

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)1517/20-21

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

### **Report of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene for submission to the Legislative Council**

#### **Purpose**

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") during the 2020-2021 Legislative Council ("LegCo") session. It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 13 October 2021 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure.

#### **The Panel**

2. The Panel was formed by resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 16 members, with Hon Steven HO and Hon SHIU Ka-fai elected as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

#### **Major work**

##### Food safety and supply

##### *Amendments to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations*

4. The Administration introduced a proposal for amending the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AF) ("the Regulations"). The proposed amendments to the Regulations sought to strengthen the regulation of various harmful substances in food, including three types of mycotoxins, five types of other harmful substances in edible fats and oils, condiments and formula products intended for infants as well as partially

hydrogenated oils ("PHOs") (i.e. the main source of industrially-produced trans fats). Members generally supported the proposal but noted with concern that the Administration, having considered the views received during the public consultation exercise, decided to extend the 18-month grace period as originally proposed in the consultation document to implement the legislative amendments in two phases (i.e. commencement of all proposed amendments except the prohibition of PHOs and the labelling requirement for hydrogenated oils on 1 June 2023, and commencement of the proposed amendments concerning the prohibition of PHOs and the labelling requirement for hydrogenated oils on 1 December 2023). Some members held the view that the Administration should adopt a more stringent approach to ensure the safety of infant formula products. It would be more desirable to set a shorter grace period for infant formula products while keeping the grace period for other products unchanged.

5. The Administration advised that in adopting an extended grace period, it had taken into account the actual time and resources required by the trade to get prepared for the new food safety standards and the local testing and laboratory sector to establish the relevant testing capability. Since the legislative proposal involved the setting of new or updating of existing maximum levels ("MLs") for a number of harmful substances in food, a number of trade organizations (covering suppliers of formula products) had reflected that the trade needed a longer grace period ranging from 24 to 36 months to make the necessary preparation, especially with respect to the labelling requirement for prepackaged foods containing hydrogenated oils. To comply with the new food safety standards, traders might need to inform upstream suppliers, select substitutes, modify recipes, make changes to the product labels and packaging and arrange laboratory tests having regard to the new MLs. In addition, the shelf life of different food products might vary from 18 months (such as some frozen foods) to two or three years (such as canned foods). Sufficient time had to be allowed for traders to phase out their stock which followed the existing requirements. Subsequently, the Harmful Substances in Food (Amendment) Regulation 2021 was published in the Gazette on 11 June 2021 and tabled at the Council on 16 June 2021.

#### *Food Surveillance Programme and food import control*

6. When receiving the Administration's annual update on the implementation of the Food Surveillance Programme ("FSP"), members expressed concerns over a wide range of issues including the Administration's surveillance work over imported vegetables and chilled or frozen food products, control of food imports by land, air and sea, regulatory control over online sale of food and the preventive measures taken against the risk of importation of the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") virus through imported frozen foods.

7. According to the Administration, the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") adopted a

risk-based principle in taking vegetable samples for testing at import level and determining the number of samples collected for testing. If vegetables imported from registered vegetables farms/vegetable processing establishments in the Mainland were detected with excessive pesticide residues or other contaminants, CFS would trace the sources of the vegetables concerned and inform the Mainland authorities which would normally suspend the export from the implicated farms/processing plants until measures had been taken to rectify the problem. As chilled meat and poultry were high-risk foods, CFS had enhanced the monitoring mechanism for vehicles and containers approved for transporting chilled meat and poultry. The vehicles and containers approved for such use must be re-inspected at two-year intervals to ensure that their food storage temperatures and hygiene conditions were satisfactory and continued to be suitable for transporting chilled food.

8. The Administration further advised that in response to the increasing popularity of purchasing food via the Internet, mobile applications or social media platforms, CFS had enhanced the monitoring of the safety of food put up for online sale in recent years. The number of online food samples collected for testing under FSP had increased from about 4 000 in 2017 to more than 4 600 in 2020, with a larger proportion assigned for microbiological testing year on year (i.e. from about 6% in 2017 to more than 11% in 2020). As there were cases in the Mainland in which the COVID-19 virus was detected on imported frozen foods or their packaging, CFS had stepped up, at import level, testing of various types of frozen foods and their packaging imported from different countries/regions, which involved taking samples at CFS' Airport Food Inspection Offices and the cold stores of importers. CFS would continue the surveillance on imported frozen foods and their packaging to closely monitor the risk of importation of the virus through imported frozen foods, while maintaining close liaison with the trade to enhance the anti-epidemic work with regard to imported frozen foods.

