

**Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of
Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (2024-2025) of the
Seventh Term of the Central and Western District Council**

Date : 26 September 2024 (Thursday)
Time : 10:00 am
Venue : Conference Room
14/F, Harbour Building
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present:

Chairman

Mr YEUNG Hok-ming, MH

Vice-chairman

Mr LUI Hung-pan

Members

Dr WONG Sin-man, Mandy
Mr NG Yin
Mr LEE Chi-hang, Sidney, MH
Mr QIU Song-qing, MH
Ms JIN Ling, MH
Mr SHIH Jan Noel
Mr WU Man-hin
Ms CHEUNG Ka-yan
Mr YOUNG Chit-on, Jeremy
Mr YEUNG Hoi-wing
Mr YIP Wing-shing, SBS, BBS, MH, JP
Mr IP Yik-nam, JP
Ms CHIU Wah-kuen, MH
Mr LAU Tin-ching
Mr LAW Kam-fai

Co-opted Members

Ms LEUNG Yuen-man, Yvonne
Ms LU Hai-rong, Karen

Guests:

Item 4

Mr PAU Chung-on District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Central/Western), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms HUI Man-wai Chief Health Inspector (Central/Western)3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item 5

Ms CHAN Kei-yan, Pinky Acting Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional South)1, Environmental Protection Department

Mr PAU Chung-on District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Central/Western), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms HUI Man-wai Chief Health Inspector (Central/Western)3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr WONG Ka-hei, Daniel Senior Executive Officer (District Management), Central and Western District Office

Miss LEUNG Wing-sze, Gigi Executive Officer (District Council)3, Central and Western District Office

Mr SIN Sheung-keung, Andrew Patrol Sub-unit Two Commander, Central District, Hong Kong Police Force

Ms CHEUNG Yan-yan Neighbourhood Police Co-ordinator, Central District Police Community Relations, Hong Kong Police Force

Item 6

Mr PAU Chung-on District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Central/Western), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms HUI Man-wai Chief Health Inspector (Central/Western)3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item 7

Mr PAU Chung-on District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Central/Western), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms HUI Man-wai Chief Health Inspector (Central/Western)3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

In Attendance:

Miss TANG Chui-kwan, Constance Acting Senior Executive Officer (District Council),
Central and Western District Office
Ms ONG Amy Acting Senior Liaison Officer (Building Management)1,
Central and Western District Office
Mr TSE Yip-kei, Alvin Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional
South)1, Environmental Protection Department

Secretary:

Ms CHEUNG Wai-ting, Kelsey Executive Officer (District Council)4, Central and
Western District Office

Opening Remarks

(10:01 am)

The Chairman said that as the quorum was reached, he announced that the fifth meeting of the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (FEHC) (2024-2025) of the Seventh Term of the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC) would begin and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. In order to identify the attendees, staff of the Secretariat would check the staff cards of every person entering the Conference Room, and obtain their respective business cards. Media reporters and assistants to Members should register their real names and mobile phone numbers for the Secretariat's record. In addition, he suggested that each discussion item should be proceeded in the format of "four-minute question-and-answer inclusive" for a more effective discussion. Representatives present were reminded to deliver speeches and give responses as concise as possible. The Chairman reminded Members to make appropriate declarations of interest where necessary.

Item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 4th FEHC meeting held on 18 July 2024

(10:01 am)

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat did not receive before this meeting any suggested amendments of the minutes (draft) of the fourth FEHC meeting. Since Members present did not raise any comments regarding the minutes, the Chairman announced that the minutes concerned were confirmed.

Item 2: Chairman's report

(10:01 am – 10:02 am)

3. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had earlier circulated the following papers among Members for their information:

Paper No.	Paper Title	Date of Circulation
32/2024	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Anti-mosquito Campaign 2024 (Phase III) in Central & Western District	14 August 2024
38/2024	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Relocation Programme of Man Yiu Street Public Toilet	23 September 2024

Item 3: Action checklist on matters arising from the last meeting (C&W FEHC Paper No. 37/2024)

(10:02 am)

4. The Chairman asked Members to note the paper concerned.

Item 4: Standing item – The problem of dog fouling in public places in the Central and Western District

(C&W FEHC Paper No. 33/2024)

(10:04 am – 10:16 am)

5. The Chairman said that the paper had been submitted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and asked its representative to introduce the paper concerned.

6. Representative of the FEHD said that there was nothing to add to the content of the paper. Members were welcome to express their views on the issue and the FEHD would endeavour to address them.

