

**Bills Committee Formed on 16 October 2020 to Study the Waste Disposal
(Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018**

**List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion
at the meeting on 25 February 2021**

This note sets out our response regarding the follow-up actions arising from the discussion at the meeting of the Bills Committee held on 25 February 2021.

- (a) *the organization chart with number of posts of relevant divisions under the Environmental Protection Department that undertake duties in relation to waste management; and the estimated number and annual salary staff cost (including civil service, non-civil service and outsourced posts) in relevant government departments required for the implementation of MSW charging;*

2. There are in total six divisions under the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) that are responsible for undertaking duties in relation to waste management. They are supervised by two Deputy Directors and each division is led by an Assistant Director.

3. Waste management involves a whole range of complex and heavy responsibilities. As of 31 March 2021, these six divisions are supported by a total of 649 civil service posts and 310 non-civil service posts. The main duties by different areas include:

- (i) Policies and regulations: The legislative work for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) charging; and the implementation and formulation of various Producer Responsibility Schemes (PRS) (for example PRS on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, PRS on Glass Beverage Containers, new PRS on Plastic Beverage Containers, etc.).
- (ii) Industry support: The supervision of Recycling Fund; the promotion of green procurement; and provision of support to infrastructure including the EcoPark.
- (iii) Promotion of waste separation and recycling as well as education and publicity: The management and promotion of GREEN@COMMUNITY (currently comprising of 9 Recycling Stations, 22 Recycling Stores and over 100 Recycling Spots); stewardship of the Green Outreach to provide on-site recycling

support; and the implementation of various collection services for recyclables, including the Pilot Scheme on Reverse Vending Machines, the Pilot Scheme on Collection and Recycling Services of Plastic Recyclable Materials, the Waste Paper Collection and Recycling Services, and the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection.

- (iv) Fostering of resources circulation and infrastructure: The management, planning and development of waste management infrastructure, including landfills, refuse transfer stations, restored landfills, Organic Resources Recovery Centre (O·PARK), Sludge Treatment Facility (T·PARK), Chemical Waste Treatment Centre, the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1 (I·PARK), and the Food Waste/Sewage Sludge Anaerobic Co-digestion Trial Scheme at sewage treatment works, etc.

4. Relevant organisation chart and the number of posts are provided at **Annex I**.

5. As the administration authorities of MSW charging, the EPD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will require substantial manpower to undertake a wide range of heavy non-enforcement responsibilities. These include developing the infrastructure required for implementing MSW charging, as well as mapping out and administering the charging arrangements. The EPD has created 50 non-directorate civil service posts responsible for the planning and the implementation of the work related to MSW charging, including publicity, education and relevant public engagement activities; the development of manufacturing, inventory and distribution system for designated garbage bags/labels after the implementation of MSW charging; and the establishment of registration and accounting system for the charging by weight through “gate-fee”. These posts involve a notional annual salary cost of \$36 million. The FEHD has created 5 non-directorate civil service posts to support the work related to MSW charging, involving a notional annual salary cost of \$4.17 million.

6. For most of the outsourced service contracts and subvented projects, the EPD only specifies the types of services to be provided by the contractor or subvented organisation and the level of services to be achieved, etc. Generally speaking, outsourced contracts or subvented projects managed by the EPD do not specify the total number of staff required to be employed by the contractor or the subvented organisation. The number of staff employed by the contractor or subvented organisation may vary with regard to service needs.

- (b) *whether the notice for commencing the operation of the Bill (if it is passed) will be scrutinized by the Legislative Council through*

negative or positive vetting procedure;

7. As we have reiterated at the Bills Committee previously, the legislation would not take effect immediately after the passage of the Bill.

8. To facilitate a gradual adaptation to MSW charging and drive behavioural changes among the community, a preparatory period of 12-18 months is proposed to be put in place after the passage of the Bill in order to provide appropriate time for the Government, various stakeholders and members of the public to prepare for the implementation of MSW charging. We understand Members' concerns about the timing of implementing MSW charging, and agree that a preparatory period of 18 months will be put in place as a basic arrangement. During the preparatory period, we will pay close attention to various aspects of the community, particularly the progress of economic recovery after the pandemic, and the level of preparation among different stakeholders, etc. We may extend the preparatory period as appropriate if considered necessary.

9. As regards the actual commencement dates of the legislation, the Government will report to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) on the progress of the preparatory period, and consult them on the commencement dates of the legislation at an opportune time. Upon obtaining the support of the EA Panel, the subsidiary legislations in relation to the relevant commencement notices will be published in the Gazette subject to negative vetting procedure of the LegCo.