#### *Enhancement of the information technology systems*

9. Following up its work in the last session, the Panel discussed with the Administration the latest progress of enhancing the five information technology systems of CFS (namely, the Food Trader Portal ("FTP"), the Food Import and Export Control System ("FIECS"), the Food Incident Management System ("FIMS"), the Food Surveillance System ("FSS") and the Food Classification and Coding System ("FCCS")). According to the Administration, the enhancement of these systems would increase CFS' efficiency, reinforce its capability in food import control and surveillance, improve the effectiveness in food incident management and strengthen food traceability.

10. Members were delighted to note that through FTP (launched in phases since December 2019), food importers could register online as food importers and/or distributors, renew registration or update trader information by electronic

means. Food importers could also apply online for import licences for meat and poultry and import permissions for meat, poultry, game, milk, frozen confections and eggs, and report the information regarding arrival of food consignments in Hong Kong. Compared with an application made in paper form, the time required for processing an online application for import licence for the import of meat and poultry by air as well as the import of chilled meat and poultry by land had generally been shortened from a few days to only a few hours. Members were also pleased to note that the enhancement of FCCS, FIMS, FIECS and FSS would be completed in phases the latest by end-2022. Upon completion, the five systems would interface with one another to provide a well-connected information network in support of risk profiling and risk-based surveillance for strengthened food safety control and traceability. The interfacing was expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2024 or earlier.

#### *Findings of the Second Hong Kong Population-based Food Consumption Survey*

11. Considering the evolution of dietary habits of the public over time and with reference to the frequency of conducting similar surveys in other places, CFS commenced the Second Food Consumption Survey ("FCS") in 2018 to understand the up-to-date food consumption pattern of the local population. When receiving a briefing on the major findings of the Second FCS, members raised enquiries about the sampling methodologies adopted for the survey and the changes identified in the food consumption pattern of the local population since the completion of the First FCS in 2007. There was a suggestion that when reporting the findings of future FCSs, the Administration should provide detailed comparisons of food consumption data collected in different FCSs, analyses of the changes in food consumption pattern of the local population, as well as corresponding risk management or control measures devised/adopted by CFS.

12. The Administration advised that the Second FCS had collected updated information on the food consumption of the Hong Kong population. The findings would be widely applied in CFS' relevant work, including conducting day-to-day food safety risk assessments and studies, reviewing the sampling strategy of its routine FSP, as well as assessing and proposing amendments to local food safety standards and regulations. The findings of the First FCS had indeed been applied on various fronts, including completion in 2014 of the First Total Diet Study ("TDS") covering a wide range of chemicals based on the food consumption data. CFS would plan ahead for and conduct the Second TDS, with a view to updating and understanding the exposure to individual harmful substances through dietary intake among various population groups in Hong Kong. The Administration undertook to revert to the Panel on the outcome of the Second TDS at a later stage.

*Impact of the discharge of wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power plant on food safety*

13. The announcement by the Japanese Government to discharge the wastewater generated in the process of cooling the reactors at the Fukushima nuclear power station ("FNPS") into the ocean in about two years' time (i.e. 2023) had sparked grave concern worldwide. At the Panel's request, the Administration briefed members on its response actions to the matter.

14. Members were deeply concerned that the discharge of wastewater from FNPS would bring serious and irreversible impacts to the marine ecosystem, the food chain and food safety. They urged the Administration to assess the impacts of the discharge plan on Hong Kong on various fronts and to determine the corresponding mitigation measures. There was a suggestion that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region should set up a crisis management committee (comprising representatives from relevant government departments and professionals with expertise in the relevant fields) to work out action plans and mitigation measures in response to emergencies arising from Japan's wastewater discharge plan. Consideration could be given to reducing Hong Kong's reliance on Japanese food products or imposing a stricter import control on Japanese food products.

