

**For discussion
on 9 February 2021**

**Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Improvement of
Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape**

Efforts to Improve Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the efforts of the Government in enhancing environmental hygiene and cityscape.

Background

2. In tandem with the development of Hong Kong society, the public have expectations on environmental hygiene and cityscape in public areas. A key part of environmental hygiene and cityscape improvement is street management, which involves the work of different policy bureaux and departments. While government departments perform their respective functions under their policy areas, they also work together to address the problems.

Improvement of Street Management and Environmental Hygiene

Actions against Illegal Extension of Business by Shops

3. Illegal extension of business by shops is a street management problem which falls within the purview of a number of government departments. At present, law enforcement against specific situations of street obstruction is generally taken by various enforcement departments (including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police), the Lands Department and the Buildings Department) in accordance with their respective powers and responsibilities. The core function of FEHD is to maintain environmental hygiene. Hence, it accords priority to handling cases causing obstruction to scavenging operations or cases relating to illegal hawking

or unauthorised extension of food premises, and takes enforcement action in the light of the ground situation, including issuing summons, taking arrest actions and issuing fixed penalty notices (FPNs) of \$1,500. Enforcement officers of various departments will take the most appropriate actions under their purview depending on the situation at the scene. Moreover, the Police will take part in joint operations to offer assistance as required to other departments, and issue FPNs, maintain the order at the scene, safeguard public safety and maintain social order, if necessary, in inter-departmental operations. Where a case is more complicated or involves several departments, the district office concerned will assist in co-ordinating inter-departmental joint operations if necessary.

4. The following are some examples of such inter-departmental joint operations:

- (a) With about 200 street shops, Shui Wo Street is the largest traditional market in Kwun Tong. The shops often illegally extend their business areas to solicit customers, causing obstruction to pavements. To further tackle this situation, the Kwun Tong District Environmental Hygiene Office (DEHO) has conducted four massive inter-departmental joint operations with the Kwun Tong District Office and the Kwun Tong Police District since July 2020 to combat shop front extensions in the vicinity of Shui Wo Street in a targeted manner. During these operations, FEHD issued 33 FPNs and initiated 2 prosecutions against persons-in-charge of shops causing obstruction in public places, over 30 tonnes of rubbish and miscellaneous items dumped in public places were cleared, while the Police issued 21 FPNs in these operations. Separately, the Kwun Tong Police District and its District Traffic Team conduct regular joint operations with the Kwun Tong DEHO every week.
- (b) In view of the serious problem of unlicensed hawking and illegal shop extension in the vicinity of Pei Ho Street Market and Cooked Food Centre in Sham Shui Po, the Sham Shui Po DEHO conducted 30 joint operations with the Sham Shui Po Police District in the vicinity of Pei Ho Street from 1 December 2020 to 18 January 2021. During the relevant operations in December 2020 and January 2021, FEHD staff arrested eight persons for unlicensed hawking/street obstruction, made verbal warnings to 10 licensed hawkers, seized the abandoned articles

of a hawker, and confiscated 32 kilograms of illegally hawked vegetables and fruits. An FPN was also issued to an offender for street obstruction. 12 FPNs for illegal parking were issued by the Police and over 4.2 tonnes of commodities and miscellaneous items were cleared by the two departments.

- (c) There are many fresh provision shops, fruit and vegetable shops and grocery stores in the streets near Kowloon City Market and To Kwa Wan Market, including Hau Wong Road, Nga Tsin Long Road, Kowloon City Road, Lok Shan Road and Ha Heung Road. These shops often extend their business areas by placing commodities on pavements and putting goods and miscellaneous items such as foam boxes on carriageways, causing obstruction to the pedestrians and traffic. In this connection, the Kowloon City DEHO conducted 21 joint operations with the Kowloon City Police District in the district from November to December 2020. During the operations, FEHD issued a total of 18 FPNs to shops that caused obstruction in public places, and cleared about 10 tonnes of refuse and miscellaneous items on the carriageways.

- (d) The Mong Kok Flower Market and its vicinity is one of the special tourist attractions in Mong Kok, with over 110 shops wholesaling and retailing mainly flowers and potted plants. With regard to street obstruction in the Mong Kok Flower Market and its vicinity, apart from enhancing street cleansing service, the Mong Kok DEHO adopts various strategies, including spot inspections and blitz enforcement operations, as well as inter-departmental joint operations with the Police, to improve the street management of the area. In the run-up to the Lunar New Year, the Mong Kok DEHO and the Mong Kok Police District stepped up enforcement in the Mong Kok Flower Market and its vicinity to further curb the irregularities, including a total of seven joint operations in January 2021. During the operations, FEHD issued 410 FPNs and 22 summonses to offenders of street obstruction, 10 prosecutions for unlicensed hawking, 2 seizures of hawker goods and 20 Notices to Remove Obstruction.

Tackling Cleanliness Problems in Rear Lanes

5. To tackle the problem of junk and refuse accumulation in rear lanes in some districts, FEHD has stepped up the sweeping and washing of rear lanes. Apart from increasing the manpower of street cleansing service contractors, FEHD has set up additional dedicated cleansing teams to handle junk and refuse in rear lanes, increased the use of street washing vehicles and high pressure hot water cleaners for washing rear lanes, strengthened pest control work, and instituted prosecutions against breaches of cleansing legislation. So far 24 cleansing teams have been set up to clean rear lanes.

