

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)764/19-20
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 27 April 2020, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
- Members absent** : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
- Public Officers attending** : **For item IV**

Mr WONG Kam-sing, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Environment

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP
Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Ms Daisy LO
Assistant Director (Nature Conservation)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Patrick LAI
Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

For item V

Mrs Vicki KWOK, JP
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Environmental Protection Department

Ms Daisy LO
Assistant Director (Nature Conservation)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Simon CHAN
Assistant Director (Conservation)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Jackie YIP
Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

For item VI

Mr TSE Chin-wan, BBS, JP
Under Secretary for the Environment

Mr CHEN Che-kong
Assistant Director (Water Policy)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Anthony FOK
Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Sewerage
Infrastructure)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr LEUNG Wing-yuen
Assistant Director/Sewage Services
Drainage Services Department

Mr CHOI Chun-ming
Principal Project Coordinator/Special Duty
Drainage Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel SHEK
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mr Jason KONG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)396/ — Minutes of the meeting held on
19-20 16 December 2019)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2019 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)411/ — List of follow-up actions
19-20(01)

LC Paper No. CB(1)530/ — List of outstanding items for
19-20(01) discussion)

3. The Chairman advised that the Administration proposed the following items for discussion at the next regular meeting scheduled for

Action

Monday, 25 May 2020, at 2:30 pm:

- (a) management of waste plastics; and
- (b) implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Hong Kong.

4. Mr HUI Chi-fung considered that some items in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion should be given higher priority than the two items proposed above and the three items to be discussed at this meeting, as there were wider public concerns on those items. He also pointed out that some items proposed by members had been included in the list for considerable time but the timings for their discussion had yet to be confirmed. He therefore asked how the Panel's outstanding items for discussion were prioritized; and whether the Chairman would review the order of items with the Administration, so that items of wider public concern could be discussed at the few remaining Panel meetings in the current legislative session.

5. The Chairman advised that at the beginning of the current legislative session, he and the Deputy Chairman discussed the Panel's work plan with the Administration's representatives. The Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion was subsequently updated to reflect the outcome of the discussion, and the list at that time already included the five items in question. As members were aware, several regular meetings in the current legislative session had been rescheduled due to the COVID-19 outbreak, thus affecting the work progress of the Panel. The three items to be discussed at this meeting were deferred from the meeting originally scheduled for 23 March 2020.

6. At the Chairman's invitation to respond to Mr HUI Chi-fung's further question, the Clerk said that the item of "Enhancing the recreation and education potential of country parks" was proposed by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman at the work plan meeting with the Administration. As a usual practice, the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion was updated from time to time having regard to various factors, including the Administration's readiness to report the issues concerned to the Panel. Should there be requests from members on reprioritizing the outstanding items for discussion, the Secretariat would discuss with the Chairman and/or the Administration accordingly.

7. Mr HUI Chi-fung suggested that discussion on the items of "Food waste collection and delivery arrangements" and "Review on measures to manage external lighting" should be given priority. The Chairman and the Administration took note of Mr HUI's suggestion.

Action

8. Members did not object to the discussion of the two Administration's proposed items mentioned in paragraph 3 above at the next regular meeting.

IV. Enhancing the recreation and education potential of country parks

LC Paper No. CB(1)461/ — Administration's paper on
19-20(02) "Enhancing the Recreation and
Education Potential of Country
Parks"

LC Paper No. CB(1)461/ — Updated background brief on
19-20(03) "Nature conservation in Hong Kong"
prepared by the Legislative Council
Secretariat)

LC Paper No. CB(1)530/ — Submission from WWF-Hong Kong
19-20(02) (English version only))

Briefing by the Administration

9. The Secretary for the Environment ("SEN") advised that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") had commissioned a consultancy study in 2017 on enhancement of the recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas (i.e. areas designated as such under the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208)). The consultants formulated four enhancement proposals as follows: (a) enhancement of existing facilities, (b) open museums for historical relic appreciation, (c) tree top adventure, and (d) glamping sites and eco-lodges. According to the results of a public consultation, all four enhancement proposals received positive feedback from over 80% of the respondents. Having considered the complexity of each enhancement proposal and the lead time required, AFCD would implement the proposals in stages.

