

Sai Kung District Council
Minutes of the First Special Meeting in 2024

Date: 6 February 2024 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room of the Sai Kung District Council

Present

Miss MA King-fan, Kathy, JP (Chairman)	District Officer (Sai Kung), Sai Kung District Office
Ms FONG Kwok-shan, Christine	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr WANG Wen	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr WONG Shui-sang	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr LI Tin-chi	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr LI Ka-leung, Philip, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms LI Ka-yan	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAU Ka-lok	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr LAM Chun-ka	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms KI Lai-mei, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr YAU Siu-hung, Kelvin, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr YAU Ho-lun	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms YU Natasha	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms SZE Pan-pan	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms WU Suet-lin	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHEUNG Mei-hung, Chris	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHEUNG Chin-pang	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHEUNG Man-tim	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHONG Yuen-tung, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms CHONG Nga-ting, Angel	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAN Chi-ho	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAN Kin-chun, Ken	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAN Kwong-fai	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAN Kai-wai	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHAN Kuen-kwan, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr TSANG Kwok-ka	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr WAN Kai-ming	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr WONG Wang-to, MH	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr WONG Yuen-hong	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms KAN Tung-tung	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr LAU Kai-hong	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Mr CHENG Yu-hei	Member of Sai Kung District Council
Ms TAM Chuk-kwan	Member of Sai Kung District Council

Mr CHUNG Kai-yin (Secretary)

Senior Executive Officer (District Council),
Sai Kung District Office

In Attendance

Miss CHENG Suet-ching, Lacus

Assistant District Officer (Sai Kung)2,
Sai Kung District Office

Mr CHENG Chi-wing, Ken

Senior Liaison Officer (1),
Sai Kung District Office

Ms LAM Yee-mang, Dawn

Senior Liaison Officer (2),
Sai Kung District Office

Mr NG Wai-ming

Senior Liaison Officer (3),
Sai Kung District Office

Miss WONG Chui-ying, Erin

Executive Officer I (District Council),
Sai Kung District Office

Miss XUE Chunling, Jessie

Executive Officer II (District Council)1,
Sai Kung District Office

Miss TANG Wing-tung, Clara

Executive Officer II (District Council)2,
Sai Kung District Office

Miss CHIU Sze-ching, Erica

Executive Officer II (District Council)3,
Sai Kung District Office

Miss CHAN Hiu-ying, Kenley

Executive Officer II (District Council)5,
Sai Kung District Office

Mr HUI Siu-kay, Thomas

Executive Assistant (District Council)6,
Sai Kung District Office

Ms YU Hau-ling, Candy

Executive Assistant (District Council)9,
Sai Kung District Office

Mr KWOK Tun-yiu, Donald

Executive Assistant (District Council)10,
Sai Kung District Office

Dr LAM Kwok-lun, Alain

Waste Management Manager,

Environmental Protection Department

Mr CHEN Kin-wun, Edwin

Senior Environmental Protection Officer
(Waste Collection & Charging)1,

Environmental Protection Department

Miss TAM Wan-chi, Bonnie

Assistant Environmental Protection Officer
(Waste Collection & Charging)13,

Environmental Protection Department

Ms WU Suet-chiu

Member, Care Team

The Chairman said a quorum was present and the meeting commenced officially.

2. The Chairman welcomed all Members and attendees to the meeting.

I. New Items

- (A) A brief introduction by the Environmental Protection Department on the municipal solid waste charging arrangements

3. The Chairman said the Environment and Ecology Bureau had organised a briefing for all members of the District Councils on 26 January. Members were briefed on the key points of and implementation arrangements for the municipal solid waste (MSW) charging, so that they could help promote the policy during their daily district work. She thanked the representatives of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for attending the special meeting to explain again the policy to Members of the Sai Kung District Council and the representative of the Care Teams. Prior to the meeting, the Secretariat had relayed Members' enquiries and comments on MSW charging to EPD to facilitate detailed discussions at the meeting.

