting comprehensive legislation on animal protection, as suggested by the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights (details of which

Action

were set out in the Subcommittee's report (LC Paper No. CB(2)689/17-18)). They hoped that arrangement could be made for early discussion of the item "Review of legislation relating to animal welfare", which was already placed on the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion (Appendix V to LC Paper No. CB(2)7/18-19).

23. The Chairman said that the Administration should also be requested to brief members on the feasibility of setting up "animal police" teams specifically tasked to investigate into cases of animal cruelty and abandonment. He noted from the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address that the Police would implement the "Animal Watchers" Scheme in 2019-2020 for tackling cruelty to animals.

24. Mr Steven HO said that boars straying into residential areas and farmland had threaten human safety and damaged agricultural produce. He suggested the Panel discuss the measures taken by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for tackling nuisance caused to the community by boars.

Other issues

25. Mr Steven HO held the view that the Administration should conduct a study on the structural changes in local fisheries industry, with a view to formulating measures to assist fishermen engaging in capture fishery to switch to sustainable fisheries operations such as aquaculture and recreational fisheries. He proposed that the matter be discussed at a future meeting.

26. Regarding the regulation of private columbaria, Dr Helena WONG considered it necessary for the Administration to report to the Panel on the progress of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in processing applications for a licence or other specified instruments for operating a private columbarium and enforcement actions taken against private columbaria after the enactment of the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630).

27. Dr Elizabeth QUAT considered that the Administration should review the existing compensation arrangement (including the granting of rental waiver and ex-gratia payments) for stall tenants who were affected by air-conditioning retrofitting works/improvement works carried out in public markets. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the issue raised by Dr QUAT should be taken up by the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets.

Action

28. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that he would bring up the issues/suggestions raised by members at the meeting with the Secretary for Food and Health to discuss the work plan of the Panel for the 2018-2019 session.

IV. Any other business

Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets

29. Members noted that the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets, which commenced work in March 2018, would continue its work in the 2018-2019 session. Members agreed that the membership of the Subcommittee should be re-opened to members of the Panel, and noted that existing members of the Subcommittee who had not given written notice to withdraw their membership would remain as members of the Subcommittee.

30. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:58 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 November 2018