10. Following SEN's introductory remarks, the Assistant Director (Country and Marine Parks), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AD(C&MP)/AFCD") briefed members on AFCD's plan to take forward the enhancement proposals, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation materials were circulated to members on 27 April 2020, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)567/19-20(01).)

Action

Discussion

Implementation timetable for enhancement projects

11. Mr Tony TSE and the Chairman considered it imperative for the Administration to set targets and implementation timetables for the projects on enhancing the recreation and education potential of country parks in line with the four enhancement proposals, with a view to ensuring their timely and effective implementation.

12. Mr Kenneth LAU expressed support for the enhancement proposals in question and called on the Administration to implement them expeditiously.

13. SEN responded that relevant government bureaux/departments would proactively seek the required resources for timely implementation of the enhancement projects.

Water filling stations

14. Ms Tanya CHAN supported the installation of water filling stations in country parks and suggested that relevant government departments step up efforts in this regard.

15. Mr CHU Hoi-dick asked about the number of flushing toilets with potable water supply in country parks, and the timetable (if any) for installing additional water filling stations at those locations.

16. AD(C&MP)/AFCD advised that the project on installing water filling stations in country parks had commenced since about a year ago. AFCD had so far installed 15 water filling stations under the project, at strategic locations such as the starting and connecting points of hiking trails. He explained that water filling stations could only be installed at locations with fresh water mains and electricity supply. Some flushing toilets in country parks were supplied with stream water but not potable water, i.e. at locations without fresh water mains. Some of those flushing toilets were situated at high altitudes, and it would be impracticable to maintain adequate water pressure for supply of potable water to the locations concerned. AFCD would continue to explore with the Water Supplies Department ("WSD") suitable locations in country parks for installing more water filling stations.

Action

Advance booking system for popular campsites

17. Noting that AFCD was formulating a pilot scheme for advance booking system at the Twisk Campsite, Mr Kenneth LAU enquired about the quotas for local and overseas visitors respectively, how the identities of campsite users would be verified on site, and how the Administration would prevent unauthorized transfer of the right to use the campsite.

18. AD(C&MP)/AFCD responded that AFCD's preliminary plan was to set up a real-name advance booking system for the Twisk Campsite, under which visitors would need to provide information on their identity cards or travel documents at the time of booking. On-site staff would be deployed for verification of visitors' identities, and only the persons who had made the bookings would be allowed to use the campsite. The quotas for local and non-local visitors had yet to be determined but the consideration was that the quota for non-local visitors would not be larger than that for local visitors.

19. The Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation ("DAFC") took note of a suggestion from Ms Tanya CHAN that the Administration should make reference to overseas experiences and consider the feasibility of setting visitor quotas for some very popular hiking trails, with a view to enhancing nature conservation in the areas covered.

Tree top adventure facilities

20. Mr Kenneth LEUNG expressed reservation about the proposal of installing tree top adventure facilities in country parks. He pointed out that the vegetation of Hong Kong's country parks might not be suitable for installation of large-scale tree top adventure facilities. However, if only small-scale facilities were provided, they might appear to be less attractive than other similar adventure facilities in Hong Kong. He was also concerned about the potential impact of tree top adventure facilities on country parks' ecological environment; and how the Administration would ensure the facilities' safe operation, including whether on-site staff would be deployed for their management, and the contingency arrangements during inclement weather.

21. The Chairman enquired about the estimated number of tree top adventure facilities to be installed in country parks.

22. DAFC explained that suggestions related to installing tree top adventure facilities in country parks were raised by many members of the public during the public engagement activities organized for the consultancy study. The Administration noted that there was a wide variety of tree top adventure facilities. During the MacLehose Trail 40th Anniversary Celebration

Action

Programme organized in 2019, AFCD provided small-scale tree climbing and ziplining facilities at Shing Mun Country Park, and they were well received. AFCD would take forward the proposal of installing tree top adventure facilities in country parks prudently. Feasibility studies would be carried out to study the ecological impact, mode of operation, safety measures, etc. of such facilities.

Further suggestions on enhancing country parks' potential

23. The Chairman expressed concern that the enhancement proposals under discussion did not cover the upgrading of infrastructure in country parks, in particular transport infrastructure. In this connection, he suggested that:

- (a) some existing roads in country parks be widened and new roads be built to increase the carrying capacities of country parks and enable quicker hill fire response;
- (b) a park-and-ride system be introduced for some country parks so that people with special needs could visit them more conveniently. Such a system might comprise a large-scale underground car park near a country park, and a fleet of small environmentally-friendly vehicles for public use within the country park;
- (c) a new road be built to enhance the connection between Tai Mo Shan and the area around Lam Tsuen in Tai Po; and
- (d) guided tour services in country parks be expanded for attracting more visitors and creating job opportunities.