4. Mr Edwin CHEN, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Collection & Charging)1, EPD and Dr Alain LAM, Waste Management Manager, EPD briefed Members on the arrangements for MSW charging with the presentation slides at Annex.

5. Ms Natasha YU supported MSW charging, since there was a pressing need to tackle the waste problem in Hong Kong. Noting that the objectives of MSW charging were to reduce waste, relieve the burden on landfills and cut plastic use, she asked whether the designated bags (DBs) were made of recyclable materials. Besides, from the law enforcement and management point of view, although it would be feasible to step up patrols or install closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, it was likely that the cost would be borne by residents and property management companies. The effectiveness of the fixed penalty as a deterrent would be uncertain. Some members of the public might choose to take risks and act against the law. She was thus sceptical about the effectiveness of the enforcement efforts.

6. Mr Chris CHEUNG pointed out that property management companies had no authority to take enforcement actions. He asked how EPD would handle the cases reported by property management companies through the mobile application and provide evidence for enforcement purposes. These procedures would increase the workload of property management companies. As regards the Government's adoption of the "dedicated-fund-for dedicated-use" approach after the implementation of MSW charging, he asked whether the revenue generated would be deployed for supporting housing estates and for alleviating households' financial burden on management fees. LOHAS Park, despite being affected by the landfill, did not have any Recycling Stations of GREEN@COMMUNITY, and the mobile Recycling Spots therein were far from enough. He called for the department to make improvements in this regard.

7. Mr CHAN Kai-wai said the Road Traffic (Parking on Private Roads) Regulations

stipulated that the owner of a private road, or an authorised officer in respect of that road, might impound or remove any vehicle which was parked on a restricted parking area on that road in contravention of any sign or road marking. He proposed that EPD consider following this practice and delegate specific enforcement powers to property management companies. Moreover, he had suggested in the past that a “Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) for Environmental Protection” should be set up, in order to secure sufficient funds for housing estates to cover the cost of environmental protection work, including the additional operational expenses arising from MSW charging. Besides, noting that EPD would offer a service fee equivalent to 3% of the prescribed price for each DB to cover the additional operating costs, he asked whether property management companies or residents’ organisations would be the target beneficiaries. Property management companies might face higher management costs due to MSW charging, which they might use as a reason to raise management fees. Therefore, he asked whether the department would decide not to offer subsidies to property management companies to avoid double benefits.

8. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members’ views and enquiries as follows:

- The materials used for producing DBs contained recycled plastic. It was stated in the relevant contract that the DBs must be made of at least 20% recycled plastic materials.
- EPD would undertake enforcement work at the refuse reception points of residential, commercial and industrial buildings, whereas the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) would be responsible for enforcement at the refuse collection points under its management. EPD did not authorise property management companies to conduct enforcement actions. When the trade was consulted during the legislation drafting process, some of them had expressed worries about being granted such powers by the Government.
- As regards enforcement approaches, upon receipt of reports of non-compliances, EPD would adopt a risk-based strategy to mount ambush operations at the buildings concerned when necessary. If non-compliance was found, fixed penalty notices would usually be issued on the spot. Prosecution by way of summons might also be brought against serious or repeated offenders.
- EPD estimated that an ordinary household would only use one 10- or 15-litre garbage bag per day, meaning that the penalty amount of \$1,500 would be equivalent to the cost of a few years’ DBs. It would thus not be worthwhile for people to take risks and violate the law, and the penalty amount would indeed serve as a sufficient deterrent.
- Residents’ organisations, property management companies, security companies and cleansing services companies could all be the applicant for the 3% service fee offered by EPD, but only one application from a relevant unit/organisation would be approved for each residential premises.
- The Government understood that it would take time for the public to adapt to the new measures. Property management companies were encouraged to distribute DBs to households at the initial stage of implementation. This could not only boost the compliance rate, but also alleviate the management burden on these

companies.

