

**Confirmed Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
Of the Waste Management Subcommittee  
on 28 September 2020 at 2:30 pm**

**Present:**

Ir Prof Irene LO, JP (Chairperson)  
Prof Albert LEE  
Ir MA Lee-tak, SBS  
Mr Simon WONG, JP  
Prof WONG Sze-chun, BBS, JP  
Ir Dr Conrad WONG, BBS, JP  
Ms Julia LAU  
Mr Andrew LEE  
Mr Adam KOO  
Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP  
Ms Sylvia CHAN, MH  
Ms Christina TANG  
Ir Samantha KONG  
Ms Becky LAM (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies:**

Ms LAM Chung-yan

**In Attendance:**

Mrs Millie NG, JP	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2), Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Mr Bruno LUK	Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (Special Assignments), EPD
Dr Samuel CHUI	Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure), EPD
Mr FONG Kin-wa	Assistant Director (Waste Reduction and Recycling), EPD
Mr CHENG Tak-kuen	Assistant Director (Waste Infrastructure Planning), EPD
Mr WONG Chuen-fai	Assistant Director (Waste Recycling Review and Special Duties), EPD
Mr Stephen SIU	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Policy Development), EPD
Ms Fanny YEUNG	Senior Administrative Officer (Waste Infrastructure Planning), EPD
Miss Dora CHU	Executive Officer (CBD) 1, EPD
Miss Ingrid SUEN	Executive Officer (CBD) 2, EPD

Action

The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting and informed them that apologies of absence had been received from Ms Lam Chung-yan.

**Item 1 : Matters arising**

2. The Chairperson advised that the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 January 2020 were confirmed by circulation on 20 March 2020. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**Item 2 : Strategies on Waste Management**  
*(ACE-WM Paper 4/2020)*

3. The Chairperson said that the paper briefed Members on the Government's holistic work and progress in various waste management initiatives, with a view to formulating long-term strategies on waste management for Hong Kong.

4. There was no declaration of interests by Members.

5. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mrs Millie Ng, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, briefed Members on the progress of waste management work in Hong Kong over the past years, focusing on policy and legislation, social mobilisation and investment in waste infrastructure, as well as the challenges encountered in waste management.

*Producer Responsibility Schemes*

6. In reply to the Chairperson's enquiry about the increase in the disposal rate of plastic shopping bags (PSB), Mr Bruno Luk advised that the PSB Charging Scheme had extended to cover the entire retail sector since 2015 and a significant drop in PSBs disposal was witnessed in the same year. Mr Luk said that the rebound in the number of disposed PSBs in recent years might be attributed to the diminishing effect of the charges. To tackle the issue, the Government had reviewed the Scheme, including the charging level and the exemption scope, and planned to consult the public by late 2020 on the way forward.

*Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging*

7. The Chairperson remarked that during the consultation sessions for the 2020 Policy Address, various stakeholders had raised concerns on the implementation progress of MSW charging. Mr Bruno Luk explained that the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (the Amendment Bill) was introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in November 2018. In June 2020, the LegCo Bills Committee decided to discontinue its work having regard to the progress of scrutinising the Bill. In view of the latest decision that the sixth-term LegCo would continue to discharge its duties for no less than one year until the seventh term of office began, Mr Luk advised that the Government would keep in view the decision of the LegCo on how to take forward the MSW Charging Bill in the remaining term. The Government would meanwhile enhance the community recycling network and other measures to support waste reduction and recycling to prepare for the future implementation of MSW charging.

8. A Member sought for the statistics of MSW disposal at the West New Territories Landfill (WENT) and North East New Territories Landfill (NENT). Dr Samuel Chui advised that about 11,000 tonnes of MSW were produced daily, with half disposed of at WENT, and the other half at NENT. He mentioned that only construction waste was disposed of at the South East New Territories Landfill at Tseung Kwan O.

9. A Member expressed disappointment that the Amendment Bill could not be passed in the 2019-2020 legislative session and was concerned that the current economic situation in Hong Kong might affect the receptiveness of the public towards MSW charging. He shared his experience of offering price reduction as incentive to encourage customers to opt out of the use of plastic straws, and suggested the Government consider the provision of economic incentives such as the reduction of Government rates to increase public acceptance of MSW charging. Mr Bruno Luk remarked that there would be a 12- to 18-month preparatory period after the passage of the Bill, which would allow the public and stakeholders to make necessary preparations for the implementation of MSW charging. The economic and social situation would also be reviewed after the preparation period

before deciding on the actual implementation date.