24. Referring to a question he raised at a Council meeting in 2013, Mr Tony TSE called on the Administration to enhance the control and management of country parks for better protection of natural environment, and enhance manpower training in relation to country park management and guided tour services with a view to enhancing the country parks' international reputation. He also remarked that the Audit Commission had in 2013 made recommendations on enhancing the educational activities in relation to conservation of country parks, but there was no mention in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)461/19-20(02)) whether AFCD had implemented those recommendations.

25. SEN responded that the Administration endeavoured to enhance country parks' facilities so as to make them more enjoyable for people in different age groups and with different needs. He remarked that as set out in the Supplement to The Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address, the Administration planned to develop Pak Tam Chung into a green tourism hub. For this purpose, AFCD

Action

would conduct a preliminary planning study for future development of Pak Tam Chung, which would include aspects such as transportation arrangements and talent development. DAFC advised that AFCD would consider Mr Tony TSE's suggestions above.

26. Ms Tanya CHAN suggested that natural-looking materials should be used as far as practicable for the construction of new facilities in country parks to harmonize with the setting thereat; and the Administration should adopt innovative designs for visitor centres in country parks.

27. DAFC responded that AFCD would consider Ms Tanya CHAN's suggestions, and pointed out that AFCD planned to review the provision of facilities and services in the existing country park visitor centres, with a view to enhancing interaction with visitors.

28. Mr CHU Hoi-dick remarked that he had formerly suggested to the Administration that Sai Kung Man Yee Road and the catchwaters in Tai Lam Country Park be designated as mountain bike trails, as the areas concerned were already developed and their use as mountain bike trails would have little ecological impact. He asked about the progress in this regard.

29. AD(C&MP)/AFCD responded that the impact of designation of mountain bike trails on other government users and public users of the roads and/or facilities concerned must be considered. WSD's work might be affected if the catchwaters in Tai Lam Country Park were designated as a mountain bike trail. Sai Kung Man Yee Road was open for use by taxis and public light buses, and as a part of MacLehose Trail Section 1, it was frequented by hikers. AFCD would continue to discuss with the Transport Department, WSD and other relevant government departments the feasibility of designating new mountain bike trails in country parks.

Environmental hygiene conditions in country parks

30. Ms Tanya CHAN called on the Administration to enhance public awareness of the importance of taking their own litter away after visiting country parks. She was especially concerned about the popular misconception that organic waste (such as food waste) was not harmful to natural environment, and hill fire hazards due to the littering of cigarette butts.

31. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that litter bins formerly placed along hiking trails in country parks had been removed in recent years as an initiative to encourage the public to take their own litter away after visiting country parks. As he observed that there were influxes of visitors to country parks recently following the COVID-19 outbreak, which gave rise to environmental hygiene

Action

problems, he asked about the following issues:

- (a) the manpower arrangements for maintaining environmental hygiene in country parks, including whether volunteers had been/would be routinely engaged for waste removal in country parks after peak seasons for outdoor activities and large-scale events taken place in country parks; and
- (b) whether the Administration would consider placing litter bins back at selected locations in country parks as appropriate to improve the environmental hygiene conditions at those locations.

32. Mr Kenneth LAU and Mr Tony TSE also expressed concerns about the environmental hygiene problems in country parks arising from the recent influxes of visitors. Mr LAU urged the Administration to increase the frequency of waste removal services in country parks and enhance public education on keeping country parks clean. Mr TSE opined that the Administration should carefully examine the carrying capacities of country parks when implementing the enhancement proposals.

33. In response to members' views and questions above, AD(C&MP)/AFCD said that AFCD had launched the "Take Your Litter Home" public education programme in country parks in 2015. All litter bins along hiking trails in country parks had been removed by late 2017 to tie in with the programme. Litter bins were still available at recreation sites in country parks, such as barbecue areas and campsites, as some waste including food waste would be inevitably generated during the activities thereat and users of these facilities might not be able to take all their litter away. There was no significant change in the manpower resources for cleaning of country parks in recent years. Apart from regular cleaning of recreation sites, cleaning staff were deployed to other areas of country parks, such as hiking trails and coastal areas, from time to time for removal of litter. For events proposed to be organized in country parks, AFCD would request the organizers to remove the waste generated from the events as a condition for granting the permits.