- The Government had stated that an amount commensurate with the revenue generated from MSW charging would be used to enhance waste reduction and recycling support for the public to achieve the effect of “dedicated-fund-for-dedicated-use”.
- The network of GREEN@COMMUNITY had been expanding continuously. At present, there were more than 170 recycling points, including large Recycling Stations, Recycling Stores and mobile Recycling Spots. 50 small-scale Recycling Stores were currently planned in public housing estates across the territory, including those in Sai Kung District.
- He noted the suggestion on the provision of additional recycling points in LOHAS Park.

9. Mr CHAN Chi-ho agreed with the Government’s intention to boost the recycling rate through MSW charging. It would be difficult for all members of the public to understand the policy intention within a short time. The Government would also need to face that even some people understood the policy intention, they would still oppose the policy anyway. That was why the Government should provide assistance to property management companies and owners’ corporations, so as to gain more public support. He hoped that the Government would distribute free DBs to Hong Kong citizens at the initial stage of MSW charging (e.g. for the first six months), in order to make people accustomed with the new arrangements. Besides, the three-colour recycling bins in housing estates were often full, so residents hoped that they could have larger ones instead. Concerning GREEN@COMMUNITY, he suggested providing more incentives for recycling, such as offering more gifts. The public would not have to maintain a large stock of recyclables, but can redeem small gifts each time. While recycling bins were plentiful in the Mainland, they were quite scarce in Hong Kong and would usually be placed within housing estates. Hence, he proposed providing more kerbside recycling bins.

10. Ms Christine FONG said even though the Government had spent considerable time on publicity work, people would still express reluctance when fee charging was involved. She proposed that the Government mandate the use of DBs at supermarkets to fully replace plastic shopping bags, and enhance the effectiveness in environmental protection. In addition, she asked whether the DBs contained biodegradable materials. She had proactively clarified to the public in response to the misleading rumour that the DBs were fragile. Moreover, a plastic shopping bag from supermarkets cost \$1, whereas a 15-litre DB cost \$1.7, so the price of the latter might not be appealing to consumers. She suggested that the Government consider providing subsidies to cover the increase in plastic bag prices by the dedicated fund. Moreover, she was grateful that LOHAS Park could take part in trying out MSW charging, and would welcome it if recycling points of GREEN@COMMUNITY were to be set up at LOHAS Park. She proposed that GREEN@COMMUNITY accept stick-shaped garbage such as brooms and mops for recycling, and opined that the Government should implement relevant product responsibility schemes, under which products with long handles (e.g. brooms and mops) could only be sold in Hong Kong if they came with detachable handles. She also suggested that the Government step up efforts in recycling garbage from remote rural areas to commercial and industrial waste. She also enquired about measures that would be put in place to support the

disposal of garbage in rural areas.

11. Mr CHEUNG Chin-pang said the Government did not encourage property management companies to use the large DBs to wrap all household waste. However, some cleaning workers of housing blocks with refuse chutes had reflected that, when garbage bags were disposed from 20/F to 30/F through the refuse chutes, more than half of them would break apart. He asked how this situation should be handled. Additionally, he had received reports from residents that the reverse vending machines for recycling plastic bottles were always full, and there were insufficient recycling points under GREEN@COMMUNITY. Many people were sceptical on whether the sorted recyclables would be handled properly by the downstream recyclers. He hoped that the department would provide details and figures about the recycled waste, in order to convince the public that the policy was indeed effective.

12. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

- On distributing free DBs to Hong Kong citizens, to ensure proper use of resources, the Government would distribute free DBs to three types of households at the initial stage of MSW charging, including "three-nil" buildings, village houses in rural areas and public housing (covering transitional housing). As for private residential buildings, they could apply for the 3% service fee offered by EPD.
- The Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) would provide private residential buildings with recycling bins. The participating housing estates could apply to ECC for additional recycling bins if needed.
- Upon implementation of MSW charging, the public could use their GREEN\$ points earned at GREEN@COMMUNITY to redeem not only daily necessities and groceries, but also DBs. It was hoped that this arrangement could provide more incentives for recycling.
- Biodegradation required specific temperatures and environments, but such conditions were absent in landfills. In fact, some biodegradable plastic bags contained added chemicals that would cause the problem of microplastics. The European Union had already banned these products, and the Government would soon impose similar ban as well. Therefore, the current DBs did not contain any biodegradable components.
- The handles of brooms or mops were usually made of plastic. Members of the public could remove them for recycling and discard the broom or mop heads in DBs. Nevertheless, wooden sticks or handles were not among the recyclables accepted by GREEN@COMMUNITY.
- Regarding the disposal of waste in rural areas, EPD and FEHD would keep close communication and strictly combat littering.
- If the DBs broke when passing through the refuse chutes, it would be regarded as a statutory defence. FEHD or private waste collectors would not refuse to collect the garbage on this ground, and cleaning workers need not wrap the waste in additional DBs.
- EPD had strictly monitored the operators of GREEN@COMMUNITY and the relevant downstream recyclers to prohibit any improper handling of recyclables.