(c) details of the Administration's stepped-up efforts to combat illegal disposal of construction and demolition waste, and statistics to demonstrate the effectiveness of such efforts; and

10. Tackling illegal disposal of construction waste is one of the key enforcement tasks of the EPD. The EPD has been maintaining close liaison with the respective Government departments through inter-departmental collaboration, including exchange of intelligence, sharing of information and joint meetings etc., to collectively monitor the overall illegal waste disposal situation and make concerted efforts to combat illegal disposal activities according to respective Government departments' authorities and legislations.

11. In order to step up efforts in monitoring and combating illegal disposal of construction waste, the EPD has been progressively installing surveillance camera systems at about 160 locations of illegal waste disposal in the territory since 2016. The systems operate round-the-clock and under all weather conditions. The EPD makes use of the technologies of the systems to facilitate enforcement and enhance the deterrent effect. The EPD also reviews

the enforcement strategy from time to time and flexibly deploys the surveillance camera systems to cover different locations so as to maximise the enforcement effectiveness.

12. In the meantime, apart from the manpower deployment for the daily integrated enforcement duties, the EPD has set up 4 additional dedicated enforcement teams comprising a total of 16 staff members to conduct proactive patrols against waste disposal at various districts and handle the relevant complaints, which help expedite collection of evidence and referrals to relevant Government departments for waste clearance.

13. Furthermore, the EPD has extensively applied Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and launched the “Fly-tipping Spotter App” in March 2020. Field inspectors can report abandoned construction waste via the app during their patrols while photos and locations of the abandoned construction waste can be captured and uploaded onto the GIS platform instantly. This facilitates relevant Government departments, such as Highways Department, to follow up and arrange prompt clearance.

14. The numbers of prosecutions by the EPD against illegal disposal of waste in the past 3 years are as follows:

	Year		
	2018	2019	2020
Number of prosecutions			
(1) Number of convictions by the court	175	178	278
(2) Number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued	246	173	214

15. The number of complaints relating to illegal waste disposal received by the EPD in 2020 has been reduced by 29% and 13% respectively as compared with 2018 and 2019. The amount of construction waste illegally disposed of in public places and on government land cleared in 2017 was about 9,000 tonnes. With stepped-up enforcement actions taken by the EPD, the amount has been reduced gradually to about 4 900 tonnes in 2018 and 3 800 tonnes in 2019 respectively, and 3 300 tonnes in 2020 which has been significantly reduced by about 63% from the peak. Apart from continuing to step up enforcement work, the EPD has launched a trade-led pilot scheme on collection and recycling of construction waste at district level with the support of the Recycling Fund in February 2021. The first pilot project under the scheme has been rolled out in Sham Shui Po District. Through the setting up of convenient collection points for construction waste and the application of smart skips, the pilot project has adopted smart technologies (e.g. HoHoSkips mobile apps for booking the service) to collect construction waste generated

from small-scale renovation works, with a view to providing convenient, efficient and cost-effective collection service for construction waste and thereby reducing illegal dumping of construction waste at source. It is expected that the problem of illegal dumping of construction waste will be further alleviated in the future.

- (d) *details of the Administration's waste management strategies by the following aspects: (i) treatment methods of different types of waste or recyclable; (ii) the possible outlets for major types of recyclable collected through relevant collection schemes or processed by relevant waste treatment infrastructures; (iii) initial costs and annual operating costs of relevant schemes/waste treatment infrastructures; and (iv) and cost-effectiveness of such schemes/infrastructures in reducing waste disposal.*

16. The Environment Bureau announced the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035 (“the Blueprint”) on 8 February 2021. Setting out the vision of “Waste Reduction • Resources Circulation • Zero Landfill”, the Blueprint outlines the strategies, goals and measures to tackle the challenge of waste management up to 2035. Under this vision, the Government will work with the industry and the community to move towards two main goals. The medium-term goal is to gradually reduce the per capita MSW disposal rate by 40 to 45 per cent and raise the recovery rate to about 55 per cent by implementing MSW charging, while the long-term goal is to move away from the reliance on landfills for direct waste disposal by developing adequate waste-to-energy facilities. To achieve the above goals, the Government will promote six major areas of action, namely Waste Reduction, Waste Separation, Resources Circulation, Industry Support, Innovation and Cooperation, and Education and Publicity, leading the advancement of various policies and measures as well as building a circular economy and a sustainable green living environment.

17. MSW charging is the main driving force behind waste reduction which helps drive enterprises and the public to practise waste reduction and recycling proactively. Therefore, whether the targets on waste reduction and recycling under the Blueprint could be achieved depends on the implementation of MSW charging, together with other waste reduction and recycling initiatives, including the implementation of new PRSs, expansion of recycling network and services, the construction of new waste management facilities, and enhanced publicity and public education, etc.

