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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Improvement of
Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape**

**Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 27 April 2021, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Member absent : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS

Public Officers attending : Item II

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han, JP
Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr Gilford LAW Sun-on
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Mr Edward CHAN Yiu-keung
Assistant Director (Operations) 2
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LEUNG Yat-king
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LAM Kam-kong
Coordinator (Cleansing Infrastructure)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr TSE Ki-cheong
Senior Superintendent (Cleansing and Pest Control) 1
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item III

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Gilford LAW Sun-on
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han, JP
Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LEUNG Yat-king
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr FORK Ping-lam
Coordinator (Waste Collection Facilities)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr TSE Yu-cheung
Senior Superintendent (Cleaning and Pest Control) 2
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LEE Ming-wai
Pest Control Officer-in-charge
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Staff in attendance : Mr Clement HAU
Council Secretary (2) 2

Ms Cally LAI
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

Action

I. Information paper issued since the last meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(2)933/20-21(01))

Admin

Members noted that the Secretariat had issued a list of follow-up actions arising from the discussion at the meeting on 23 March 2021 (LC Paper No. CB(2)933/20-21(01)), to which the Administration had yet provided its response. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide the written response as early as possible.

II. Improvement of environmental hygiene of public markets and public toilets
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1004/20-21(01) to (03))

2. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings at **Annex A**).

3. The Administration briefed members, with the aid of power-point presentation, on the measures adopted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for improving the environmental hygiene of public markets and public toilets, as set out in its papers (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1004/20-21(01) and (02)).

(Post-meeting note: The softcopy of the power-point presentation materials was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1029/20-21(01) on 27 April 2021.)

Follow-up actions arising from the discussion

Admin

4. The Administration was requested to provide a written response to the issues raised by members as set out in **Annex B**.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1085/20-21(01) on 14 May 2021.)

Action

III. Enhancement of control work of mosquito and biting midge infestation

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1004/20-21(04) and (05))

5. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings at **Annex A**).

6. The Administration briefed members, with the aid of power-point presentation, on the enhancement of control work of mosquito and biting midge infestation, as set out in its paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1004/20-21(04)).

(Post-meeting note: The softcopy of the power-point presentation materials was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1029/20-21(02) on 27 April 2021.)

Follow-up actions arising from the discussion

7. The Administration was requested to provide a written response to the issues raised by members as set out in **Annex B**.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1085/20-21(01) on 14 May 2021.)

IV. Any other business

8. The Chairman said that a further meeting would be scheduled for members to consider, among others, the Administration's responses to the issues raised at this meeting as well as at the last meeting held on 23 March 2021.

(Post-meeting note: The next meeting was subsequently scheduled for 24 May 2021, Monday, from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm.)

9. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:31 pm.

**Proceedings of the meeting of the Subcommittee on
Issues Relating to the Improvement of Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape
on Tuesday, 27 April 2021, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)/Discussion	Action Required
<i>Agenda item I - Information paper issued since the last meeting</i>			
000343 - 000654	Chairman Admin	The Chairman's opening remarks	
<i>Agenda item II - Improvement of environmental hygiene of public markets and public toilets</i>			
000655 - 002029	Chairman Admin	The Administration's briefing on its work and measures to improve the environmental hygiene of public markets and public toilets (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1004/20-21(01) and (02)).	
002030 - 003058	Chairman Mr Wilson OR Admin	<p>Mr Wilson OR's views and concerns:</p> <p>(a) the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") should provide a suitable work and rest environment of toilet attendants; and</p> <p>(b) whether the Administration would consider empowering the respective Market Management Consultative Committees ("MMCCs") to make decisions in relation to the daily management of public markets, such as arranging minor repair works for the markets.</p> <p>The Administration's responses that:</p> <p>(a) when building new public toilets and reprovisioning or refurbishing existing ones, FEHD would as far as practicable make available attendant rooms and improve the facilities for toilet attendants, e.g. tables and chairs, lockers, power sockets, exhaust fans or propulsion fans, oscillating fans as well as improved ventilation and lighting; and</p> <p>(b) to strengthen communication with market stall tenants, regular meetings with various MMCCs were held for discussing issues relating to market management. FEHD would consider involving MMCCs more proactively in making decisions in the daily management of public markets.</p>	