EPD also hoped that the recycling industry would have better prospects under MSW charging, thereby reducing the occurrence of improper handling of recyclables by private recyclers.

13. Dr Alain LAM of EPD added that the Government was preparing a legislation requiring property management companies (“PMCs”) and owners’ organisations (“OOs”) of major housing estates and single-block buildings with relatively large numbers of flats to collect separated recyclables and pass them to recyclers for processing. It would require PMCs and OOs to provide one set of containers for collecting recyclables at each building under their management. They would have to ensure that the containers were kept clean, and clear the recyclables from the containers regularly. Recycling facilities handling glass containers are required to obtain waste disposal licences from the EPD under the existing Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) for glass beverage containers. Plans are underway to extend PRSs to plastic beverage containers and beverage cartons, requiring recycling facilities handling these materials to also secure waste disposal licences for their recycling and disposal operations. The EPD will closely monitor these recycling facilities, requiring licensees to comply with various environmental pollution control legislations and operate the recycling facilities in an environmentally sound manner. Additionally, only the recyclers listed in the “Hong Kong Collector/Recycler Directory” would be allowed to carry out recycling work.

14. Mr WONG Shui-sang said many owners of the private land in rural areas were no longer living in Hong Kong, so it was very common for villagers to dispose of refuse on private land rather than at refuse collection points. He asked who would be liable to the fine if someone disposed of waste that was not properly wrapped on private land after the implementation of MSW charging. Besides, some people would covertly bring garbage from other places, such as construction materials and large furniture, to villages for disposal at night. As rural areas were poorly illuminated, the process of refuse disposal might not be clearly recorded even if there were CCTV cameras. He worried that villagers would be wrongly blamed for disposing of waste indiscriminately. He suggested that the department install CCTV cameras at refuse collection points and places with poor lighting. Concerning the recycling services of GREEN@COMMUNITY, many villages were located far away from GREEN@SAI KUNG TOWN, and there were not enough incentives for villagers to recycle. He asked the department to make improvements in this regard. Furthermore, he said that a huge amount of yard waste was produced during grass cutting and tree pruning in rural areas (including the handling of fallen branches after typhoons and rainstorms), which often filled up most of the garbage bins at the refuse collection points. He worried that after MSW charging took effect, village representatives would not be able to cover the expenses of purchasing a large quantity of DBs, nor could they afford the fees of disposal of oversized waste after cutting down large trees.

15. Mr Kelvin YAU was in support of implementing MSW charging to reduce waste. The education sector was an essential stakeholder, but not much publicity work on MSW charging had been done at schools in the past. He suggested that EPD strengthen collaboration with the Education Bureau (EDB), so that relevant information could be directly disseminated to schools. MSW charging would be piloted at government schools on 1 April, thanks to the relatively simple environment, their experiences would be more likely to be used as reference. He hoped

that the department could share these examples with non-government schools for reference. Also, students played an influential role in their own families. They could share with their parents what they had learnt, thereby supporting the Government's efforts to explain the policy to the public. He hoped that the department would make good use of such channel. Furthermore, although schools had been proactive in reducing waste, such as by recycling waste paper, it was often difficult for them to find suitable recyclers. He hoped that the updated information to be released by the Government would allow schools to find recyclers more easily. Lastly, since the large DBs could only be purchased from authorised platforms, he suggested the department consider allowing more platforms to sell DBs for the convenience of schools.