18. Facing the challenges of a downturn in the external recycling market, the current high level of waste disposal, and the scarcity of our land resources, etc, we have to make greater efforts in mobilising the entire community to practise waste reduction and implement measures for achieving waste reduction

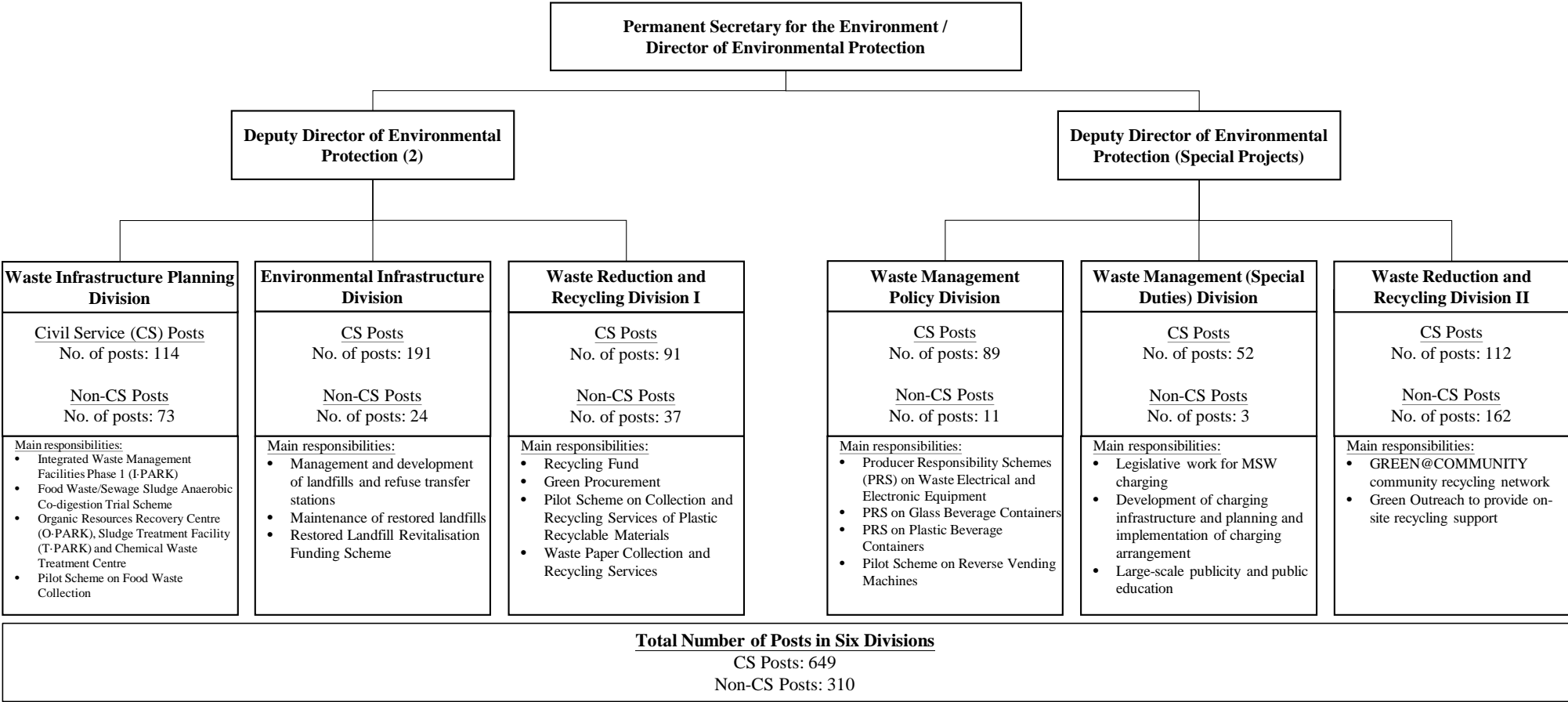
and recycling on a considerably larger scale, thereby promoting transformation of waste into resources. This helps build a circular economy, create job opportunities, strengthen green recovery in Hong Kong after the pandemic and achieve decarbonisation to combat climate change in parallel. In the long run, we have to formulate strategies to progressively move away from over-reliance on landfills.

19. Waste-to-resources/energy facilities have become an international trend for efficient waste management and it is also the development direction of waste management in Hong Kong. Waste-to-resources/energy facilities can reduce waste disposal at landfills, and also generate electricity or convert waste into other useful resources. This will reduce the use of fossil fuels for electricity generation and help to reduce carbon emissions in response to climate change.

