

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)467/20-21

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/EA

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 23 November 2020, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP (Chairman)
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-keung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending : **For item V**

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

Mrs Millie NG, JP
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)
Environmental Protection Department

Dr Samuel CHUI, JP
Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure)
Environmental Protection Department

Mr Alfred NG
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Restored
Landfill Revitalisation Group)²
Environmental Protection Department

For item VI

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

Ms Bella MUI
Assistant Director (Nature Conservation)
Environmental Protection Department

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

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

Other persons attending : **For item V**

Mr LOW Chen-yang
Deputy Head (Community Services)
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Ms Brenda CHUNG
Senior Section Manager (Youth and Family)
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Ms Karen CHAN
Architect (Construction)
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Mr Michael SIN
Executive Director
Spence Robinson Limited

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

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

Miss Bowie LAM
Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

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I. Election of Deputy Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session. Mr SHIU Ka-fai nominated Mr Paul TSE and Ms Elizabeth QUAT seconded the nomination. Mr Paul TSE accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Mr Paul TSE was declared Deputy Chairman of the Panel.

II. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)99/ — Minutes of the meeting held on
20-21 16 October 2020)

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2020 were confirmed.

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III. Information papers issued since the meeting on 22 June 2020

3. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the meeting on 22 June 2020:

(LC Paper No. CB(1)869/ 19-20(01) — Information paper on "Report on the Cleaner Production Partnership Programme" provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)59/ 20-21(01) — Letter dated 19 October 2020 from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen suggesting discussion on enhancing quality of coastal waters of Victoria Harbour (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)182/ 20-21(01) — Letter dated 5 November 2020 from Hon Elizabeth QUAT suggesting issues to be discussed by the Panel (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)232/ 20-21(01) — Submission from WWF-Hong Kong regarding the conservation of Chinese white dolphins)

4. The Chairman advised that Mr Tony TSE and Ms Elizabeth QUAT had suggested in their respective letters (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)59/20-21(01) and CB(1)182/20-21(01)) discussion on "Enhancing quality of coastal waters of Victoria Harbour" by the Panel. Currently, the item was tentatively scheduled for discussion in the second quarter of 2021. At the Panel's work plan meeting on 3 November 2020, as requested by the Chairman, the Administration advised that it would consider advancing the timing of discussion.

5. The Chairman also said that Ms Elizabeth QUAT had suggested in LC Paper No. CB(1)182/20-21(01) discussion on various matters relating to waste management. According to the general direction agreed at the said work plan meeting, the Chairman advised members to ask questions on those matters during discussion on the item of "Waste Management Strategies for Hong Kong" and, subject to discussion outcomes, the Panel would consider the need to incorporate individual topics into the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

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IV. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)226/ — List of outstanding items for discussion)
20-21(01)

6. The Chairman advised that the briefing by the Secretary for the Environment on the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address had been tentatively scheduled for 15 December 2020. He suggested that the Panel's regular meeting originally scheduled for 21 December 2020 be rescheduled to be held on 15 December 2020, so that discussion on "Waste Management Strategies for Hong Kong" could take place at the same meeting. Members did not raise objection.

(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, the item "Waste Management Strategies for Hong Kong" had been deferred to a future meeting, and the Panel would discuss "Voluntary Scheme for Phasing Out Personal Care and Cosmetic Products Containing Microbeads" instead at the meeting on 15 December 2020 (vide LC Paper No. CB(1)333/20-21 issued on 7 December 2020). As the COVID-19 outbreak in Hong Kong had been getting more severe, the Chairman had subsequently directed that an informal meeting by videoconferencing be conducted on 28 December 2020 to receive the policy briefing (vide LC Paper No. CB(1)379/20-21 issued on 17 December 2020).)

7. The Chairman drew members' attention to the Administration's suggestions that the items of "Noise pollution" and "Review of the environmental impact assessment system" be deleted from the list of outstanding items for discussion. Members did not object to the suggestions.