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003059 - 003833	Chairman Mr Tony TSE Admin	<p>Mr Tony TSE's enquiries on:</p> <p>(a) whether FEHD would involve market stall tenants in maintaining environmental hygiene of public markets; and</p> <p>(b) whether FEHD could speed up the refurbishment works for the 240 public toilets under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme ("EPTRP"); and whether FEHD was planning to refurbish/facelift public toilets not under EPTRP.</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) FEHD called for the cooperation of market stall tenants to conduct cleaning and disinfection at their stalls, clear miscellaneous items and ensure that goods and food were properly stored, with a view to keeping the stall areas and public places clean and hygienic, and eliminating the food sources and hiding places of rodents; and</p> <p>(b) for the 240 public toilets under EPTRP, FEHD had been working closely with the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD") to streamline the working procedures and speed up the refurbishment/facelifting work processes. Separately, FEHD would consider the need for and means of refurbishing/facelifting certain public toilets managed by FEHD that were not under EPTRP.</p>	
003834 - 004754	Chairman Ms Elizabeth QUAT Admin	<p>Ms Elizabeth QUAT's concerns and enquiries:</p> <p>(a) whether FEHD would solicit innovative ideas and explore more effective methods to enhance the management and hygiene of public toilets, by making reference to the successful practices in overseas (such as outsourcing the management of public toilets); and</p> <p>(b) noting that FEHD had applied anti-microbial coating to the facilities in certain public toilets in view of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") epidemic, information was sought on the use and effectiveness of the coating.</p>	

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		<p>The Administration's responses that:</p> <p>(a) FEHD and ArchSD were jointly organizing the "PT 2.0 - Public Toilet Design Competition" to unleash the creativity of the public and the architecture sector to come up with innovative designs for cleaner and better public toilets. They had also co-organized a design thinking programme called "Toilet Tells: Rediscover Public Toilet" to gain an indepth understanding of the needs of various stakeholders and to explore innovative ideas in the design, management and service of public toilets through a series of design thinking workshops, with a view to developing a blueprint for ideal and modernized public toilets in Hong Kong. Separately, FEHD was developing a Smart Toilet System prototype for trial at certain public toilets; and</p> <p>(b) anti-microbial coating technology had been adopted to inhibit the growth of bacteria and viruses. It was piloted at about 270 public toilets with high utilization rates. The coating was applied to frequently touched surfaces in those toilets (such as door knobs and handrails of toilets, surfaces of toilet seats and hand-dryers). FEHD was assessing the effectiveness of the coating in reducing the risk of spreading virus under the COVID-19 epidemic.</p> <p>Ms Elizabeth QUAT urged FEHD to expand the use of anti-microbial coating in public toilets if it was found to be effective.</p>	
004755 - 005305	Chairman Deputy Chairman Admin	<p>The Deputy Chairman observed that the hygiene condition of public toilets managed by FEHD had improved in recent years. He stressed the importance of maintaining hygiene and cleanliness of public toilets, and asked about the measures taken by FEHD in monitoring the performance of outsourced contractors of public toilet cleansing service.</p> <p>The Administration's responses that:</p> <p>(a) FEHD staff would, in accordance with the operational guidelines on contract management, check the compliance of contractors with cleansing service contracts</p>	

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		<p>and monitor their work and performance 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 public toilet cleansing service, FEHD would take follow-up actions, including issuance of verbal and written warnings, issuance of default notices and deduction of monthly payment; and</p> <p>(b) on top of the existing inspection mechanism, FEHD had, since 1 April 2020, set up a new inspection system, under which the contractor's management staff and FEHD's district management staff were required to conduct regular inspections of public toilets and other facilities in the district to ensure that the service was up to the satisfaction level as required under the contract. The service standards required were also clearly conveyed to the contractors through site inspections.</p>	
005306 - 010117	Chairman Admin	<p>The Chairman's concerns and enquiries on:</p> <p>(a) how FEHD would ensure that repair works of public toilets were conducted in a timely manner; and</p> <p>(b) whether FEHD had taken any measures to ensure that toilet paper provided by cleansing service contractors would meet hygiene standards.</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) to enhance the efficiency of repair works of public toilets, FEHD, ArchSD and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") had jointly developed a "minor works order record system" mobile application to link with ArchSD's and EMSD's computer maintenance systems to share relevant data. Repair requests could be made to ArchSD and EMSD via the mobile application to facilitate prompt referral of repair requests, tracking of the progress of repair works, expedite the repair process of public toilets, avoid mismatch in maintenance records and discrepancies, and systematically collate management data for</p>	