7. The Chairman invited Members to express their views and make enquiries on the issue. Speeches by Members were consolidated as follows:

- (i) A Member believed that penalties addressing the issue with dog fouling in public places should be imposed on dog owners instead of those who assisted in walking the dogs because various dog owners would delegate the caring responsibilities of their dogs to foreign domestic helpers. As foreign domestic helpers were not familiar with the local laws and regulations concerned, they might unknowingly break the law.
- (ii) A Member said that there were disputes among residents over issues with environmental hygiene at Prince's Terrace, and that the Police were even asked to mediate the disputes. Therefore, the Member hoped that the government department could step in to deal with the issue, or that the frequency of cleansing Prince's Terrace could be stepped up with the aid of the District-led Actions Scheme.
- (iii) A Member believed that there was room for improvement in the FEHD's enforcement procedures and suggested that the FEHD could work together with residents with reference to the mode of Project PROVE, a mobile application report platform by the Police, whereby the public could report an incident to the FEHD directly by uploading videos or photographs to assist in law enforcement.
- (iv) A Member noticed that many would visit the pet corner at Belcher Bay Promenade. However, a small number of dog owners failed to clean up the location after their dogs had fouled, which was particularly serious on rainy days as dog faeces would flow everywhere with rainwater, posing a severe impact to environmental hygiene. The Member asked how the department responsible for managing the venue would normally deal with the situation.

8. Representative of the FEHD gave a consolidated response to Members' speeches and said that the FEHD had stepped up cleansing public places near Prince's Terrace. Besides, publicity posters and banners in multiple languages had also been put up and hung in suitable places to raise public awareness over the proper clearance of pet foul and the maintenance of environmental hygiene. As regards law enforcement, the FEHD conducted 12 special enforcement operations against dog fouling from July to September. Meanwhile, uniformed and plainclothes staff also carried out enforcement operations in the vicinity of the Central and Western District on a regular basis. Under the law, no person in charge of a dog should allow the dog to deposit its faeces in a street. However, it would not be an offence if the person in charge of the dog removed the faeces and cleaned the place before leaving the location where the faeces concerned were deposited. At various times of the day, the FEHD's staff carried out surprise enforcement operations in dog fouling blackspots in the Central and Western District, such as Mid-Levels Central, Mid-levels West and Sai Wan, during which no contraventions with those allowing their dogs to foul the streets were detected. The FEHD would further step up its operations.

[Post-meeting note: On 18 October 2024, the Secretariat relayed the FEHD's written reply to Members by email.]

Item 5: Request the Government to step up the monitoring of recycling stores in Central and Sheung Wan where their lorries occupy roadside loading/unloading bays for a prolonged period, waste materials are placed on pavements at will and pedestrian access is obstructed, and scrap metal cutting workshops are unreasonably set up on pavements, seriously exploiting the use of pavements by members of the public as well as endangering their safety

(C&W FEHC Paper No. 34/2024)

(10:16 am – 10:42 am)

9. The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the FEHD, the Central and Western District Office (C&WDO) and the Hong Kong Police Force to the meeting and invited Members to express their views and make enquiries on the issue. Speeches by Members were consolidated as follows:

- (i) A Member said that individual recycling stores had all along used their shop front and the nearby public places as a workshop and cut the recyclables with cutting machines on the pavements, creating a shower of sparks. Some staff of a recycling store even broke florescent tubes outside the store, leaving glass pieces all over the place and posing a risk to pedestrians. Large bundles of scrap paper were often placed by the roadside of Cultural Square by the recycling store. Not only was the traffic obstructed, poor odours were also emitted from soaked scrap paper, affecting environmental hygiene.
- (ii) A Member noticed that the recycling stores at Queen Victoria Street, with a relatively small shop front, would often occupy the pavement and carriageway

by placing the recyclables there, seriously obstructing pedestrian and traffic flow. In particular, large vehicles like buses did not have sufficient space to make a turn, causing danger to the public.