V. Management of restored landfills

(LC Paper No. CB(1)226/ — Administration's paper on "8002QE – Restored Landfill Revitalisation Funding Scheme – E-Co Village at Lot B of Tseung Kwan O Stage I Landfill")

LC Paper No. CB(1)226/ — Background brief on "Management of restored landfills" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

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Briefing by the Administration

8. The Under Secretary for the Environment ("USEN") advised that in 2015, the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") had invited eligible organizations to apply for Batch 1 of the Restored Landfill Revitalisation Funding Scheme ("the Funding Scheme"). After a rigorous selection process, an in-principle approval was granted to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals ("TWGHs") for implementation of its proposed project, namely the E-Co Village (a camp site-cum-green education ground) at Lot B of Tseung Kwan O Stage I Landfill.

9. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Senior Section Manager (Youth and Family), Tung Wah Group of Hospitals ("SSM(YF)/TWGHs") briefed the Panel on the key aspects of the E-Co Village project, including its objectives, service targets, scope of works, etc.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation materials were circulated to members on 23 November 2020, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)260/20-21(01).)

Discussion

Details of the E-Co Village project

Project design and service targets

10. Ms Elizabeth QUAT asked about the design capacity of E-Co Village, provision of barrier-free access and facilities, and mode of operation and capacity of the camping zones.

11. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok suggested that holiday camp-style facilities be provided at E-Co Village to increase the attractiveness of its camping zones.

12. The Deputy Head (Community Services), Tung Wah Group of Hospitals ("DH(CS)/TWGHs") and SSM(YF)/TWGHs responded that E-Co Village was designed to serve a maximum of about 300 visitors at the same time, and its camping zones were expected to accommodate up to 300 users each night. Campers would have to set up their own tents. There would be barrier-free access and facilities in E-Co Village, including barrier-free toilets and shower facilities.

13. Mr YIU Si-wing considered it worthwhile to develop E-Co Village. He asked whether parking spaces, including those for coaches, would be provided

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in the project, and whether there would be convenient public transport access to the site.

14. The Executive Director, Spence Robinson Limited and USEN responded that under the current project design, about five car parking spaces and one coach parking space would be provided. The site was within five-minute walking distance from the nearest bus stops of several bus routes. Mr YIU Si-wing suggested that TWGHs re-examine whether only one coach parking space would be sufficient.

15. Mr YIU Si-wing further suggested that E-Co Village be open to tourists (such as participants of educational visits) on weekdays when there might be fewer local visitors.

16. DH(CS)/TWGHs advised that TWGHs had been maintaining close liaison with schools and kindergartens. It was envisaged that through collaboration with schools and kindergartens, E-Co Village would have a solid visitor base on weekdays consisting of students who would participate in learning activities to be conducted there. USEN supplemented that the Administration was open to Mr YIU's suggestion, as long as priority to use E-Co Village was given to local residents.

Financial implications

17. Ms Elizabeth QUAT enquired whether visitors to E-Co Village would have to pay a fee, and if so, whether concessionary arrangements would be in place for low-income families. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether certain areas in E-Co Village would be open to the public for free.

18. DH(CS)/TWGHs responded that as E-Co Village would be operated on a non-profit-making and self-financing basis, TWGHs planned to charge a fee on users to cover the operating expenses, and the fee would be set at an affordable and sustainable level with reference to the fee levels of similar public facilities. As a charitable organization, TWGHs was mindful of the need to assist low-income families. It would consider putting in place concessionary arrangements for low-income families to use E-Co Village, and would endeavour to apply for relevant funds and subsidies to support low-income families' participation in activities organized at the venue.

19. As land resources were scarce in Hong Kong, Mr POON Siu-ping considered it worthwhile to develop restored landfills for public use. He noted from the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)226/20-21(02)) that funding support at a ceiling of \$5 million (in money-of-the-day prices) would be provided to TWGHs for the first two years of E-Co Village's operation to cover

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the project's starting costs and operating deficits. He asked whether a fee adjustment mechanism would be put in place for E-Co Village to achieve breakeven after the expiry of the above funding support.

20. DH(CS)/TWGHs explained that TWGHs expected that E-Co Village would have operating deficits in the first two years of operation, as it would take time to grow the visitor base. Such operating deficits would be covered by the government grant. It was expected that from the third year of operation onwards, with a larger visitor base, E-Co Village's revenue would be sufficient to meet its expenses. Any surplus generated from E-Co Village would be ploughed back to support its operation.