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		<p>further analysis and service enhancement; and</p> <p>(b) in general, cleansing service contractors were required to supply clean and hygienic toilet paper under the contracts they entered into with government departments. The contracts would require the supply of toilet paper conforming to the Mainland's national standard GB20810-2006 or its latest edition (expressed in terms of micro-organism levels). FEHD monitored closely the quality of cleansing service provided by its contractors, and checked whether they had complied with the requirements in the contract to safeguard public hygiene standards, including those pertaining to toilet paper in public toilets.</p> <p>Echoing the views of Mr Wilson OR, the Chairman urged the Administration to consider allowing MMCCs to arrange minor repair works of public markets, so as to expedite such repairs.</p>	
010118 - 011044	Chairman Mr Tony TSE Admin	<p>Mr Tony TSE's enquiries on:</p> <p>(a) whether FEHD would arrange additional cleansing services for public toilets during periods of high utilization, so as to ensure the cleanliness and hygiene of those toilets; and</p> <p>(b) the ratio of male and female cubicles in the 240 public toilets refurbished/to be refurbished under EPTRP; and whether FEHD would adjust the ratio depending on the actual circumstances (e.g. usage rates of individual toilets).</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) since September 2018, FEHD had stepped up inspection (at least once in every work shift) and monitoring of contractor's performance in respect of public toilets at tourist spots or with high utilization rates to ensure that contractors performed deep cleansing service on a regular basis and provided service up to standard. For certain public toilets with very high utilization rates, some had an additional toilet attendant deployed in the same shift and some were served by three shifts a day round-the-clock; and</p>	

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		<p>(b) in refurbishing public toilets, the 2:1 female-to-male toilet compartment ratio would be adopted. Depending on the needs and usage of individual public toilets, this ratio might be adjusted as appropriate.</p> <p>In respect of enforcement actions taken against irregularities in public markets over the past three years, the Administration was requested to provide breakdowns by (a) nature of the irregularities (specifically involving cleanliness offences committed by market stall tenants) and (b) forms and levels of the penalties imposed on the stall tenants concerned, including warning letters issued, prosecutions initiated and stalls with tenancy agreements terminated.</p>	<p>Admin (item (a) of Annex B refers)</p>
<p>011045 - 011353</p>	<p>Chairman Admin</p>	<p>The Chairman's enquiry about the measures taken by FEHD to improve the hygiene of public toilets amidst the COVID-19 epidemic. His concern as to whether the use of blower fans in public toilets would increase the risk of spreading virus.</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) on the advice of the Centre for Health Protection, the use of blower fans on the floors of public toilets had been suspended to mitigate the risk of spreading virus;</p> <p>(b) in the light of the COVID-19 epidemic, FEHD had stepped up cleansing of public toilets. For public toilets with attendant service, FEHD had instructed the attendants on duty to cleanse and disinfect the floor, water closets, urinals, wash hand basins, toilet seats, door handles, handrails, etc. every two hours with 1:99 diluted household bleach. For other public toilets, cleansing workers also carried out cleansing and disinfection at least twice daily with 1:99 diluted household bleach in performing routine cleansing service to ensure the cleanliness; and</p> <p>(c) publicity efforts had also been made to advise the public to put the lid down before flushing the toilet.</p>	

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<i>Agenda item III - Enhancement of control work of mosquito and biting midge infestation</i>			
011354 - 012613	Chairman Admin	The Administration's briefing on the enhancement of control work of mosquito and biting midge infestation (LC Paper No. CB(2)1004/20-21(04))	
012614 - 013932	Chairman Ms Elizabeth QUAT Admin	<p>Ms Elizabeth QUAT's views and concerns that biting midge infestation remained a serious problem in various districts. Specific measures should be taken to prevent the proliferation of biting midges, particularly in areas where the infestation problem was serious, such as in rural environment.</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) number of biting midges-related complaints received over the past few years had been on a decreasing trend (with 115 complaints received in 2019, 56 in 2020 and eight during the period from January to March 2021). This showed that the nuisances caused by biting midges in public places had been alleviated; and</p> <p>(b) FEHD would continue to prevent and control biting midge infestation in public places through routine inspections, district feedbacks and follow-up actions on complaints received; and would continue to provide technical advice and training to other departments on controlling biting midge infestation.</p>	
013933 - 014752	Chairman Mr Tony TSE Admin	<p>Mr Tony TSE's enquiry on how the Administration would assist the construction industry in strengthening mosquito prevention and control at construction sites.</p> <p>The Administration's response that:</p> <p>(a) FEHD tackled the problem of mosquito infestation at construction sites through enhanced enforcement and education efforts. Since May 2017, FEHD had set up four Pest Control Inspection Teams to step up inspections of construction sites and enforcement actions against mosquito breeding places; and</p>	