34. The Chairman enquired how the Administration would strengthen the cleaning of toilet facilities in country parks.

35. Mr HUI Chi-fung asked whether there were plans to convert existing aqua privies or portable toilets in country parks to flushing toilets and provide hand-washing facilities to the locations concerned, so as to better meet the needs of different types of visitors.

Action

36. DAFC and AD(C&MP)/AFCD advised that due to the lack of water supply, electricity supply, sewerage infrastructure and/or road access, some locations in country parks could only be equipped with aqua privies or portable toilets. The Administration had been studying how to enhance the designs of and desludging arrangements for such toilet facilities, with a view to improving their sanitary conditions and reducing odour nuisance. AD(C&MP)/AFCD added that portable toilets with exhaust fans powered by solar energy and container-type portable toilets had recently been set up at some locations in country parks to replace the conventional ones. As regards flushing toilets in country parks, their sanitary conditions were generally satisfactory. The Administration would allocate more manpower resources for cleaning of flushing toilets in country parks if necessary.

Hill fire prevention

37. Mr CHU Hoi-dick and Mr HUI Chi-fung sought information on the Administration's efforts to prevent hill fires. Mr HUI considered that public education on hill fire prevention should be strengthened.

38. DAFC and AD(C&MP)/AFCD responded that the Administration had been implementing a host of measures to prevent and handle hill fires in country parks, including surveillance from fire lookouts, devising a staff roster for quick hill fire response, enhancing surveillance during periods with higher hill fire risk (such as around the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals), promoting awareness of hill fire prevention to residents in rural villages and grave sweepers, etc. Such measures had effectively reduced the occurrence of hill fires. A few decades ago, there were about 100 to 200 incidents of hill fire in country parks each year. The annual number of incidents had dropped to about 20 to 30 in recent years. Meanwhile, AFCD had been experimenting with the use of new technologies to enhance hill fire detection. It would also continue to strengthen publicity and public education on hill fire prevention.

Proper behaviours when encountering wild animals

39. Mr HUI Chi-fung considered that the Administration should strengthen public education on proper behaviours when encountering wild animals in country parks. He enquired whether relevant information was displayed at campsites and in other areas of country parks frequented by visitors.

40. DAFC responded that AFCD had been providing the relevant information to the public through different communication channels, including TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest, distribution of pamphlets, posting education materials on AFCD websites and social media platforms as

Action

well as at country park visitor centres, etc.

Conclusion

41. The Chairman concluded that members generally supported the implementation of the proposals in question to enhance the recreation and education potential of country parks. He reiterated that the Administration should set an implementation timetable for the related enhancement projects.

V. Control of invasive alien species

LC Paper No. CB(1)461/ — Administration's paper on "Control
19-20(04) of Invasive Alien Species"

LC Paper No. CB(1)461/ — Updated background brief on
19-20(03) "Nature conservation in Hong Kong"
prepared by the Legislative Council
Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(1)465/ — Submission from Peng Chau
19-20(01) Reclamation Concern Group
(Chinese version only))

Briefing by the Administration

42. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) ("DDEP(2)") and the Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AD(C)/AFCD") briefed the Panel on the Administration's measures to manage invasive alien species ("IAS"). DDEP(2) remarked that under the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2021, the Administration would enhance the management of IAS with a comprehensive strategy to prevent their adverse impact on local ecology. AD(C)/AFCD then briefed members on the existing measures to control common IAS in Hong Kong, including *Mikania micrantha*, *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Sonneratia* species, red imported fire ant and house crow. He advised that the Administration had engaged a consultant in the setting up of a risk assessment protocol for IAS with reference to measures adopted in other places. Researches on IAS by universities and non-governmental organizations were also encouraged through funding support. The Administration would enhance publicity and public education on matters related to IAS to prevent their unintentional introductions into and establishment in the natural environment of Hong Kong.

Action

(*Post-meeting note*: The PowerPoint presentation materials were circulated to members on 27 April 2020, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)567/19-20(02).)