15. The Administration advised that it had demanded the Japanese authorities to provide data on various aspects and information on control and surveillance, including the method and actual location of the wastewater discharge, the list and the concentration of the radionuclides in the wastewater, the frequency and volume of discharge, the monitoring programme on the wastewater treatment and the surrounding environment, as well as alternative methods to handle the wastewater. Since the wastewater contained various high-concentration radionuclides, the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") had made it clear to the Japanese authorities that they should not discharge the wastewater from FNPS into the ocean unilaterally without the consensus of the international community. The Administration assured members that FHB and CFS would carefully examine the information provided by the Japanese authorities and the assessments made by international expert organizations. Risk assessments would be conducted, as appropriate, to determine whether monitoring work on Japanese food should be adjusted and whether additional measures were required to ensure food safety and safeguard public health. Depending on the circumstances, CFS might require more Japanese food imports to be accompanied by radiation certificates, increase the tests on imported Japanese food and tighten import control on food products (including agricultural and fishery products) from related areas in Japan.

Requirements on air change or air purifiers in catering premises

16. On grounds of reducing the risk of virus transmission, a requirement on

ventilation in the seating areas of dine-in catering premises was stipulated in the Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH")'s directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) issued on 17 March 2021. Accordingly, operators of catering premises were required to register with FEHD on or before 30 April 2021 that the air changes per hour at seating areas of their premises had reached a minimum of six times or air purifiers which met the specified specifications had been installed according to the on-the-ground situation, together with a certificate issued by a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category). In view of the grave concerns of the catering trade over the ventilation requirement, the Panel held a special meeting in April 2021 to discuss relevant issues with the Administration.

17. Members pointed out that the business of catering premises had been badly hit by the COVID-19 epidemic and the Government's anti-epidemic and social distancing measures. As many catering business operators lacked the knowledge about air ventilation and the compliance of air purifiers with the specified specifications, they could hardly complete the registration on air change/installation of air purifiers by 30 April 2021. Also, the requirements on operators of catering premises to fulfill the new ventilation requirement and to complete registration on air change/installation of air purifiers within a short timeframe had led to a sudden surge in demand for ventilation works and air purifiers, and pushed up the relevant services fees including that for issuing a certificate providing information related to the air change or air purifiers installed in the respective premises. There was a strong call from members that the Administration should provide support to the catering trade to assist them in the compliance with the ventilation requirement.

18. The Administration advised that FEHD had established a Working Group comprising expert representatives drawn from a wide spectrum of backgrounds (including public health, engineering, surveying and ventilation) to put forward recommendations to the Government and to work on specific guidelines for ventilation contractors, so as to assist catering premises operators in the smooth implementation of and compliance with the requirement. If catering business operators were unable to complete the registration on air change/installation of air purifiers on time, they might apply for an extension of time for registration. If the application was approved, catering business operators had to complete the registration within the extended time limit specified by FEHD. During the extension period, catering premises which had submitted such an application would not be regarded as failing to comply with the requirement on air change. Catering premises could still provide dine-in service subject to the prevailing directions on the dine-in hours and the maximum number of persons at each table.

## Implementation of the Market Modernization Programme and management of public markets

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### *Market Modernization Programme project in Aberdeen Market and related arrangements*

19. Members in general supported the Administration's proposals to overhaul Aberdeen Market under the Market Modernization Programme ("MMP") and to create a non-recurrent commitment of \$100 million to allow timely disbursement of ex-gratia payments to tenants affected by market development or consolidation plans under MMP. Some members expressed concerns whether the Administration could compress the works schedule for Aberdeen Market and shorten the 14-month full market closure period, and whether priority would be given to existing stall tenants for resuming operation in the overhauled market. According to the Administration, the existing tenants had preliminarily agreed to full closure of Aberdeen Market for about 14 months for the overhaul works. FEHD would explore with the Architectural Services Department on whether and how the project programme could be further shortened. In early 2020, the Administration collected the forms for confirmation of intention from all tenants. Based on the results, the 150 stalls to be provided in the overhauled market should be able to accommodate all tenants who opted to continue operation in the market after it had been overhauled.