21. In response to a related question from Mr YIU Si-wing, USEN advised that apart from the grant for the proposed capital works (at a ceiling of \$100 million) and the said two-year funding support for the project's operation, the Administration would not provide further funding to TWGHs for the implementation and operation of the project.

22. Mr Tony TSE said that he supported the proposed project in principle, as he considered that restored landfill sites should be developed for public use. He emphasized the need to ensure that the project in question would be value for money, and requested the Administration to provide the following information in writing: (a) details of the E-Co Village project design, including the design capacities of facilities therein, (b) target number of participants to be received by E-Co Village, and (c) how to ensure financial sustainability of the project.

Admin 23. USEN advised that according to TWGHs' estimation, E-Co Village would receive some 70 000 participants in the first year of operation. The target number of participants would be reviewed in future having regard to E-Co Village's operational situation. The information requested by Mr Tony TSE would be included in the relevant paper to be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC").

Safety standards and security features

24. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for the proposed project. He believed that E-Co Village would be attractive if its fee was set at an affordable level and its operation was safe. He enquired about: (a) whether there was any odour problem at the project site; (b) the concentration of landfill gas released from the restored landfill, and whether such landfill gas would pose any danger to campers; and (c) measures to ensure security of E-Co Village, including whether it would be enclosed by fence.

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25. USEN and the Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure) advised that landfill gas generated from the decomposition of waste at Tseung Kwan O Stage I Landfill was collected and treated by a landfill gas management system. According to the Administration's latest measurement, the annual average concentration of methane at the surface of the site was 3 parts per million ("ppm"), which was far lower than the safety standard of 10 000 ppm. As the site was an open space with single-storey structures to be erected, if a tiny amount of methane was released into the air, it would be dispersed quickly and would not pose any danger to users of E-Co Village. No odour problem had been detected at the site.

26. The Executive Director, Spence Robinson Limited and DH(CS)/TWGHs advised that E-Co Village would be enclosed by a natural-looking fence. The venue would be manned round the clock. In case of need at night, users of the camping zones could seek assistance from staff at the Green Stations in E-Co Village.

27. In response to Mr SHIU Ka-fai's further question, USEN explained that the landfill gas management system(s) installed on a restored landfill would generally operate for 15 to 30 years, subject to the situation of landfill gas generation from waste decomposition.

Land licence period

28. Mr YIU Si-wing asked about the term of the land licence to be granted to TWGHs for developing and operating E-Co Village.

29. The Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2) explained that the site had been allocated to EPD by the Lands Department for restoration and afteruse until mid-2028. If the proposed project was approved by the Finance Committee in 2021 as planned, EPD would grant a land licence to TWGHs for a period of about seven years (i.e. until mid-2028) for E-Co Village's development and operation. If the operation of E-Co Village was satisfactory, the Administration would actively explore extension of the land licence before its expiry.

Implementation progress of Restored Landfill Revitalisation Funding Scheme

30. Mr POON Siu-ping sought an update on the implementation progress of the Funding Scheme.

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31. USEN responded that the objective of the Funding Scheme was to provide funding support to eligible organizations for development of recreational facilities or other suitable afteruses at restored landfills, with a view to providing a practical alternative for the effective use of restored landfills. Other than Batch 1 of the Funding Scheme, the Administration found that due to restrictions on loading capacities of restored landfills, the remoteness of certain sites, etc., the other restored landfills might not be suitable for developing large-scale recreational facilities under the Funding Scheme. The Administration would therefore consider developing simple afteruse facilities such as parks at those restored landfills as small Government projects.

Other suggested afteruses of restored landfills

32. While she did not object to the implementation of the E-Co Village project, Ms Elizabeth QUAT held that the proposed development option might not be ideal for the site concerned, given that Hong Kong's country parks could better achieve some of the project's objectives, namely to promote environmental protection and enable the public to enjoy the nature.

33. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that he supported the proposed project but shared a similar concern with Ms Elizabeth QUAT. He considered that the Administration should review its policy on country park management and consider enhancing country parks through developing more infrastructures thereat.