Discussion

43. Mr Tony TSE noted that the early detection and rapid response mechanism to be introduced would include long-term monitoring at high-risk locations. He enquired what locations were generally considered to have high risks of IAS introductions, how IAS introductions and establishment would be detected, and whether new technologies would be applied to facilitate monitoring.

44. AD(C)/AFCD explained that most unintentional introductions of IAS were through freights, and hence the high-risk locations were mainly ports of entry of goods. AFCD had been implementing a long-term monitoring programme, which included ecological surveys at various natural habitats in Hong Kong. This could assist in the detection of the presence of IAS in Hong Kong. AFCD would consider the need to strengthen monitoring at specific locations having regard to the results of IAS risk assessments in future.

45. Mr Tony TSE asked about the control measures targeting at IAS established in Hong Kong; how the effectiveness of such measures was evaluated; and whether there were timetables for eradication of such IAS.

46. AD(C)/AFCD responded that most alien species did not cause significant impact on local ecology. For the few alien species causing impact on local ecology or nuisance to people (i.e. IAS), the Administration had been taking control measures based on actual circumstances to minimize their impact. The effectiveness of IAS control measures was evaluated on a species-by-species basis, and experiences of other places showed that it was generally very difficult to eradicate IAS once they were established. Take the *Sonneratia* species as an example, they were first detected in Inner Deep Bay in 2000. They grew rapidly and were established in the local natural environment. Each year, AFCD removed about 10 000 to 15 000 *Sonneratia* trees in the mangroves and mudflats in Inner Deep Bay. As for house crow, since 2000, AFCD had been monitoring its population and distribution and carrying out nest removal as well as capture operations to control its population. The current number of house crows in Hong Kong was estimated to be 80 to 90. According to a study conducted by AFCD, if not for the control measures, the population of house crow in Hong Kong could be numbered in the hundreds or thousands.

47. The Chairman said that he was especially concerned about the ecological impact of *Mikania micrantha*, which obstructed the growth of or

Action

even killed other plants. He suggested that the Administration should consider engaging members of the public in the removal of invasive alien plant species such as *Mikania micrantha* and *Sonneratia*, through the provision of rewards based on the weight or number of plants removed.

48. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok shared the concern about the ecological impact of *Mikania micrantha*, and remarked that large areas of woodland along Tolo Highway appeared to be infested with the plant. He asked about the measures to control *Mikania micrantha*, and whether there was a comprehensive survey of the plant's distribution and ecological impact.

49. AD(C)/AFCD responded that:

- (a) AFCD would utilize its available resources efficiently for IAS control, with a view to minimizing the impacts of individual IAS on natural habitats;
- (b) *Mikania micrantha* was a pioneer plant species and mainly grew in low-lying areas with ample sunlight, such as derelict fields, roadsides and woodland fringes. It was less commonly found in areas of high degree of biodiversity, such as woodlands in country parks. Some native climbing plant species found on hillside slopes, such as *Bauhinia glauca*, were commonly mistaken as *Mikania micrantha*;
- (c) in Hong Kong, *Mikania micrantha* was usually cleared manually by using hand tools or mechanically by using brush cutters. While these were effective methods for controlling the population of *Mikania micrantha*, repeated clearing was generally necessary due to the fast-growing nature of the plant;
- (d) AFCD regularly monitored country parks, special areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and removed any *Mikania micrantha* upon detection. Other government departments, such as the Lands Department and Leisure and Cultural Services Department, also carried out appropriate vegetation maintenance measures, including removal of *Mikania micrantha*, for plants located in premises under their respective purviews. On private land, the responsibilities of *Mikania micrantha* removal rested with the relevant owners and property managers;
- (e) AFCD had issued a practice note to relevant government departments, landscape contractors and interested parties to provide them with technical guidance on the clearing of *Mikania*

Action

micrantha; and

- (f) removal of *Sonneratia* trees was relatively difficult as they grew in mangroves and mudflats, which were hard-to-reach places. At present, AFCD appointed a contractor for removal of *Sonneratia* trees at appropriate times during low tides.

50. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok further enquired whether *Bauhinia glauca* might adversely affect natural habitats. AD(C)/AFCD responded that there was no evidence that *Bauhinia glauca* had significant impact on the local ecology.