10. A Member was appreciative of the Government's efforts in introducing environmental education to schools. To facilitate the implementation of MSW charging, she suggested the Government provide incentive and set priority in view of the local context and draw inspirations from the PSB Charging Scheme to devise effective ways to instill behavioural change. She opined that the Government should improve the tidiness of public spaces in Hong Kong as a way to recognise the public's efforts on environmental protection. She further remarked that different Government bureaux and departments should collaborate and take the first step to work on waste reduction.

11. Mrs Millie Ng agreed that efforts should be stepped up to restore public confidence on the recycling of waste. She advised that the various pilot schemes centralizing the collection of various types of recyclables could ensure that the recyclables collected were properly processed. Mr Bruno Luk supplemented that the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had taken over the management of recycling bins in public places from the Food & Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) since October 2020. To increase the collection capacity for recyclables and help the public avoid improper use of recycling bins, the design of the recycling bins was enhanced by separating the litter compartment from the recycling bins. He also advised that EPD's outreaching teams, in collaboration with different community groups, would provide on-site assistance in practising source separation of waste and clean recycling. Outreaching services had been carried out in three pilot districts and would be further extended to other districts by phases, with a view to encouraging the public to recycle and support MSW charging.

#### *Food Wise Campaign*

12. A Member opined that Hong Kong should promote food waste reduction at source in addition to processing food waste at the O•PARKs. Mrs Millie Ng said that since the launch of the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign, a gradual decrease in domestic food waste disposal was observed. The Government would maintain close collaboration with the community and the catering sector to promote the Campaign.

13. A Member suggested the Government follow the principle of “N-1” proposed in the Mainland to reduce food wastage, in which the number of dishes ordered at food establishments should always be one less than the number of diners. Mrs Millie Ng agreed to take this suggestion into consideration.

*Collaboration with the Community*

14. A Member shared that one in every eight deaths was directly linked to air pollution and around one-third of ailments were attributable to air pollution. He suggested reflecting these statistics in waste-related public education to highlight the correlation between environmental protection and public health, with a view to encouraging public engagement in various environmental initiatives.

*Nurturing a “Plastic-free” Culture*

15. In response to the Chairperson’s enquiry on minimizing the use of disposable plastic tableware, Mrs Millie Ng advised that EPD had commissioned a consultancy study on the feasibility, scope and mechanism of controlling or banning disposable plastic tableware, which was scheduled for completion by the end of 2020. While reference would be drawn from the international experience and development, she explained that it might not be fully applicable to local context given the unique Asian food culture. She added that cost and operational implications of using alternative tableware would also need to be taken into consideration.

16. A Member remarked that a timeline for banning the use of disposable plastic tableware should be devised by the Government. Mrs Millie Ng advised that the Government would consider the recommendations to be made by the consultants in formulating a proposal for Hong Kong as well as the implementation timeline. Views of the public and stakeholders would be sought in devising the proposal.

17. A Member observed that more and more Southeast Asian countries were promoting the use of reusable tableware. Given that the surge in takeaways in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, he suggested the Government take the opportunity to help people cultivate the habit of using reusable tableware.

18. A Member remarked that many local start-ups had come up with various alternatives to disposable plastic tableware but lacked the resources to promote the products. Another Member suggested that a platform should be provided for information sharing to facilitate promotion of recycling. Mrs Millie Ng noted that the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation had been supporting some start-ups which made innovations in new materials for producing reusable tableware. The Green Tech Fund to be set up by the Government would also subsidize research projects on green technologies which might include the development of alternatives to disposable plastic tableware.

*Community Recycling Network*

19. A Member considered that education should be enhanced on the proper usage of recycling bins. Mr Wong Chuen-fai advised that the Government spared no efforts in the promotion of clean recycling and source separation of domestic waste, and positive progress had been witnessed. He added that the Government had also been enhancing the community recycling network to facilitate recycling.