16. Mr CHENG Yu-hei said in countries or regions that were relatively successful in reducing waste at source or implementing recycling measures, considerable efforts had been put in education. He thus suggested that the Government allocate additional resources to education and publicity, so that relevant information could be passed on by students to their family members. Besides, given the size of the rural areas, he recommended increasing the capacity of recycling bins. He also suggested improving the quality of the lids of the recycling bins in urban areas. Additionally, some of them did not have lids and could easily become the breeding grounds for mosquitoes in summertime, he hoped that improvements could be made accordingly.

17. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

- Even though MSW charging had yet to take effect, the problem of indiscriminate disposal of waste, especially construction waste, had been prevalent in rural areas. EPD had been combating illegal disposal of waste on various fronts, such as installing CCTV cameras.
- Even if the garbage was properly wrapped in DBs, discarding it at locations that were not designated for refuse collection would still be regarded as littering, of which the offender would be liable to a fixed penalty of \$3,000.
- FEHD would install CCTV cameras at littering black spots in rural areas where necessary, based on the information from reports and complaints received. The Government also understood the public's concerns over the potential environmental hygiene problems caused after MSW charging was implemented. Relevant departments would continue to fight unlawful acts and do their best to prevent the situation from worsening.
- The yard waste produced during grass cutting etc. in rural areas, was not household refuse. As regards whether villagers were required to wrap yard waste in DBs for disposal, the department would continue to communicate with village representatives and listen to their views, so as to identify a more appropriate way to handle such situation.
- He agreed with Members' suggestion that relevant information could be passed on by students to their family members. EPD had communicated closely with EDB in this regard and the Government had planned to distribute a 15-litre DB to every student in all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong to promote MSW charging.

- The department hoped that the MSW Charging Demonstration Scheme could set examples for the public to better understand the implementation and details of MSW charging.
- Kerbside recycling bins were easily misused by the public as rubbish bins for general waste. In the past, the department had received comments from the Ombudsman on their low effectiveness. Therefore, it had removed the recycling bins in urban areas, and now recycling was mainly carried out through GREEN@COMMUNITY.
- The feedback on insufficient recycling points of GREEN@COMMUNITY in rural areas and the suggestion on improving the recycling bins were noted.

18. Ms Angel CHONG was concerned about the food waste recycling issue as the number of food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) was limited. She enquired if the Government had come up with a timetable for providing more FWSRBs. Further, as FWSRBs could only be activated by scanning a QR code on a mobile phone, she enquired if such design could be modified to be more age-friendly.

19. Ms TAM Chuk-kwan said that she understood EPD might carry out ambush operations and enforcement actions within housing estates. She enquired whether more manpower could be deployed for law enforcement. She also agreed that DBs should be distributed to all Hong Kong citizens for free. While the Administration planned to give out free DBs to three types of households, there were a considerable number of grassroots families residing in the housing estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) and the Home Ownership Scheme. She hoped that the Administration could consider the proposal, as the most effective way to promote the policy would be to distribute DBs to all citizens for free. Small gifts could be redeemed under the GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme, and the public were willing to make the effort to recycle in exchange for gifts. While some popular gifts, such as rice and oil, were often quickly redeemed and went out of stock, the less popular ones would stay on shelf for long. She suggested evaluating the gift options and offering more items that were in demand. Moreover, only private housing estates were eligible to apply for the Pilot Scheme on FWSRBs in Private Housing Estates at present, whereas other households, such as those in TPS estates, also hoped to join the Pilot Scheme. She expressed concerns as to whether the ambit of the Pilot Scheme would be expanded in the future.