Admin 34. USEN responded that as reported to the Panel in April 2020, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") would implement various projects in country parks in order to enhance their recreation and education potential. These projects included the setting up of more campsites and the development of more visitor facilities. The Administration would provide more details in this regard in writing after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 7 January 2021, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)409/20-21(02).)

35. Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr Steven HO said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong had all along advocated better utilization of restored landfills, and had proposed the development of integrated agricultural villages on some restored landfills through quadripartite cooperation among the Government, the academia, the agricultural sector and the commercial sector. Unfortunately, the Administration did not consider the application for agricultural afteruses on restored landfills. Mr HO expressed dissatisfaction that the Administration had only chosen the more easily achieved

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afteruse options for various restored landfills, i.e. to engage organizations with relatively richer resources to develop recreational or sports facilities, without regard to the more pressing needs of the community. He queried why the Administration had approved the setting up of a farming garden in the proposed project, but had not heeded the suggestion of developing larger-scale farms using garden-plot farming practice at restored landfills.

36. Ir Dr LO Wai-kyok also suggested that the Administration should consider development of agricultural afteruses on restored landfills.

37. USEN responded that the use of restored landfills for large-scale farming was rare, if not none, in other countries. Nevertheless, the Administration was exploring the possibility of setting up garden plots on suitable restored landfills for small-scale farming activities. The Administration welcomed members' suggestions in this regard.

38. Ms Elizabeth QUAT called on the Administration to allocate more land for agricultural development.

39. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions had been advocating the relocation of Fanling Golf Course, so that the site could be used for housing development to ease housing shortage. He enquired whether the Administration would explore the possibility of developing one of the three existing strategic landfills into a golf course in future. In addition, he noted that although part of Tseung Kwan O Stage I Landfill had been/would be developed into a pet garden, a football training centre and E-Co Village, large areas of the landfill would remain undeveloped. He enquired about the Administration's plan to utilize such land.

40. USEN responded that the Administration had been endeavouring to identify suitable afteruses of restored landfills, with a view to fully utilizing the available land. In general, flat areas constituted a small portion of restored landfills while the remaining areas were slopes; and only flat areas were suitable for afteruse development as there were technical difficulties in developing afteruses on slopes. Therefore, restored landfills in Hong Kong were normally unsuitable for development into a large golf course. The Administration would continue to study afteruse options on remaining undeveloped flat areas of restored landfills. It was envisaged that some of those flat areas could be developed into small public recreational facilities or garden plots.

Conclusion

41. The Chairman invited members to indicate whether they supported the Administration's submission of the proposal to PWSC for consideration. No

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members raised objection. Mr Steven HO said that he had reservations about the proposed project. The Chairman requested the Administration to address members' views and concerns above when the proposal was discussed by PWSC.

(At the Chairman's direction, the meeting was suspended at 3:28 pm and resumed at 3:32 pm.)

VI. Enhanced protection of green turtles

LC Paper No. CB(1)226/ — Administration's paper on "Enhanced
20-21(04) Protection of Green Turtles"

LC Paper No. CB(1)226/ — Background brief on "Conservation of
20-21(05) local Green Turtles" prepared by the
Legislative Council Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(1)242/ — Submission from WWF-Hong Kong)
20-21(01)

Briefing by the Administration

42. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AD(C)/AFCD") briefed the Panel on:

- (a) the current protection measures for Green Turtles and their nesting site at Sham Wan, Lamma Island;
- (b) the proposed expansion of the Sham Wan Restricted Area ("SWRA") from the 0.5-hectare beach to the sea inlet of about 98.2 hectares adjoining the beach;
- (c) the proposed extension of the restricted period applicable to SWRA from five months (1 June to 31 October) to seven months (1 April to 31 October) each year; and
- (d) measures to combat unauthorized entry into SWRA during the restricted period and strengthen protection of Green Turtles.

43. AD(C)/AFCD advised that the Administration planned to gazette amendments to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) ("WAPO") in December 2020 or January 2021 to give effect to the proposed expansion of

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SWRA and extension of the restricted period. The legislative amendments would be subject to negative vetting.