20. Details and expenses of waste disposal and recycling based on the waste statistics for 2019 are provided at **Annex II**.

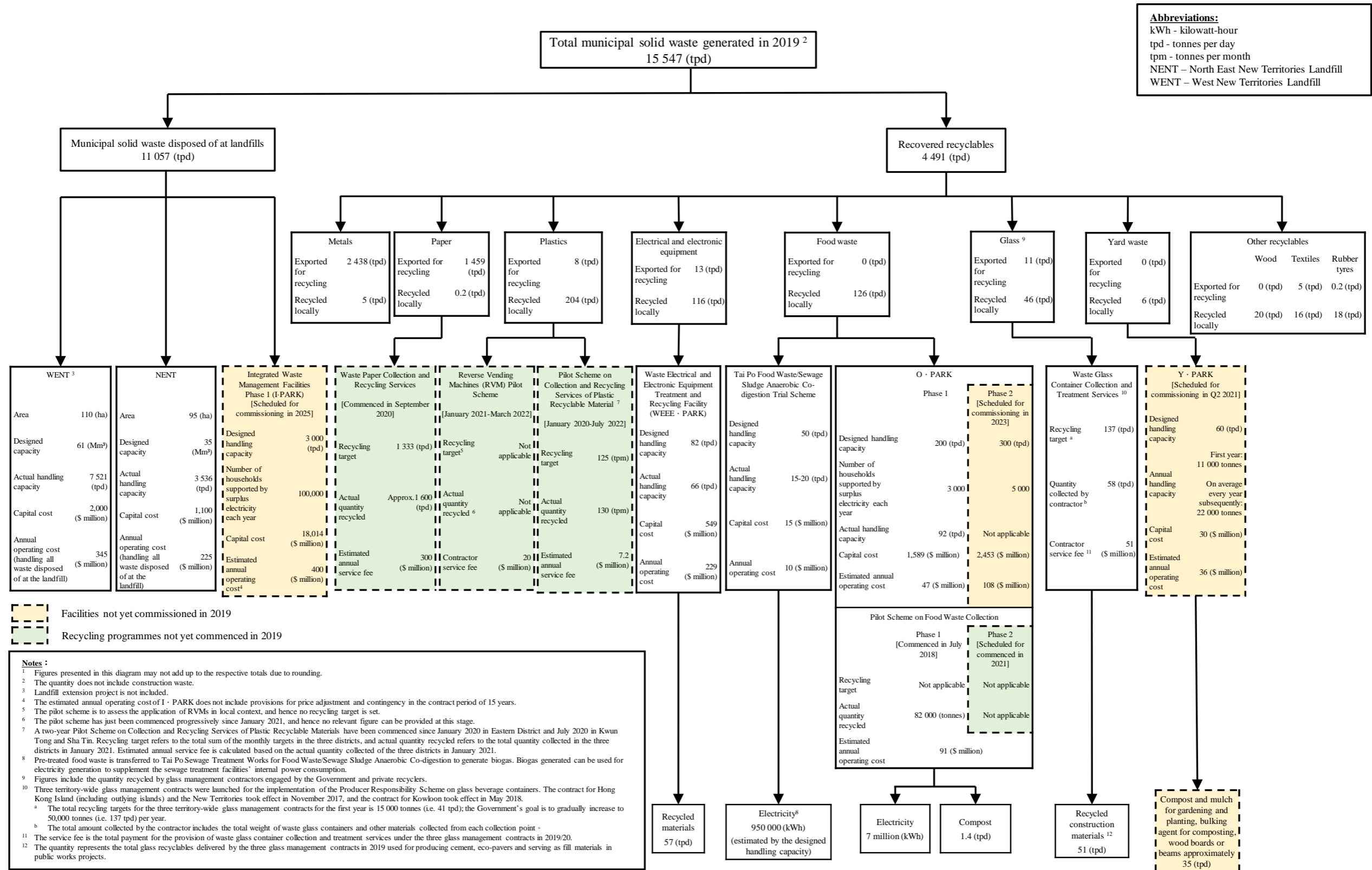
Environmental Protection Department
May 2021

**Organisation chart of waste-related divisions of Environmental Protection Department
(As at 31 March 2021)**



Disposal and Recycling of Municipal Solid Waste in Hong Kong¹ (Based on 2019 Statistics for reference)