6. With a view to improving the conditions of rear lanes, the Highways Department (HyD) completed 233 improvement work items in rear lanes of public roads from June 2019 to mid-January 2021, including repairing damaged road surfaces and surface channels as well as local repaving. The relevant departments will continue to follow up the situation of rear lanes and carry out appropriate improvement works according to actual needs and circumstances.

7. In view of the unsatisfactory situation of some rear lanes, in particular the improper disposal of food waste by food premises and the repeated occurrence of junk accumulation in rear lanes, FEHD has been targeting irregularities of food premises in rear lanes such as food preparation, cleaning of utensils and illegal waste disposal, taking more stringent enforcement actions as well as strengthening its cleansing work. From January 2020 to 31 January 2021, FEHD instituted 67 prosecutions against food preparation and 94 against cleaning of utensils in rear lanes, and issued 101 FPNs against illegal waste disposal.

8. Since 18 December 2020, FEHD has launched a trial scheme targeting 15 rear lanes in five districts (including Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Kowloon City, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long) where rodent infestation is particularly serious. Actions are taken against improper waste disposal in licensed premises in the districts, including follow-up actions on complementary, education and enforcement work by FEHD, as well as appropriate improvement works by the relevant departments where necessary. The education period from mid-December 2020 to mid-January 2021 has ended while the prosecution period has commenced since mid-January 2021. As at 31 January, FEHD has issued nine FPNs against littering offenders and 23 Notices to Remove Waste against

unauthorised owners/occupants, and has also instituted prosecution against an offender of obstruction of public places.

Removal of Unauthorised Commercial Publicity Materials/Graffiti

9. FEHD makes sustained efforts in maintaining environmental hygiene and cityscape. Apart from routine street sweeping, street washing and refuse collection services, FEHD will, from time to time, remove unauthorised commercial posters and bills on the street and issue FPNs to offenders for unauthorised display of commercial bills and posters with easy-mount frames and other display fittings in public places. In 2020, FEHD issued more than 3 400 FPNs to the offenders. It will continue to take stringent actions against such activities. At the district level, FEHD will keep the ground situation of individual locations in view and consider the need of conducting special enforcement operations. If the commercial publicity materials contain sufficient information for tracing the beneficiaries, FEHD will issue warning letters to them and, where practicable, recover from them the cost of removing these materials. Prosecution against the beneficiaries will also be considered.

10. HyD conducts regular inspection of the public roads and ancillary facilities under its management. If graffiti is found on them or related reports are received, HyD will arrange a clean-up in a timely manner. Between July 2019 and December 2020, the number of graffiti removed by HyD was close to 9 200. In cases where criminal elements are involved, the Police will take appropriate follow-up actions. Separately, the management authorities of the facilities concerned will also follow up on the cases.

Cleansing of Public Roads

11. To support the year-end clean-up campaign in 2021, FEHD and HyD have stepped up cleansing and sweeping of public roads. Currently, FEHD has 30 Central Divider Teams and 10 Mechanical Street Sweeping Teams responsible for sweeping the carriageways, flyovers and road dividers, as well as clearing the refuse at central dividers and roadside of the public roads under its purview. Generally, the frequency of cleansing ranges from once daily to once bi-monthly, and may be adjusted in the light of the ground situation. HyD has two Mechanical Street Sweeping Teams which are responsible for cleaning up the highways under its ambit once daily.

12. Starting from late December 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021, FEHD and HyD will work together to enhance the cleanliness of footbridges and subways in their respective areas of responsibility. The work includes: sweeping floors, removing dirt and localised cleaning as necessary by FEHD; and cleaning floors and walls and handling cleansing complaints by HyD. HyD will also beautify its footbridges and subways where necessary. In late December 2020, HyD and FEHD jointly cleansed the pedestrian subway KS12 at the junction of Lok Sin Road and Choi Hung Road in Wong Tai Sin District. Separately, HyD completed improvement works on the appearance of road facilities in the fourth quarter of 2020, including wallpapering of 15 road facilities, deep cleansing of 36 road facilities and repainting of 19 road facilities.

13. In late December 2020, FEHD and HyD conducted joint operations to clear fly-tipped household refuse and construction and demolition materials at roadside, e.g. clearing of fly-tipped household refuse and construction and demolition materials on public roads at Lin Cheung Road in Sham Shui Po District and at Castle Peak Road - Ting Kau in Tsuen Wan District.

Public Education

14. FEHD has been disseminating information on personal, household and environmental hygiene through different channels, including broadcast of Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, display of posters at main public transport facilities such as MTR stations and bus stops, distribution of pamphlets and leaflets, and the use of Facebook and Instagram pages of Keep Clean Ambassador Ah Tak and YouTube. The presence of Ah Tak at public functions is also arranged to appeal to the public to maintain street cleanliness and educate them on proper disposal of refuse.

15. A dedicated thematic website was launched in January 2021, setting out the work done by FEHD on environmental hygiene and street cleansing services. Regular updates, including reports on the efforts and effectiveness of the year-end clean-up campaign, will be uploaded. The website also provides useful information and advice on environmental hygiene, with a view to promoting public collaboration and understanding. For more information, please visit the FEHD website (https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/keep_clean2020-2021/index.html).

Conclusion

16. The Government will continue to implement the above improvement and management measures and maintain communication with District Councils, members of local communities and stakeholders in different sectors. At the same time, publicity and public education will be enhanced to raise awareness of and encourage active participation in keeping the city clean, so as to constantly improve the environmental hygiene and cityscape management of our community.

Advice Sought

17. Members are invited to provide comments on the above measures.

Food and Health Bureau

Development Bureau

Home Affairs Bureau

Security Bureau

Transport and Housing Bureau

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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