- (iii) A Member believed that the recycling store which placed their recyclables and cutting machines on the pavements were occupying public places for commercial activities. The department should adopt a stringent approach in law enforcement consistently to prosecute the store.
- (iv) A Member added that some recycling stores at Forbes Street, Kennedy Town and Kwai Heung Street, Sai Ying Pun would place metal cages and recyclables on government land nearby, causing issues with environmental hygiene. It was hoped that the department could take law enforcement actions against the occupation of public places on a regular basis.
- (v) A Member believed that as street obstruction by stores was related to issues with hygiene, traffic, noises and public safety, joint-departmental enforcement operations were by far the most effective approach to tackle the issue. Therefore, the Member hoped that the government could consider conducting joint-departmental operations on a regular basis to consistently combat the relevant offence.
- (vi) A Member said that some recycling stores had already included the fines for street obstruction in their operating costs and suggested that progressive fines be imposed to raise the costs of non-compliance by the stores, thereby enhancing the deterrent effect.
- (vii) A Member believed that the issue with street obstruction by the stores at Tung Loi Lane had existed for many years, which was getting more and more serious. It was suggested that the department should consider introducing a “blacklist” system by refusing to issue the relevant licence to the recycling store involved or restricting the store from applying for the Recycling Fund.
- (viii) A Member added that apart from the recycling stores, some lorry trucks of the courier companies had all along been parked by the roadside near Western Market, Sheung Wan, occupying public places for the staff to carry out work procedures, such as the dismantling and sorting of goods. Nevertheless, the government did not take any corresponding actions to combat the situation concerned, so it was suggested that the government should set up a joint-departmental enforcement team to tackle the situation.
- (ix) A Member believed that while the recycling stores, being an offensive trade, would have an impact on the safety of residents nearby and environmental hygiene, the recycling industry was of pivotal importance to Hong Kong. As a result, the Member suggested that the government should start by reviewing its policies and establishing a compensation mechanism to help the recycling

industry carry on with their business through relocating to brownfield sites in the New Territories. In this regard, the recycling industry could continue to operate whilst minimising its impact on the public.

- (x) A Member believed that issues with the recycling stores lay in the fact that they occupied public space as part of their workshops and placed large machines there to cut the recyclables. Furthermore, the situation intensified as they began to occupy more and more space. Taking Kwai Heung Street as an example, a lorry truck had always been parked outside a recycling store, leaving only one lane available for traffic. As this kind of cases could not be tackled by a single department, it was hoped that the government departments could put in place joint efforts in solving the issue where the recycling stores occupied public places.

10. Representative of the FEHD said that apart from joint-departmental operations, the FEHD also inspected the recycling stores on a regular basis. The FEHD would actively participate in the joint-departmental operations in a co-operative manner.

11. Representative of the C&WDO said that the C&WDO had co-ordinated five and four joint-departmental operations in the vicinity of the scrap recycling stores at Tung Loi Lane and Man Yee Lane respectively. To combat the relevant offence, more joint-departmental operations would follow.

12. A Member stressed that behaviours, such as operating a cutting machine and breaking fluorescent tubes on a pavement, would pose a severe impact to public safety. It was hoped that the number of joint-departmental enforcement operations could be increased, thereby enhancing the deterrent effect.

13. Representative of the C&WDO responded that the relevant joint-departmental operations would be stepped up.

Item 6: Concern about the black spots of moss on pavements and stairs in the Central and Western District
(C&W FEHC Paper No. 35/2024)

(10:42 am – 10:59 am)

14. The Chairman said that the remainder of the meeting would be chaired by the Vice-chairman.

15. The Vice-chairman welcomed representatives of the FEHD to the meeting and invited Members to express their views and make enquiries on the issue. Speeches by Members were consolidated as follows:

- (i) A Member said that quite a number of public complaints about the issue with moss had been received recently. The Member said that while the FEHD would

promptly cleanse the streets upon receipt of a complaint, moss would grow expeditiously and appear in the same location in less than two months, resulting in new complaints. Therefore, the Member asked whether the FEHD would actively inspect and cleanse the moss blackspots.

- (ii) A Member asked whether the department had any suitable cleansing products or chemicals to effectively eradicate the growth of moss on a safe basis.
- (iii) A Member said that moss growing on stairs would result in a greater risk for senior citizens to slip and fall. Also, some members of the public expressed that the frequency of cleansing the stairs was low and asked the FEHD to step up its efforts in cleansing the stairs in the district.
- (iv) A Member added that apart from the locations mentioned in the paper, Graham Street, Shelly Street and Elgin Street were also moss blackspots. While the Member expressed gratitude over the FEHD's swift response to the complaints about moss, the growth of moss was not eradicated despite repeated cleansing. In addition to the humid weather, water dripping from external walls of buildings, leaking fire hydrants in the streets and the accumulation of water due to damaged road surfaces would also give rise to the growth of moss. Therefore, it was hoped that the department could explore more effective approaches to tackle the issue with moss.
- (v) A Member said that moss in the Central and Western District was mostly found in the drainage areas near hillside roads and retaining walls, which were not managed by the FEHD. The Member suggested that the locations where moss was found should be reported to the C&WDO for co-ordination.
- (vi) A Member observed that there was a large piece of moss near the MTR Station outside The Belcher's and cast doubt on the results of the cleansing operation by the outsourced service contractors. To enhance regulation, the Member suggested that the FEHD should consider making good use of its existing resources to monitor street cleansing with the data collected by the intelligent lamp posts, so as not to rely too heavily on the photographs provided by the outsourced service contractors, thereby preventing them from having perfunctory performances.

