

**For discussion on
16 April 2019**

**Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Refurbishment of Public Toilets
Managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Government's plan to refurbish public toilets (PTs) managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in the coming five years.

Background

2. As promulgated by the 2019-20 Budget, the Government will allocate additional resources of about \$600 million to commence refurbishment or facelifting works for about 240 PTs of FEHD by phases in the coming five years (i.e. 2019-20 to 2023-24). The projects will also improve toilet facilities and enhance their cleanliness and hygiene.

Factors of Consideration of Refurbishment Works

3. FEHD will install various facilities, which would be more convenient and user-friendly based on patrons' needs for the refurbishment of PTs. These improved facilities include sensor-activated taps and flushing facilities, coat hooks and facilities for baby, etc. FEHD in collaboration with Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) will decide on the exterior, fitments and materials of each PT having regard to the actual circumstances, to ensure that the design could blend well with surrounding environment and keep up with the times, and to make the PT facilities hygienic, clean, safe and decent.

4. In formulating the design of PTs, FEHD and ArchSD will consider how best to incorporate third parties' views, such as arranging design thinking workshops to brainstorm solutions and engage stakeholders like design professionals, scholars and architects, etc.

5. FEHD will take into consideration a number of factors including the PT's condition, level of utilisation, etc. in selecting PTs for refurbishment and determining their priorities.

6. In addition to allocating extra funding for refurbishing PTs, FEHD will work closely with ArchSD to streamline working procedures and speed up refurbishment works process.

Scope of the Works

7. There are two types of PT refurbishment works, namely full-scale refurbishment and smaller-scale facelifting. The overall timeline for refurbishment takes about 2 to 3 years¹, while the whole process for facelifting works requires about 1 to 1.5 years². Generally speaking, full-scale refurbishment will adopt new design, improve toilet layout, beautify exterior wall and replace facilities. For details of refurbishment works, please refer to **Annex 1**. For facelifting of PTs, the scope of works are mainly replacement of aged facilities and installation of new features, with the prevailing layout and exterior wall remained unchanged. Scope of works for facelifting is at **Annex 2**. The ratio of number of PTs to commence refurbishment to facelifting works each year is about 2:3.

Facility Improvement

8. FEHD will, having regard to the actual circumstances of individual toilets, adjust the scope of works for refurbishment or facelifting projects, including exterior design, materials, ventilation system, lighting and installation of the following facilities:

- (a) sensor-activated water tap and soap dispenser for each wash hand basin;
- (b) sensor-activated flushing system for each toilet cubicle if circumstances permit;
- (c) electric hand dryers (with a drain tank) at suitable places in the common areas;
- (d) waterproof power sockets at suitable places in the common areas;
- (e) lockable stainless steel toilet paper holders to provide jumbo roll tissue in toilet compartments;

¹ General time needed starting from recommending inclusion of a specific PT in the refurbishment programme to applying for funding, designing and implementing actual works. Upon determining the list of PTs to be included in the refurbishment programme, FEHD will apply for funding through ArchSD. After obtaining funding approval, ArchSD and its project consultants will conduct feasibility study having regard to the site conditions of each PT to be refurbished and provide design proposals. FEHD will also consult District Councils and the local communities on the project plans for the refurbishment works. After the project plans and design proposals are finalized, ArchSD will carry out pre-construction work (i.e. the tendering and detailed design stage) before proceeding with the refurbishment works. The actual time required to complete a project depends on its complexity, including the site conditions, site area, location, design, land allocation and views of the local community.

² Upon determining the list of PTs to be included in the facelifting programme, FEHD will conduct joint site inspection with ArchSD to decide on the scope of works before apply funding through ArchSD. After obtaining funding approval, ArchSD and its contractors will, in consultation with FEHD, work out the proposed materials and internal fitting-out as well as the works schedule. Upon finalizing the above, ArchSD will proceed with the facelifting works.

- (f) electric fans and blower fans, with timer installed, to keep floor dry;
- (g) LED lighting to replace conventional ones;
- (h) manhole covers of public toilets will be placed at inconspicuous locations and away from the toilet entrances as far as practicable; and
- (i) provision of drinking water dispensers outside PTs if circumstances permit.

Application of Technologies

9. In order to address the problems of inadequate ventilation and wet toilet floor arising from the humid weather in Hong Kong, on top of providing air exhaust fan in each toilet cubicle, FEHD is, in consultation with ArchSD and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), exploring to put on trial the following initiatives:

- (a) provision of air-conditioning systems and dehumidifiers, if feasible, to ameliorate the wet floor and odour problems as well as to keep temperature in PTs at an optimal level. FEHD will put on trial the above measure in the refurbishment works of Lan Kwai Fong Public Toilet; and
- (b) one stop provision of wash hand basin, soap dispenser and hand drier in the form of a Cabinet Wash Hand Basin System to alleviate the wet floor problem caused by water dripping by toilet users. Peak Tower Public Toilet, Tsuen Wan Multi-storey Carpark Building Public Toilet and Tak Wah Park Public Toilet are selected for trial use of the system in their refurbishment works.