20. Members noted that FEHD would introduce a new management model/operation mode in new or overhauled public markets (including Aberdeen Market) by strengthening the role of the service contractors in managing the markets. Concerns were raised about the duties to be undertaken by service contractors and how FEHD would monitor the service contractors' performance to ensure the quality of management. The Administration stressed that FEHD would continue to be responsible for formulating the rental policy, determining the rental level for public market stalls and managing tenancy matters including signing of tenancy, tenancy renewal and termination. Under the new management model, service contractors would be responsible for formulating promotion and development strategies for the markets, advising on the trade mix in the markets and providing assistance in enforcing tenancy agreements, etc. In addition to daily on-site inspections, FEHD's supervisory staff would also conduct surprise checks to evaluate the performance of the contractors. In the event of unsatisfactory performance or contractors' contravention of requirements, FEHD would take appropriate actions in accordance with the terms in the service contracts.

### *Promotion of contactless payment in public markets*

21. To improve public hygiene and reduce the risk of virus transmission through physical contacts, FEHD had launched a subsidy scheme for promotion

of contactless payment in public markets under the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund. Under the scheme, a one-off subsidy, at a flat rate of \$5,000 per stall, was provided to tenants (including tenants of cooked food stalls) in markets of FEHD or the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA"). According to the Administration, during the application period of the subsidy scheme from 15 October to 21 December 2020, FEHD and HA had received more than 3 500 and 450 applications respectively. It was estimated that about 30% of the let stalls of FEHD's markets could provide contactless payment service.

22. While expressing support for the subsidy scheme, members opined that the percentage of stalls installed with contactless payment devices was still on the low side. In their views, FEHD should step up promotional efforts to encourage market stall tenants to install contactless payment devices and market patrons to make payment by contactless means. The Administration advised that since the launch of the subsidy scheme, FEHD had conducted a series of promotional activities on contactless payment and arranged frontline staff to communicate with tenants to understand their concerns and needs. In response to members' suggestions, the Administration launched the second round of the subsidy scheme in April 2021 and extended the scope to cover licensed hawkers. As at 3 August 2021, over 7 000 applications from market stall tenants and licensed hawkers had been received in the two rounds of the subsidy scheme.

### Columbarium policy

#### *Implementation of the Private Columbaria Ordinance*

23. Members noted with concern that despite the Private Columbaria Licensing Board ("PCLB")'s implementation of a number of measures since August 2019 for expediting the processing of applications for specified instruments (i.e. a licence, an exemption or a temporary suspension of liability ("TSOL")) from private columbaria, PCLB had only approved six licence applications by May 2021 and was still processing 233 applications for specified instruments submitted by 95 private columbaria. Members expressed dissatisfaction over the slow progress of PCLB in processing applications for specified instruments from private columbaria. Some members were concerned that apart from a number of requirements that must be met, private columbaria were requested to fulfill additional financial requirements when applying for a licence, as this had added undue burden to the trade and complicated the application procedures.

24. In response, the Administration stressed that the progress of PCLB in processing applications depended on the actual circumstances and the merits of each case. The current target of PCLB was to arrive at certain decisions (approval, approval-in-principle or refusal to application for licence/exemption/TSOL) on all applications for specified instruments already made in respect of pre-cut-off columbaria within two years. According to the Administration, the



requirements that must be met for various types of applications for specified instruments were all statutory requirements stipulated in the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630). To ensure that a columbarium, after being granted a licence, could continue its operation during the validity periods of the interment rights of niches sold and provide the committed services stipulated in the sale agreements with the consumers, PCLB promulgated the "Financial Mechanism for Protection of Consumer Interests" in November 2018. Licence applicants who intended to adopt a lump sum payment/pre-payment as the payment method were required to submit the specified financial information and financial projection which would then be forwarded to PCLB's financial advisor for assessment. The financial advisor would submit a financial assessment report to PCLB for the latter to consider each application according to the criteria as set out in the "Financial Mechanism for Protection of Consumer Interests" and impose appropriate financial-related licensing conditions to protect the interests of consumers when approving a licence application.

### *Promotion of green burial*

25. While appreciating the Administration's efforts in promoting green burial, members considered the increase in the public's adoption of green burial rather stagnant, as evidenced by the fact that the percentage of green burial cases over the total number of deaths only rose modestly from 14.3% in 2017 to 15.2% in 2020. Members urged the Administration to continue to promote green burial through various channels in the hope that it would steadily become the mainstream method of handling cremated ashes. There were suggestions that more Gardens of Remembrance ("GoRs") should be provided at convenient and easily accessible locations, with worshipping facilities and space for mounting plaques of the deceased to facilitate members of the public to pay tribute to the deceased; and the Administration should take the initiative to understand the public's views on green burial, in particular, whether there was any deterring factor affecting the prevalence of green burial, so as to map out appropriate measures to encourage more people to adopt green burial.