16. Representative of the FEHD responded that the 23 moss blackspots set out in the paper had been cleansed, and that the department pledged to follow up on the case in The Belcher's mentioned by the Member. Representative of the FEHD added that there were no products designed specifically for moss removal at present. Moss would mainly be scrubbed with water, whereas high-functioning herbicides could not be applied, so as not to contaminate stormwater drains and the environment. The FEHD welcomed Members and the public to monitor the situation and report an issue with moss in a timely manner, so that the FEHD could tackle the issue swiftly.

Item 7: Concern about the disposal of large bags of rubbish at the roadside in the Central and Western District

(C&W FEHC Paper No. 36/2024)

(10:59 am – 11:22 am)

17. The Vice-chairman welcomed representatives of the FEHD to the meeting and invited Members to express their views and make enquiries on the issue. Speeches by Members were consolidated as follows:

- (i) A Member said that residents had sought assistance regarding the poor financial position of certain refuse collection companies, which resulted in the failure in refuse collection by refuse collection vehicles on time. Refuse therefore piled up in the streets for a long time, giving rise to issues with environmental hygiene. With respect to this kind of issues, the Member asked whether the department had issued any warnings or Fixed Penalty Notices to the relevant companies.
- (ii) A Member believed that the outsourced refuse collection companies should bear the responsibility for the accumulation of refuse as they had failed to collect refuse on time. Frontline cleansing workers became scapegoats under the existing penalties, which failed to effectively hold the outsourced refuse collection companies responsible for their dereliction of duty.
- (iii) A Member said that as only four out of the 16 refuse collection points in the Central and Western District were open overnight, food premises could only hand their refuse over to a refuse collection vehicle for collection after the refuse collection points were closed. However, noises generated by the refuse collection vehicles would affect residents who were taking a rest. The Member suggested that the opening hours of the refuse collection points be extended for more food premises to dispose of refuse on their own.
- (iv) A Member said that certain refuse collection vehicle companies would reduce their efficiency in refuse collection due to issues with insufficient manpower or vehicles. The Member suggested that the relevant department should enhance regulation on the refuse collection vehicle companies by introducing fines or other punitive mechanisms to ensure the quality of refuse collection services.
- (v) A Member said that many foreigners in the district were not familiar with the refuse collection system in Hong Kong and suggested that the government should publish publicity leaflets in multiple languages. In this regard, residents of different ethnic groups could be aware of the information on refuse collection points, such that they would not dispose of refuse illegally.

18. Representative of the FEHD responded that in general, only domestic refuse would be collected in the FEHD's refuse collection points, and that the stores were required to engage a

private refuse collection company to dispose of commercial refuse on their own. The FEHD did not monitor the operation of the private refuse collection companies and their refuse collection vehicles and had it intervened by disposing of the refuse left behind by a private refuse collection company, undesirable consequences might arise. For instance, traders would then believe that it was the government's responsibility to dispose of the refuse, such that they would evade their own responsibilities. Representative of the FEHD further said that government contractors were not responsible for refuse collection in various private residential and single-block buildings as they would engage private refuse collection companies on their own. While the FEHD did not issue licenses to regulate private refuse collection vehicles, refuse collection vehicles were required to register and pay a fee before entering the landfills and refuse transfer stations operated by the EPD.

Item 8: Any other business

(11:22 am)

19. The Vice-chairman said that there were no other business.

Item 9: Date of the next meeting

(11:23 am)

20. The sixth meeting of the FEHC would be held on 21 November 2024 and the paper submission deadline would be 6 November 2024.
21. The meeting ended at 11:23 am on 26 September 2024.

The minutes were confirmed on 21 November 2024

Chairman: Mr YEUNG Hok-ming, MH

Secretary: Ms CHEUNG Wai-ting, Kelsey

Central and Western District Council Secretariat
November 2024