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		<p>(b) FEHD maintained close liaison with various property management associations, and through which talks were also arranged for property management personnel to enrich their knowledge on mosquito control. Besides, FEHD attended the meetings of the Joint Utilities Policy Group every year to share the most updated information on pest control, so as to enhance the mosquito prevention and control work at construction sites and properties of the utility companies.</p> <p>The Administration was requested to provide the following:</p> <p>(a) in respect of enforcement against mosquito breeding, (i) the number of prosecutions instituted in each of the past three years and (ii) the number of cases respectively involving construction sites and other premises; and</p> <p>(b) details of measures taken/to be taken by the Administration to assist the construction industry in strengthening mosquito prevention and control at construction sites.</p>	<p>Admin (item (b) of Annex B refers)</p> <p>Admin (item (c) of Annex B refers)</p>
014753 - 015613	Chairman Mr Wilson OR Admin	<p>Mr Wilson OR's expression of view that the Administration failed to tackle the pest problem in the community owing to a lack of coordination among various departments in their pest control efforts. He asked how the Administration would enhance inter-departmental coordination in implementing pest control measures.</p> <p>The Administration's response that:</p> <p>(a) under the coordination of the Pest Control Steering Committee, additional resources had been allocated to a number of departments (including FEHD, the Housing Department ("HD"), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"), the Highways Department, etc.) for carrying out enhanced pest control work in areas under their respective purview. Relevant departments had also made concerted efforts in conducting pest control operations in various districts and shared among themselves techniques and experience in pest control work;</p>	

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		<p>(b) in addition to the prevention and control work against biting midge infestation as mentioned earlier, FEHD had been strengthening the surveillance of mosquito infestation to facilitate the targeted deployment of mosquito prevention and control work. Since April 2020, FEHD had put in place newly designed gravidtraps as a replacement for the ovitraps previously used. The gravidtraps could directly count the number of adult mosquitoes to enumerate the new Gravidtrap Index ("GI"). Relevant departments would promptly carry out targeted mosquito prevention and control work upon notification of GI, particularly when exceeding the alert level of 20%; and</p> <p>(c) FEHD had started to provide hotspot analysis on locations persistently recorded with positive findings in gravidtraps as well as locations with high number of adult mosquitoes collected in individual gravidtraps for targeted control actions by relevant departments.</p>	
015614 - 020216	Chairman Deputy Chairman Admin	<p>The Deputy Chairman's comments that frontline staff had not properly applied larvicidal oil in a park managed by LCSD. His enquiry about measures taken by FEHD to ensure that frontline staff of relevant departments would be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to properly perform pest control work.</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) to enable the staff of various departments to have a better understanding of pest control work, FEHD had organized pest control training courses/talks for the staff from different Government departments, including HD and LCSD;</p> <p>(b) in the past two years, a total of 16 training courses/seminars were organized for various government departments, the property management industry, the pest control services industry etc.; and</p> <p>(c) FEHD had produced educational video discs on mosquito control for reference by frontline staff of relevant departments, to ensure their correct execution of pest control work.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)/Discussion	Action Required
020217 - 020435	Chairman Admin	<p>The Chairman's expression of concern about the mosquito infestation situation in rural areas. His enquiry on whether FEHD could provide assistance for residents in rural areas in respect of mosquito control (such as providing them with temephos).</p> <p>The Administration's responses:</p> <p>(a) FEHD had no plan to provide residents in rural areas with temephos since this was a type of pesticides, the use of which required professional knowledge; and</p> <p>(b) FEHD had conducted internal testing on the new mosquito traps at various places including villages in the rural areas. Test results showed that activities of adult mosquitoes had decreased substantially. According to the feedback from local residents, the number and frequency that they got bitten by mosquitoes had also reduced significantly after the installation of the new mosquito traps. The new mosquito traps had been proven as effective in eliminating mosquitoes. FEHD would place the new traps in public places at close proximity to villages in rural areas whenever necessary to enhance mosquito control. FEHD had also advised the relevant government departments to place the new traps in their venues to strengthen mosquito control.</p>	
<i>Agenda item IV - Any other business</i>			
020436 - 020527	Chairman	The Chairman's closing remarks	

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Improvement of
Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape**

**List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion
at the meeting on 27 April 2021**

The Administration was requested to provide a written response to the following issues and concerns raised by members:

Issue relating to agenda item II "Improvement of environmental hygiene of public markets and public toilets"

- (a) in respect of enforcement actions taken against irregularities in public markets over the past three years, breakdowns by (i) nature of the irregularities (specifically involving cleanliness offences committed by market stall tenants) and (ii) forms and levels of the penalties imposed on the stall tenants concerned, including warning letters issued, prosecutions initiated and stalls with tenancy agreements terminated;

Issues relating to agenda item III "Enhancement of control work of mosquito and biting midge infestation"

- (b) in respect of enforcement against mosquito breeding, (i) the number of prosecutions instituted in each of the past three years and (ii) the number of cases respectively involving construction sites and other premises; and
- (c) on the understanding that a large number of prosecutions were instituted against construction sites for failing to eliminate mosquito breeding places, details of measures taken/to be taken by the Administration to assist the construction industry in strengthening mosquito prevention and control at construction sites, including, for example, (i) organizing talks and trainings for the construction industry; and (ii) liaising with relevant organizations (such as the Property Management Services Authority and the Construction Industry Council) with a view to enhancing the alertness of the construction industry in mosquito control.