26. According to the Administration, it had been actively promoting green burial as a more environmentally friendly and sustainable means of handling ashes of the deceased. To gain a better understanding of the public's views on green burial, FEHD had conducted two questionnaire surveys in 2020. Survey respondents in general supported the Administration's greater efforts in public education and publicity to enhance the public's acceptance of green burial. In this connection, the Administration would continue with and step up its regular promotion work, including the construction of more GoRs and improvements to the thematic website "Green Burial", alongside the adoption of the "design thinking" approach to seek innovative and appropriate solutions to various issues. To further enhance the quality and efficiency of green burial services to meet public needs, the Administration planned to organize "design thinking" workshops with a view to collecting views and innovative ideas from the public and stakeholders, thereby further improving green burial services.

### *Development of columbarium at Siu Ho Wan, Lantau Island*

27. At the Panel meeting on 20 April 2021, members were consulted on the proposal to carry out site formation and associated infrastructural works for the development of a columbarium at Siu Ho Wan, Lantau Island. Members, in general, were supportive of the proposal but urged the Administration to compress the works schedule for the early completion and commissioning of the columbarium. Some members hoped that adequate parking spaces for private cars could be provided in the vicinity of the proposed columbarium; and consideration be given to providing a car park at Siu Ho Wan in order to meet the parking demand arising from the operation of the proposed columbarium.

28. The Administration advised that in light of members' views, FEHD, the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") and the Transport Department had re-examined the space near the proposed columbarium. It was preliminarily estimated that 10 or more additional metered parking spaces (making a total of more than 33 metered parking spaces) could be provided outside the columbarium. As for the project timetable, CEDD planned to use the "design and build" contract mode and aimed to complete the site formation as well as the building works for the columbarium developments as early as possible after funding approval by the Finance Committee was obtained. The target completion date of the construction works was 2026, i.e. one year earlier than the original target.

### Issues relating to agriculture and fisheries

#### *Progress of the initiatives under the New Agriculture Policy*

29. The Panel followed up with the Administration on the implementation progress of various initiatives under the New Agriculture Policy, including the establishment of an Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") under the management of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") in Kwu Tung South, New Territories. Members expressed concerns about the construction works for Phase 1 development of the Agri-Park, the criteria for allocation of farmland in the Agri-Park, the Administration's provision of support to farmers displaced by Government development projects in securing farmland for rehabilitation as well as the operation and management of the Agri-Park.

30. According to the Administration, the construction works for the Agri-Park Phase 1 was expected to be completed in phases from end 2021 to 2023. Farmers operating within the area prior to the establishment of the Agri-Park as well as farmers affected by Government development projects within the same timeframe would be accorded priority to apply for renting farmland in the Agri-Park. The rest of the Agri-Park farmland would mainly be made available to the public through open application, with a view to encouraging and nurturing

new agro-businesses to invest and explore new agricultural production methods on a commercial scale. AFCD would work out the assessment criteria and mechanism for handling applications from members of the public. The standard tenancy period would be five years. It could be renewed upon expiry for tenants who had fully complied with relevant terms and conditions.

31. The Administration further advised that it had commissioned a consultancy study on Agricultural Priority Areas ("APAs") to identify relatively large areas of quality agricultural land, explore the feasibility of designating them as APAs and recommend measures/incentives which were conducive to the putting of fallow agricultural land into long-term agricultural use. Some members expressed disappointment with the slow progress of the consultancy study. They called on the Administration to expedite the study and the designation of agricultural land as APAs. The Administration explained that there were about 4 300 hectares of active and fallow agricultural land (either government- or privately owned) in Hong Kong. The study would make specific recommendations on the locations and scope of APAs, having regard to various factors and criteria including Government development plans, environmental conditions and infrastructure support. As the issues involved were more complex than anticipated, it took time to complete the study. A steering committee led by FHB and the Development Bureau had been set up for overseeing the consultancy study.