(Post-meeting note: The PowerPoint presentation materials were circulated to members on 23 November 2020, vide LC Paper No. CB(1)260/20-21(02).)

Discussion

Rationale for the proposed measures

44. Noting that the beach at Sham Wan was the only site in Hong Kong and one of the few sites in South China Sea at which Green Turtles nested from time to time, Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support for the above proposed measures for enhancing the protection of Green Turtles.

45. Mr Tony TSE sought elaboration on the reasons for the proposed measures, including whether the existing measures were considered to be inadequate for protection of Green Turtles. He enquired whether there would be quantifiable indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed measures, and what further actions would be taken if the proposed measures could not achieve the desired outcome.

46. Mr Steven HO expressed support for the general direction of protecting Green Turtles and emphasized the need to strike a balance between promoting the development of the fisheries industry and protecting the environment. He asked whether the Administration would continue to maintain SWRA even if no nesting activities of Green Turtles were observed at Sham Wan in future.

47. USEN and the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation ("DAFC") explained that:

- (a) Sham Wan was an important habitat to the breeding and survival of Green Turtles in the local and regional contexts. The recorded nesting activities of Green Turtles at Sham Wan were on a declining trend, and one of the possible reasons was the insufficient coverage of the existing SWRA and the restricted period. The Administration had therefore proposed the expansion of SWRA and extension of the restricted period, with a view to enhancing protection of Green Turtles;
- (b) relatively larger numbers of Green Turtle hatchlings had been observed at Sham Wan during the 2002 and 2008 breeding seasons. As it was habitual for Green Turtles to return to their natal beaches

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to nest after 20 years or more when they reached sexual maturity, some of the Green Turtles born in 2002 and 2008 might return to Sham Wan in the coming few years. For the purpose of conserving the species, it would be particularly important to maintain at Sham Wan an appropriate habitat for breeding Green Turtles during the breeding seasons in the coming few years; and

- (c) to evaluate the effectiveness of the enhanced measures, the number of Green Turtles nesting at Sham Wan as well as the numbers of eggs and hatchlings would be compared with the data collected in the past. If no nesting activities of Green Turtles were observed in the future 10 years or so, the Administration would review the need for maintaining Sham Wan as a restricted area under WAPO.

48. The Chairman expressed support for enhancing protection of Green Turtles. He suggested that the Administration should report to the Panel the progress and effectiveness of the proposed measures one or two years after their implementation. USEN said that the Administration would provide such information to the Panel in future.

Monitoring of Green Turtles' activities

49. Mr POON Siu-ping asked about the statistics on Green Turtles' nesting activities in Hong Kong and information on their migratory movements and feeding grounds gathered by satellite tracking.

50. AD(C)/AFCD responded that since AFCD had started monitoring the nesting activities of Green Turtles at Sham Wan in 1998, over 3 000 eggs and over 1 000 hatchlings had been recorded. It was habitual for mature Green Turtles to return to nest every few years. The last time that nesting of Green Turtles was observed in Sham Wan was in 2012. Through the use of satellite tracking technology, AFCD had found that some Green Turtles had reached feeding grounds near Hainan, Taiwan, the Dongsha Islands, etc. There were limitations in the use of the technology to trace the migratory movements of Green Turtles, as the battery in a transmitter would generally run out in about a year. The transmitter on a turtle would be detached from its carapace naturally some time after.

Enforcement against unauthorized entry and illegal fishing

51. The Chairman urged the Administration to ensure that sufficient resources would be allocated for enforcement against unauthorized entry into and illegal fishing in the expanded SWRA during the extended restricted period. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Tony TSE sought details of the Administration's

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plan in this regard, including whether the entire sea inlet of Sham Wan would be monitored by surveillance cameras. Mr POON also asked about the number of prosecutions in the past against unauthorized entry into SWRA.

52. Mr Steven HO was concerned that the surveillance cameras to be deployed at the expanded SWRA would not be able to clearly capture the certificate of ownership numbers of vessels suspected to be involved in illegal activities, rendering the cameras ineffective in combating illegal fishing.