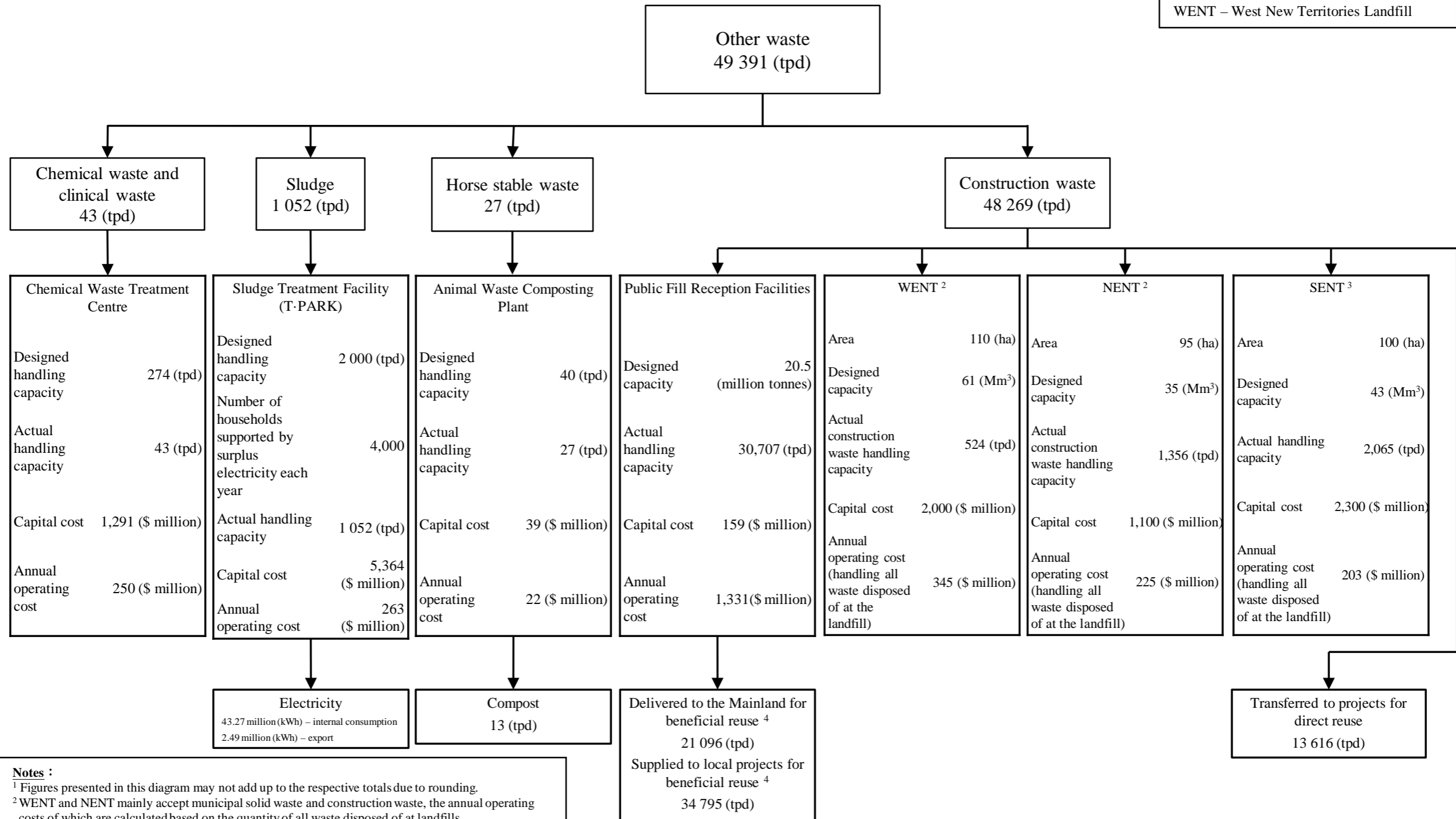
Abbreviations:
 kWh - kilowatt-hour
 tpd - tonnes per day
 tpm - tonnes per month
 NENT – North East New Territories Landfill
 WENT – West New Territories Landfill



Disposal and Recycling of Other Waste¹

(Based on 2019 Statistics for reference)

Abbreviations:
 kWh - kilowatt-hour
 tpd - tonnes per day
 NENT – North East New Territories Landfill
 SENT – South East New Territories Landfill
 WENT – West New Territories Landfill



Notes :
¹ Figures presented in this diagram may not add up to the respective totals due to rounding.
² WENT and NENT mainly accept municipal solid waste and construction waste, the annual operating costs of which are calculated based on the quantity of all waste disposed of at landfills.
³ Since 6 January 2016, SENT has been designated to accept construction waste only.
⁴ Part of the quantity is supplied by public fill stockpiled at public fill reception facilities.