51. The Chairman asked whether information on *Mikania micrantha* and the aforesaid practice note issued by AFCD had been made available to the public on AFCD's website. AD(C)/AFCD replied in the affirmative.

VI. Provision of sewerage networks in Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun

(LC Paper No. CB(1)461/ — Administration's paper on "Provision
19-20(05) of sewerage network in Tseung
Kwan O and Tuen Mun")

Briefing by the Administration

52. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Assistant Director/Sewage Services, Drainage Services Department ("AD/SS/DSD") briefed the Panel on the Administration's proposals to upgrade the following projects to Category A for the provision of sewerage networks in parts of the unsewered areas in Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun:

- (a) 4362DS – Sewerage for Ma Yau Tong Village, Tseung Kwan O, at an estimated cost of \$179.4 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices; and
- (b) part of 4346DS – Upgrading of Tuen Mun sewerage, phase 1, at an estimated cost of \$431.2 million in MOD prices.

(*Post-meeting note:* The PowerPoint presentation materials were circulated to members on 27 April 2020, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)567/19-20(03).)

Action

Discussion

53. The Chairman reminded members of the requirements under Rule 83A and Rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure.

54. Mr Tony TSE said that he supported in principle the Administration's submission of the above proposals to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC"). He asked about the ratios of compensation for land resumption and site clearance to the overall costs of the two projects.

55. AD/SS/DSD responded that the estimated amounts of compensation for land resumption and site clearance were about \$800,000 for the sewerage project in Ma Yau Tong Village, Tseung Kwan O, and about \$70 million for the sewerage project in Tuen Mun. The amounts would be taken into account in the funding applications for the above projects. In response to Mr Tony TSE's further question, the Under Secretary for the Environment ("USEN") pointed out that in both projects, site clearance would not affect any household, but would affect some structures such as fences.

56. Mr Tony TSE asked whether the Administration had considered incorporating the proposed sewerage works into other public works projects to be carried out near the village areas concerned (if any), with a view to expediting the construction works. USEN advised that branch sewers were proposed to be constructed under the two projects in question. The project requirements for the construction of branch sewers in rural areas were different from those for the construction of trunk sewers in larger-scale development projects.

57. Mr Kenneth LAU declared that he was residing in Tuen Mun, a representative of Lung Kwu Tang in the Tuen Mun Rural Committee and serving as the rural committee's chairman, and an ex-officio member of the Tuen Mun District Council. He expressed support for the proposed projects and called on the Administration to commence the construction works as early as possible. He also appealed for expeditious implementation of other sewerage projects in unsewered rural areas, so as to improve the environmental hygiene conditions in those areas and prevent the transmission of diseases such as COVID-19.

58. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that he strongly supported the proposed projects. In view of the worsening economic conditions, he shared the view that the Administration should implement other sewerage projects in rural areas expeditiously for the benefits of the residents concerned, as well as for stimulating the economy and promoting employment in the relevant sectors. He

Action

and Mr Kenneth LAU sought information on the Administration's progress of providing public sewerage systems in rural areas.

59. USEN responded that:

- (a) the priority of public sewerage projects in unsewered rural areas was determined having regard to the populations and extent of pollution in the rural areas, the rural areas' distances from the nearest trunk sewers, residents' opinions, etc.;
- (b) there were about 1 030 rural areas in the territory. Among which, 250 had already been provided with public sewerage systems. The public sewerage projects for 280 rural areas were being carried out or had been included in the public works programme, and the projects for another 170 rural areas were in the preliminary planning stage. In other words, the Administration's public sewerage programme had already covered about two-thirds of the rural areas;
- (c) the Administration endeavoured to provide public sewerage systems in unsewered rural areas as early as possible. It generally took a long time to plan and implement such sewerage projects because of the need to discuss project designs with representatives of all affected households; and
- (d) in the past two years, the Administration had consulted the Panel on a number of sewerage projects. The costs of such sewerage projects totalled about \$30 billion, of which about \$10 billion was related to sewerage projects in rural areas.

60. The Chairman suggested that when the Administration consulted the Panel on sewerage projects in future, it should provide members with an overview of completed and ongoing projects on enhancing Hong Kong's sewerage infrastructure, and the time frames and costs of the projects.

Conclusion

61. The Chairman concluded that members supported the Administration's submission of the proposals in question to PWSC.

Action

VII. Any other business

62. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:21 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
19 June 2020