*Government's efforts in promoting the sustainable development of the fisheries industry*

32. Established in 2014 with an approved commitment of \$500 million, the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund ("SFDF") aimed to provide financial assistance for the fisheries industry to carry out projects which were conducive to the sustainable development of the industry. When receiving an update from the Administration on the progress of the promotion of the sustainable development of the fisheries industry through the implementation of SFDF, some members expressed concerns that the successful rate of funding applications was not high and the vetting process was overly long. Noting that many approved projects were proposed by non-profit-making organizations ("NPOs") and academic institutions, members suggested that AFCD should foster partnership among the trade and NPOs/academic institutions to encourage their cooperation in making applications for SFDF. They also called on the Administration to strengthen the support to local fishermen/aquaculturists to facilitate their switching to sustainable fisheries operations after equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills through the pilot projects funded by SFDF.

33. According to the Administration, AFCD had regularly reviewed the operation of SFDF and rolled out a series of measures to improve the efficiency of SFDF. The measures included simplifying the application and vetting

procedures; enhancing the support during the application process; and allowing more projects and equipment purchases to receive funding under SFDF. Following the implementation of these measures, the average processing time of applications was shortened with vetting of all applications completed within six months, meeting the performance pledge set for it. Besides, the number of projects approved per year in the past two years was three times of the past average. AFCD had been assisting fishermen/aquaculturists in forming partnership with NPOs/academic institutions. AFCD would continue to organize liaison meetings, seminars and workshops to introduce SFDF to the fisheries industry, NPOs and academic institutions. To help the fisheries sector switch to sustainable modes of fishing operations, AFCD had been implementing a basket of support measures which included preparation for the designation of four new fish culture zones for the long-term development of the mariculture sector in local waters and provision of technical support to fishermen in daily operations.

#### Amendments to Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance

34. The previous exemptions provided in Schedule 2 to the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Cap. 529) ("VSRO") only permitted the performing of certain veterinary surgery acts by persons other than registered veterinary surgeons. With the establishment of a veterinary school at the City University of Hong Kong, the scope of exemptions needed to be expanded to allow veterinary students to perform a wider variety of veterinary surgery acts in order to facilitate their clinical training. The Administration's proposals to amend Schedule 2 to VSRO to permit any person in full time study of a veterinary programme at a recognized veterinary school, college or institution to practise veterinary surgery acts under the direct and continuous supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon as part of the training requirement under that veterinary programme received members' support. Concerns were, however, expressed on the circumstances under which owner's consent must be sought before a veterinary student might perform any exempted veterinary surgery acts on an animal as well as the level of supervision that would be required from a registered veterinary surgeon as a condition to the proposed exemptions for veterinary students.

35. According to the Administration, the supervising surgeon would be required to seek the owner's consent on site (at training clinics of veterinary schools, colleges or institutions) for a veterinary student to perform exempted veterinary surgery acts on an animal. Also, the supervising surgeon needed to inform the animal owner of the types of treatment required for the animal and how the veterinary student would provide assistance during the treatment process. The exempted veterinary acts which could be performed by veterinary students would be limited to those veterinary surgery acts or procedures that were necessary as part of the training requirement under their veterinary programmes, hence ensuring that the exempted veterinary acts would be

relevant to the course content and required by their curriculum. The Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 2) Order 2021 ("Amendment Order") was subsequently gazetted on 18 June 2021 and tabled at the Council on 23 June 2021. The Amendment Order came into effect on 1 September 2021.

### Proposed construction of a joint-user building in Yuen Long

36. The Panel was consulted on the proposed construction of a joint-use building ("JUB") for reprovisioning a refuse collection point ("RCP") and setting up a community recycling centre at the junction between Hung Yuen Road and Hung Ping Road, Yuen Long. Members in general supported the proposal but expressed concerns about the scale of the project as well as its impact on the surrounding environment. The Administration emphasized that to cater for the actual need arising from developments in Hung Shui Kiu and the anticipated population growth of the area, there was an imminent need to reprovision an RCP at the proposed site. The design of the proposed JUB had incorporated the suggestions and addressed the views and concerns raised by members of the Environment, Climate Change, Agriculture and Fisheries Committee of the Yuen Long District Council, local residents and relevant stakeholders. The relevant funding proposal was subsequently approved by the Finance Committee on 26 February 2021.