20. Ms WU Suet-lin said that the social welfare sector was concerned about the recycling problem of the donation collection bags for flag selling. Currently, no recyclers would handle those donation collection bags as they would only recycle the plastic boards attached to the top of the bags but not the rest. Therefore, social welfare organisations were not sure what they should do when they had to dispose of a large number of donation collection bags. She suggested introducing incentives, such as providing service fee subsidies to encourage recyclers to handle the donation collection bags, or providing direct subsidies for social welfare organisations to recruit staff to process the related recycling work, for example, separating the plastic board from each donation collection bag. Besides, as some elderly persons were quite frugal, they might hoard garbage due to the waste charges. Many of their homes might turn into “garbage apartments” as a result, affecting personal and environmental hygiene.

21. Ms KI Lai-mei said that while there were currently more than 170 GREEN@COMMUNITY public collection points across the territory, Sai Kung District had relatively few such facilities, with only three Recycling Stores and some small-scale Recycling Stores planned to be set up in the future. Also, there were no recycling points in Tsui Lam, Hong Sing Garden and LOHAS Park, so the recycling needs of the residents could not be met. She hoped that the number of recycling points could be increased. GREEN@SAI KUNG TOWN would generally process 60 tonnes of recyclables per month in the past, but the number had gone up to 70 tonnes last month. In view of the insufficient manpower of the recycling points, she hoped that EPD could deploy additional resources to hire more staff to deal with the potential increase in workload after the implementation of MSW charging. Regarding food waste, she hoped that EPD could step up its promotion on food waste reduction. Lastly, on the 3% service fee provided by EPD, she enquired of EPD whether the application should be made by the representative appointed by a housing estate, or separate applications could be made by the property management company, relevant residents' organisation(s), etc. of the same housing estate.

22. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

- EPD launched a programme to collect food waste using FWSRBs in public housing estates under the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society. It anticipated that the FWSRBs would be installed in all public housing estates in Hong Kong by August. Private housing estates with no fewer than 1 000 households could apply for the installation of FWSRBs through ECC, whereas those with more than 200 participating households could apply for subsidies under the Recycling Fund to rent FWSRBs.
- Although EPD would mainly give warnings during the phasing-in period instead of carrying out stringent enforcement actions, it would take into account the public compliance situation and ensure the availability of adequate manpower for effective enforcement after the phasing-in period based on the data and information collected.
- EPD currently only planned to distribute free DBs to the three types of households mentioned as well as those residing in the rental units of TPS estates.
- He hoped that EPD could understand how to better support the elderly after the implementation of MSW charging through the Care Teams, which could also help remind elderly persons to maintain personal and environmental hygiene.
- The 3% service fee provided by EPD should be applied by the representative appointed by a housing estate. Each housing estate would have to appoint its own representative with the consent of the relevant residents' organisation(s). Its property management company was not allowed to apply just on its own initiative.
- The suggestions on the gift options offered under GREEN@COMMUNITY, increasing the number of recycling points in Sai Kung District, and providing recycling service for the donation collection bags for flag selling were noted.

23. Mr CHAN Kuen-kwan enquired if it was illegal for members of the public to ask other

households to put garbage into their DBs if they were not full. He also suggested that EPD distribute free DBs to the households in negative equity. Further, he enquired whether all oversized waste, including electrical appliances, could be disposed of as long as it was affixed with a designated label.

24. Ms KAN Tung-tung asked how people should collect garbage wrapped in DBs in buildings without refuse chutes, and if there would be indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policy. Besides, some elderly persons told her that they hoped the Government would not prohibit the sale of plastic-stemmed interdental brushes, dental floss and cotton buds. She enquired if there were alternatives to these products.

25. Mr WAN Kai-ming said that cleaning workers were unsure whether they should collect garbage that was not wrapped in DBs and were concerned about the risks of violating the law when handling such waste. Although EPD suggested installing CCTV cameras to monitor the disposal of garbage, the relevant cost would be quite significant. He enquired if EPD would introduce relevant subsidies or support programmes. Furthermore, many owners' corporations did not know the application procedures for FWSRBs, so he hoped that EPD could step up its publicity efforts in this regard. He also noted that there were frequent breakdowns of FWSRBs. Citing Sheung Tak Estate as an example, four out of eight FWSRBs had once been out of service on the same day. The FWSRBs in private housing estates were also often fully loaded or out of order. He thus suggested improving the design of the FWSRBs. The frequent malfunctions of FWSRBs could result in unpleasant odours, discouraging residents from using them. Moreover, the reverse vending machines for recycling plastic bottles in shopping malls were often full. He hoped that EPD could improve the situation. Lastly, he suggested that EPD produce promotional materials on MSW charging in different languages for foreign domestic helpers.

26. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members' views and enquiries as follows:

- The law did not explicitly prohibit residents from sharing the use of DBs. However, as every household had different garbage disposal habits, he believed that the relevant situation would not be common.
- Members of the public would be deemed to have complied with the requirements of MSW charging by affixing a designated label on the oversized waste. Yet, they should also dispose of such garbage at appropriate collection points instead of discarding it indiscriminately and illegally.
- There would be various types of buildings participating in the MSW Charging Demonstration Scheme, including residential buildings, to allow the public to gain a better understanding of its implementation in different types of buildings.
- The aim of MSW charging was to promote waste reduction, therefore the policy's effectiveness could be reflected by a reduction in the city's waste disposal quantity. Property management companies could also make simple assessments on whether the amount of household refuse was reduced.
- Cleaning workers would not contravene the relevant regulations by handling non-compliant waste when collecting refuse, and it was reasonable for them to collect

such waste to ensure environmental hygiene. They only had to make sure that the waste was wrapped in DBs or affixed with designated labels before being loaded onto refuse collection vehicles.

- The promotional leaflets for MSW charging were available in different languages, such as Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepali, Thai, etc. There would also be promotional videos in different languages in the future to disseminate relevant information to foreign domestic helpers.
- The suggestions on the promotion of the application procedures for FWSRBs and the views on the usage situation and suggested improvements were noted.

27. Dr Alain LAM of EPD responded that the new legislation on the regulation of disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products would come into effect on 22 April, under which the sale of plastic-stemmed cotton buds, plastic toothpicks, etc. would be prohibited. The ban was made based on the availability of mature market alternatives, such as similar products made of paper, wood or bamboo, while plastic-stemmed interdental brushes and dental floss could continue to be available in the market as usual.

28. Mr LAU Kai-hong said that the three-colour recycling bins were placed at improper locations in the rural areas. For example, they were placed beside the bus stop at the village entrances, which was inconvenient for villagers. Yet, the conveniently located ones were often overflowing and left unmanaged, such that some recyclables were placed next to them and treated as general waste by FEHD. He suggested that the Government produce DBs in other colours specifically for the collection of recyclables for easier identification. He also suggested using a higher proportion of or even 100% of reusable materials in the production of DBs. Concerning the food waste issue, he had sought advice from government departments and various organisations on the application for subsidies for food waste recycling. Villagers indeed had incentives to recycle food waste as it could be transformed into fertilisers for plants. He suggested stepping up the education work on this front, and proposed that the Government produce short videos about MSW charging to help the public understand the policy more quickly and easily. Regarding the Rural Committees' involvement in the distribution of free DBs, he had not received relevant resources yet and hoped that EPD could follow up. He said that next time the Government should take the lead in carrying out publicity work, since the Rural Committees had already deployed a lot of manpower and resources for the distribution of anti-epidemic service bags in the past.

29. Mr CHAU Ka-lok said that under the Pilot Scheme on FWSRBs in Private Housing Estates, participating housing estates would be allocated one FWSRB for every 500 households. However, not every block in private housing estates had 500 households. There was one private housing estate in Tseung Kwan O with nine blocks and over 3 700 households in total, but its application for one FWSRB for each block was unsuccessful. He hoped that EPD could relax the relevant requirements. Furthermore, he suggested that EPD provide more incentives for housing estates to apply for the Pilot Scheme. While the FWSRBs were provided free of charge, the housing estates would still have to bear the expenses for electricity and manpower for cleansing, etc. As regards waste disposal, he was of the view that most people would not be willing to pay \$11 to dispose of a fluorescent tube, and they could only recycle such items

through channels such as Recycling Stations. However, in Sheung Tak Estate, for example, there were no such facilities, and the mobile Recycling Spots were set up infrequently. He thus suggested that EPD encourage housing estates to coordinate recycling efforts on their own.

