

**Advisory Council on the Environment
Waste Management Subcommittee**

Notes of the 19th Meeting Held on 13 October 2008

Present

Prof. Poon Chi-sun (Chairman)
Mr. Edwin Lau
Dr. Man Chi-sum
Mr. Simon Wong
Mr. Tsang Kam-lam
Dr. Yau Wing-kwong
Mr. Te Chi-Wang (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies

Mr. James Graham
Prof. Howard Huang
Dr. Ng Cho-nam

In Attendance

Mr. Alfred Lee	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Management Policy)
Mr. Patrick Lei	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)
Dr. Derek Wong	Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)

Action

Welcome

1. The Chairman welcomed Dr. Derek Wong of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), who replaced Dr. Cherie Lee, to provide secretariat support to the Subcommittee. The Chairman also expressed his gratitude to Dr. Cherie Lee for her past contribution to the Subcommittee.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting

2. The draft minutes of the 18th meeting held on 2 June 2008 were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Public Education Programme

3. The Secretary reported that with the support of the Subcommittee, the “Save Food Project” proposed by Greeners’ Action was approved by the Environment and Conservation Fund Committee in September 2008.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation on the Management of Packaging Materials and Beverage Containers (PowerPoint Presentation)

4. Mr. Patrick Lei briefed Members on the latest situation on the management of packaging materials and beverage containers in Hong Kong. In particular, he highlighted overseas experience in addressing the problem of excessive packaging and in recovering and recycling post-consumption packaging waste. He also advised the Subcommittee on recent initiatives on the voluntary front, including the agreement on minimal packaging with five local moon cake manufacturers and a new recycling programme for glass bottles to be launched in cooperation with the Hong Kong Hotels Association and eleven hotels.
5. A Member welcomed the new recycling programme for glass bottles, and suggested that glass bottles from bars and restaurants in certain districts, such as Lan Kwai Fong and Wan Chai, could be collected as well. Mr. Alfred Lee responded that the new recycling programme was on a trial basis, and it appeared to be more cost-effective to collect glass bottles from the hotel sector, where larger quantities of glass bottles were disposed of on a daily basis. Depending on the effectiveness of this trial, consideration could be given to extend the programme to other sectors, such as bars and restaurants. A Member also supported the new recycling programme, and suggested that proper outlets for the recovered materials should be secured. Mr. Alfred Lee responded that indeed, the recovered materials from the recycling programme would be re-processed locally into pavement blocks.
6. The Chairman asked whether there were recovery statistics for individual components of packaging waste. Mr. Alfred Lee responded that the recovery statistics for paper, plastic and the like were available and were generally considered respectable

when compared with other advanced economies in Asia. Yet, there was room for improvement, particularly with respect to certain packaging materials, such as glass bottles. The Chairman asked whether the recovery statistic could be further broken down into commercial and industrial sources and domestic sources. A Member added that such break-down could provide indicators on the success of source separation programme for domestic waste. The Secretary undertook to check with relevant EPD colleagues and revert.

Secretary

[Post-meeting Note: EPD colleagues advised that the recovery statistics could not be further broken down, as such recovery data were collected from recyclers, which accepted recyclables from all sources.]

7. A Member noted that the awareness of public on the 3-colored waste separation bins could be further improved. A Member concurred that many people were not aware of the color code system of the waste separation bins. A Member suggested that in addition to public education, placing 3-colored waste separation bins at more convenient locations could enhance utilization. A Member also suggested that the designs of the 3-colored waste separation bins could be reviewed to increase their appeal and facilitate placement at locations of high patronage. Given Members' interests, the Chairman suggested that the Subcommittee could be briefed on the latest situation of the 3-colored waste separation bins at the next meeting. Mr. Alfred Lee welcomed the suggestion, and agreed that a briefing could be arranged.

Secretary

8. To sum up, the Chairman noted that certain progress had been made on the management of packaging materials and beverage containers. Yet, it appeared that the problem of packaging waste could be further addressed with the introduction of producer responsibility schemes in the future.

Agenda Item 4: Proposed Themes for the Public Education Programme of the "Policy Framework" (Paper WMSC 05/08)

9. The Secretary briefed Members on the latest progress of the public education programme and the proposed themes for the third round of funding applications. Members supported the two proposed themes, namely producer responsibility schemes

for plastic shopping bags and for beverage containers, and suggested that packaging materials should also be included in the proposed themes.

[Post-meeting Note: Members' suggestion was taken on board and an invitation for funding applications was issued on 17 October 2008.]

Agenda Item 5: Progress of Key Initiatives in the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” (Paper WMSC 06/08)

10. Mr. Alfred Lee briefed Members on the progress of key initiatives in the “Policy Framework”. On the EcoPark, a Member noted that the remaining two lots were designated for recycling of waste metals, which, he considered, worked rather well without the support of the Government. Mr. Alfred Lee noted that the designation of lots for particular materials was drawn up in consultation with the recycling trade, and the focus of the EcoPark was more on value-added processes. With respect to the lots in questions, the Secretary undertook to check with relevant EPD colleagues and revert. Secretary

[Post-meeting Note: EPD colleagues advised that the aim of the EcoPark was to provide land for handling locally collected waste and turning them into valuable products. Through EPD's consultation with the recycling trade, it was noted that there was a demand for land to re-process waste metals. Since the EcoPark was a new concept in Hong Kong, EPD would like to develop the EcoPark in a progressive manner. In addition to encouraging recycling of waste materials that might not be economically viable on its own, EPD would also consider treatment of other materials with value-added processes.]

11. A Member considered that the forthcoming implementation of the environmental levy scheme on plastic shopping bags should not create undue to retailers. Mr. Alfred Lee agreed and said that EPD had been working closely with the retail trade to devise the implementation detail of the environmental levy scheme. EPD shared the view that the environmental levy scheme should be workable and easy to comply with, while maintaining the integrity of the overall regulatory regime.

Any Other Business

Computer Recycling Programme

12. A Member suggested that the public collection point service and the mobile collection vehicle service could be extended to more locations and the collection frequency could be increased. Mr. Alfred Lee responded that depending on the experience gained, EPD would optimize such services to cater for public demand.

Funding for District Councils

13. A Member asked whether District Councils could apply for funding under the Public Education Programme. The Secretary responded that local non-profit making organizations could apply for funding under the Environment and Conservation Fund. In addition, District Councils might also have other funding sources for organizing community activities.

Letter from a member of the Public

14. A member of the public wrote to the Subcommittee suggesting a recycling programme for single-use batteries. A draft reply was tabled for discussion. Members suggested such recycling programme could be considered in the longer term, when more pressing issues, such as the recycling of rechargeable batteries, had been addressed.

[Post-meeting Note: The reply was issued on 21 October 2008.]

Agenda Item 5: Date of Next Meeting

15. The next meeting had been scheduled for 8 December 2008.

ACE Waste Management Subcommittee
Secretariat
November 2008