53. Ms Elizabeth QUAT expressed support for the proposed measures and mentioned that she had advocated enhancing protection of Green Turtles (including through expanding SWRA) for many years. She and the Chairman suggested the use of new technologies to strengthen enforcement, such as using unmanned aerial vehicles and/or installing infrared cameras on buoys to enhance surveillance and detection of unauthorized entry into the expanded SWRA.

54. DAFC and AD(C)/AFCD responded that:

- (a) currently SWRA only covered the sandy beach at Sham Wan. AFCD carried out patrols on the beach during the restricted period each year, and deployed surveillance cameras to assist in the monitoring of SWRA. After the expansion of SWRA, patrols would be conducted on the beach as well as in the waters to combat unauthorized entry;
- (b) through consolidation of its internal resources, AFCD had recently set up a dedicated enforcement team at sea with additional vessels and manpower resources for enforcement of regulations relating to fishery and marine parks. The dedicated enforcement team at sea would conduct patrols and take enforcement actions in the expanded SWRA during the restricted period if necessary;
- (c) AFCD would also explore the deployment of remote control surveillance cameras to monitor the sea inlet of Sham Wan after the expansion of SWRA. The cameras were not expected to be able to clearly capture the certificate of ownership numbers of individual vessels, they could nonetheless facilitate detection of and rapid response against irregularities;
- (d) to combat illegal fishing, AFCD would continue to strengthen patrols in Hong Kong waters and if necessary conduct joint enforcement actions with the Marine Region of the Hong Kong Police Force. AFCD would also engage local fishermen in

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publicity and public education activities as well as the gathering of intelligence relating to illegal fishing. After receiving reports of irregularities from local fishermen, AFCD would deploy enforcement staff to the locations concerned as soon as possible; and

- (e) there had not been any prosecution against unauthorized entry into SWRA. The major reason was that unauthorized entries into SWRA were mostly unintentional, and the persons involved had left the area immediately upon patrol officers' advice.

55. Mr Steven HO urged that the relevant government departments, including EPD, should allocate additional resources for combating illegal fishing, which was rampant in Hong Kong waters. He also commented that penalties imposed by the court in the past against related offences were too light to generate sufficient deterrent effect.

56. USEN took note of members' views and suggestions, and advised that EPD would discuss with AFCD how to further enhance enforcement at sea.

Reducing marine refuse

57. Ms Elizabeth QUAT asked whether the Administration would consider stepping up efforts to remove and prevent the generation of marine refuse (especially waste plastics) along the migratory routes of Green Turtles, with a view to enhancing protection of the species. The Chairman asked a similar question and pointed out that the problem of marine plastic debris, which was a big threat to the survival of Green Turtles, had been raised in WWF-Hong Kong's submission (LC Paper No. CB(1)242/20-21(01)).

58. USEN responded that through the Inter-departmental Working Group on Marine Environmental Management, which was under the steer of the Environment Bureau, the Administration had strengthened interdepartmental cooperation on tackling marine refuse. This had enabled more efficient deployment of manpower resources for removal of marine refuse. The Administration had also set up a notification and alert system with the Guangdong authorities to enable quicker response by both sides to marine environmental incidents, such as the surge of marine refuse after heavy rainstorms.

59. DAFC supplemented that habitat management actions were carried out at Sham Wan before the nesting season every year, including clearing of refuse on the beach as well as removal of abandoned fishing nets from the sea inlet. Some of the clean-up operations were conducted in collaboration with green

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groups. After the expansion of SWRA, the Administration would monitor the cleanliness condition of the sea inlet and arrange for marine refuse clean-up operations if necessary.

60. USEN further advised that the Administration endeavoured to reduce the use of single-use plastic products in Hong Kong and prevent them from entering the marine environment. EPD was conducting a study on the feasibility, scope and mechanism of controlling or banning disposable plastic tableware. Upon completion of the study, the Administration would report to members its plan on further reducing the use of disposable plastic tableware.

Conclusion

61. The Chairman concluded that members did not object to the Administration's plan to gazette the relevant amendments to WAPO in December 2020 or January 2021, with a view to implementing the proposed expansion of SWRA and extension of the restricted period by the start of the next breeding season of Green Turtles on 1 April 2021.

VII. Any other business

62. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:09 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 January 2021