20. In response to the Chairperson's enquiry on the types of recyclables collected by Community Green Stations (CGSs), Mr Wong Chuen-fai advised that CGSs focused on collecting low-value recyclables from the community. Such mode of operation had gained support from private recyclers that mainly collect recyclables of higher commercial value.

*Recyclables Collection Services*

21. In response to a Member's enquiry on the development progress of the smart recycling system, Mrs Millie Ng advised that smart bins for collecting food waste would be used by selected housing estates during the second phase of the food waste collection trial. Mr Wong Chuen-fai added that EPD had launched a pilot programme for smart recycling system in mid-September 2020. The pilot programme would assess the local application and public acceptance of such a system. During the first phase, a Community Smart Recycling Vehicle would be touring around various districts to introduce and let the public try out the new system. He supplemented that participants could earn points for gift redemption as an incentive for recycling.

22. A Member remarked that sufficient space for the recycling facilities should be reserved as part of new residential developments. She pointed out that the Government should take the lead by providing recycling facilities in public housing estates. Mrs Millie Ng advised that EPD had been collaborating with the Development Bureau and professional bodies to promote sufficient space for recycling in residential developments including public housing estates, and would continue to work with stakeholders in this area.

*Waste-to-resources Infrastructure*

23. In response to the Chairperson's remark on the growing concerns on food waste from different stakeholders, Mrs Millie Ng advised that the Government had commissioned infrastructure for transforming food waste into energy, and more were in the pipeline. The Government was also proactively exploring channels to facilitate food waste collection. With reference to overseas experience, no more than 50% of food waste could be recycled even with sustained efforts, and hence promotion on waste reduction at source was important. With the introduction of MSW charging, the public and business sector would have a greater incentive to separate food waste at source.

24. A Member suggested the Government consider delivering construction waste to Mainland for processing in view of the lack of local infrastructure in recycling construction waste. He added that Global Positioning System (GPS) might help trace the trucks carrying the construction waste to ensure that the waste would be recycled by factories in the Mainland instead of being disposed of improperly.

25. In reply to a Member's enquiry regarding the possibility of building small incinerators on outlying islands, Mr Cheng Tak-kuen advised that outlying islands transfer facilities were established to collect and convey MSW from the Islands District to the landfill or the future incinerator. The Chairperson considered that it would be a challenge to construct extra Integrated Waste Management Facilities (IWMF) in view of the great controversy concerning the related environmental impacts.

26. A Member suggested introducing incentives to promote the use of reclaimed water in the New Territories. Dr Samuel Chui advised that Water

Supplies Department and Drainage Services Department had been working together on the expansion of Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works, of which the reclaimed water would be used for toilet flushing in the near future.

*Support for the Recycling Trade*

27. The Chairperson suggested that the Government should strengthen the collaboration with the Greater Bay area on recycling. Mrs Millie Ng advised that the Government had maintained dialogues with her counterparts in the Greater Bay area as well as the Guangdong Province, and had been working proactively to meet the standards stipulated under the Mainland's tightened import control regime of recyclables.

28. A Member drew Member's attention to news articles regarding the rumored withdrawal of a tenant in EcoPark that failed to build and operate a paper recycling and manufacturing plant according to the contractual terms. Mrs Millie Ng noted that the tenant had been awarded the service contract in 2018, but was unable to commence the proposed project as scheduled under the current economic situation. With the recent launch of the citywide waste paper collection and recycling services, Mrs Ng aspired that a stable source of waste paper would open up new avenues and opportunity for commissioning local waste paper recycling plants.

29. Mr Fong Kin-wa supplemented that the waste paper collection and recycling services could help address the issue of price fluctuations of waste papers and promote sustainability of the trade. Contractors would provide the services to maintain and enhance the quantity as well as quality of collected waste paper in order to meet the tightened import requirements of the Mainland and overseas markets. Through the provision of economic incentive, contractors were encouraged to identify more outlets for waste paper, such as markets in Southeast Asia.



*Conclusion*

30. The Chairperson thanked the subject teams for their detailed presentation. She summarised the views of Members and concluded that Members were in general supportive of the waste management strategies for Hong Kong.

**Item 3 : Any other business**

31. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

**Item 4 : Date of next meeting**

32. Members will be advised on the date and agenda for the next meeting in due course.

**Waste Management Subcommittee Secretariat  
December 2020**