10. FEHD is also exploring the application of technologies in PTs with reference to practices of other countries, including :

- (a) application of advance ozone technology on a trial basis for Sai Yee Street Garden Public Toilet in Mong Kok in end-March 2019. Ozonated water is injected into the flushing system to inhibit bacteria growth, and degrade odour molecules so as to abate odour and improve air quality; and
- (b) application of Nano Confined Catalytic Oxidation technology on a trial basis for Tsuen Wan Multi-storey Carpark Building Public Toilet and Tak Wah Park Public Toilet when their refurbishment works commence in Q1 2019, and Peak Tower Public Toilet and Southorn Centre Public Toilet in Wan Chai when their refurbishment works commence in Q4 2019. The technology decomposes odour molecules and pollutants into harmless water molecules and carbon dioxide so as to abate odour and improve air quality.

Enhancement of Toilet Management

11. To strengthen services management and enhance the overall hygiene condition of PTs, FEHD provides toilet attendant services in PTs with high utilization rates or at tourist spots to maintain their hygiene condition and ensure consumables are timely refilled and defective facilities promptly reported.

12. On top of routine cleansing services, FEHD also set up dedicated deep cleansing teams starting from 1 March 2019 to perform regular deep cleansing services for PTs with high utilization rates. Such dedicated deep cleansing teams will be extended to all PTs upon renewal of street cleansing services contracts starting from mid-2019.

13. FEHD staff conduct daily inspection to check PT facilities for repair and maintenance. If minor defects are detected, such as replacement of light bulb or light tube, cleansing service contractor would carry out repair or replacement works within 24 hours. For more complicated defects, FEHD staff will initiate repair requests to ArchSD or EMSD³ to arrange timely repair works. FEHD will also discuss with the two departments from time to time to enhance communication, fine-tune the workflow and protocol, aiming for more efficient repair works of PT facilities.

14. As regards contract management, FEHD has in place a management mechanism for its outsourced cleansing services contracts. Performance standards, including scope of services, level of cleanliness and responsiveness are stipulated in the contracts. The tender documents also stipulate the minimum requirements on manpower, work shifts and frequency of services according to operational needs. FEHD staff will check whether the contractors have complied with the cleansing services contracts through site inspections, surprise checks and examination of job records. In the event of any irregularities, defaults or non-compliance with contract provisions in the delivery of PT cleansing services, FEHD will take follow-up actions, including the issue of verbal and written warnings, default notices and deduction of monthly payment.

15. Additional dedicated staff are deployed to step up surprise inspections and monitor contractors' performance, including surprise inspections of cleansing services and facilities in various districts, covering facilities and cleansing services of PTs.

Public Education

16. In addition to hardware improvement and enhancement of cleansing services, civic mindedness on the importance of toilet hygiene as well as the proper use of toilet

³ FEHD, ArchSD and EMSD have an established mechanism for repair requests. If any defect (such as dilapidated ceiling painting or mal-functioned hand drier) is identified during inspection of PT, FEHD staff will make a repair request to ArchSD or EMSD for timely repair works, and properly record the request.

facilities are equally vital in upkeeping cleanliness of PTs. Through strengthened health educational and promotional activities, FEHD appeals to the public for collaborative efforts in enhancing the cleanliness and hygiene of PTs.

17. FEHD has set up health education promotional booths on trial for disseminating messages on the importance of toilet hygiene as well as the proper use of toilet facilities at prominent locations of some PTs to strengthen public education. As the trial programme is effective, FEHD will extend it to other suitable PTs. In addition, FEHD will continue to make use of the Facebook and Instagram pages of Keep Clean Ambassador Ah Tak as well as other publicity materials to appeal to the public for being civic-minded and considerate when using PT facilities.

Conclusion

18. We will review from time to time the progress of the refurbishment programme and effectiveness of the above measures. Where required, we will increase the number of PTs to be refurbished and introduce other enhancement measures for PTs so as to improve their cleanliness and hygiene.

Advice Sought

19. Members are invited to provide comments to the above measures.

Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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Scope of Works for Full-scale Refurbishment

Refurbishment works include:

- (a) Outlook design (neat and decent);
- (b) General layout (spacious and comfortable);
- (c) Floor tiles and wall tiles (using larger tiles);
- (d) Lighting (natural lighting be adopted as far as possible and ensure adequate lighting);
- (e) Ventilation system (raised roofing, convection windows, oscillating fans and exhaust fans, etc.)
- (f) Piping, drainage and flushing water tanks, and auto-sensor type flushing system for urinals concealed;
- (g) Ratio of number of female cubicles to male cubicles be increased to 2:1;
- (h) Adequate facilities such as hand dryer, toilet paper, hand soap and automatic air-refreshener;
- (i) Addition of facilities such as coat hook, rack/shelf, emergency alarm bell, baby changing counter, baby rest and water closet and wash hand basin at children-height level; and
- (j) If circumstances permit, provision of –
 - i. Facilities which are senior-friendly, including handgrip rail, priority cubicle near entrance and barrier free facilities;
 - ii. Accessible unisex toilet;
 - iii. Universal toilet⁴; and
 - iv. Attendant room, with power sockets, lockers, electric fans, ventilation, lighting and exhaust fans installed, for toilets with toilet attendant.

The outlook and façade of public toilets will also be refurbished if needed, such as repainting of external walls and replacement of wall tiles, etc. According to individual public toilet's situation, feature or thematic wall would be adopted.

⁴ FEHD plans to provide universal toilet in 5 new PT / newly refurbished PT in 2019.

Scope of Works for Facelifting

Facelifting works include:

- (a) Replacement of aged facilities and installation of new facilities;
- (b) Repainting of ceiling;
- (c) Replacement of cubicle partitions, wall tiles and floor tiles; and
- (d) Repainting or replacement of piping, conduits and water pipes.