### Subcommittees formed under the Panel

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

37. Issues relating to environmental hygiene remained high on the agenda of the Panel. To enable more focused discussion on relevant issues, the Panel appointed at its meeting on 10 November 2020 a subcommittee to study and, where appropriate, recommend measures for improving environmental hygiene and cityscape. Under the chairmanship of Hon CHAN Han-pan, the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Improvement of Environmental Hygiene and Cityscape commenced work on 13 January 2021. The Subcommittee had concluded its work and submitted a report (LC Paper No. CB(2)1327/20-21) to the Panel in July 2021.

38. To follow up on the recommendations in respect of the management and hygiene conditions of public toilets put forward by the Subcommittee as well as those made by the Office of the Ombudsman in its direct investigation report published in May 2021, the Panel discussed with the Administration in September 2021 the latter's response actions to those recommendations. Members were pleased to note that the Administration had taken on board all the observations and recommendations made by the Subcommittee and The Ombudsman. Some members subscribed to the Subcommittee's view that it

was pivotal for the Administration to accord equal weight to improving both the hardware and software contents of public toilets in order to enhance their overall hygiene standard. They called on the Administration to make greater efforts to, among others, expedite the refurbishment/facelifting works for the 240 public toilets under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, make use of technology to enhance the efficiency of repair works therein, and strengthen the monitoring of toilet cleansing services provided by outsourced contractors and FEHD itself.

39. According to the Administration, it was actively exploring the application of new technologies and innovative ideas, with a view to improving public toilets' facilities, management and hygiene conditions on various fronts. For example, to further expedite the progress of refurbishment works (in particular, for those public toilets situated in rural areas), the Administration was actively exploring the application of "Modular Integrated Construction" and "Design for Manufacture and Assembly" in public toilet refurbishment and improvement works to shorten on-site construction time. In addition, FEHD had developed and piloted the "Smart Public Toilet System" in two public toilets to collect daily operational data for reference in the review of service quality and management effectiveness (covering various aspects such as cleansing, housekeeping and maintenance) as well as for the introduction of new technologies for better public toilet design.

#### *Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights*

40. The Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights, established under the Panel to study and follow-up on policies and measures relating to animal rights, completed its initial 12-month period of work in December 2017 and subsequently reactivated its work on 13 January 2021. Under the chairmanship of Hon CHAN Hak-kan, the Subcommittee held a total of six meetings between January and June 2021. The Subcommittee had concluded its work and submitted a report (LC Paper No. CB(2)1509/20-21) to the Panel in September 2021.

#### Meetings held

41. During the period between October 2020 and September 2021, the Panel held a total of 12 meetings including an informal meeting for receiving the briefing by SFH on the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address by videoconferencing. The Panel has scheduled another meeting on 12 October 2021 to receive SFH's briefing on the 2021 Policy Address.

**Legislative Council**

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Terms of Reference**

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy areas prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Membership list for the 2020-2021 session\***

**Chairman** Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS, JP

**Deputy Chairman** Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP

**Members** Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH, JP  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

(Total : 16 members)

**Clerk** Miss Josephine SO

**Legal adviser** Ms Wendy KAN

\* Changes in membership are shown in Annex to Appendix II.



## Annex to Appendix II

### Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

#### Changes in membership

<b>Member</b>	<b>Relevant date</b>
Hon IP Kin-yuen	Up to 20 October 2020
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung	Up to 21 October 2020
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting	Up to 29 October 2020
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP	Up to 10 November 2020
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP	Up to 10 November 2020
Hon SHIU Ka-chun	Up to 11 November 2020
Hon HUI Chi-fung	Up to 11 November 2020
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho	Up to 11 November 2020
Hon James TO Kun-sun	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon Claudia MO	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH	Up to 12 November 2020
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon KWONG Chun-yu	Up to 12 November 2020
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP	Up to 1 December 2020
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP	Up to 1 December 2020
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP	Up to 1 December 2020
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP	Up to 2 December 2020
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP	Up to 3 December 2020
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP	Up to 3 December 2020 Since 25 January 2021
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP	Up to 3 December 2020
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding	Up to 3 December 2020
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP	Up to 3 December 2020
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP	Up to 6 December 2020
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai	Up to 25 August 2021

For **changes in LegCo Membership**, please refer to the link below:

(<https://www.legco.gov.hk/general/english/members/yr16-20/notes.htm>)