30. Mr CHAN Kai-wai said that even though the Government provided subsidies, it was inevitable that the participating housing estates would have to cover some costs. Ocean Shores had also applied for the EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme, but no promotional materials were provided so far. He hoped that EPD could expedite the provision of promotional materials and the FWSRBs. Furthermore, during the Christmas holidays earlier, the GREEN@COMMUNITY Recycling Stations were closed. A huge amount of recyclables were piled up outside the facilities and the recyclers received warnings. He enquired whether the contract terms stipulated that the recyclers must operate year-round. If this was not the case and EPD still held the recyclers responsible, it would put additional pressure on them. In view of the recent drastic increase in the workload of the recycling industry, EPD should proactively deploy additional resources to support recyclers so that they could cope with the demand.

31. Mr WONG Shui-sang said that at present, many people would dispose of garbage on private land, and he believed that such behaviour would occur more frequently upon the implementation of MSW charging. Besides, the capacity of the glass container recycling bins was too small that they were often full. On the other hand, the locations where the “Look For Green” trucks were stationed to collect glass containers were very far from rural villages. He again enquired how people should handle the yard waste after grass cutting and tree pruning, and stressed that the amount of waste involved was quite substantial that it usually could fill up an entire truck. He added that frequent tree management was necessary due to the rapid growth of branches. In the past, yard waste would be put in normal garbage bags for collection by the FEHD staff. Now he was unsure who should pay for the DBs for the yard waste after MSW charging took effect, and said such a huge expense would be burdensome for any party.

32. The Chairman added that the representatives of EPD had already said fallen leaves and tree branches were regarded as yard waste. As for whether villagers had to use DBs for disposal of yard waste as with household waste, EPD would discuss with village representatives on the relevant arrangements in due course.

33. Mr Edwin CHEN of EPD responded to Members’ views and enquiries as follows:

- He was thankful for the suggestion on introducing bags of other colours for recycling. However, introducing recycling bags in various new colours at the current stage might cause confusion among the public and hinder their adaptation to the new policy.
- The food waste collected by the FWSRBs would be transferred to the Organic Resources Recovery Centre and be converted into biogas for electricity generation, whilst the residues from the process could be turned into compost as a by-product for the use of non-profit-making organisations.
- EPD planned to install FWSRBs in rural villages progressively. At present, some

villages had applied for the relevant fund to try out the arrangements. He hoped that the use of FWSRBs could be promoted to different villages in the future.

- If the applications for FWSRBs were made via the Recycling Fund, the subsidies provided would cover not only the rental cost of FWSRBs, but also the cost of the installation and regular maintenance service.
- EPD would release promotional videos on MSW charging progressively and it had received many comments that the content of the publicity materials should be easy to understand.
- Fluorescent tubes were usually collected at the estate offices of public housing. As these tubes contained chemicals such as mercury, they should not be collected in containers at public spaces such as the corridors. Generally, residents would have to take them to the respective estate offices for recycling.
- As MSW charging was about to be implemented, EPD had been reviewing and strengthening the support to the recycling industry. Except for the Christmas and Lunar New Year holidays, the recycling points under GREEN@COMMUNITY would be open for public use.
- Concerning the enquiries about the handling of yard waste, if a village house had its own garden, the yard waste produced from it should be treated as household waste. If the amount of yard waste was significant, villagers could arrange for private waste collectors to collect the yard waste using refuse collection vehicles without rear compactors, and a “gate-fee” would be charged based on the weight of the waste. As for villagers’ handling of yard waste generated from public spaces, EPD would later discuss with the respective Rural Committees and village representatives on detailed arrangements.
- The views on the locations of recycling bins in the rural areas and the suggestion on relaxing the application requirements for FWSRBs were noted.

34. Dr Alain LAM of EPD responded that the Fluorescent Lamp Recycling Programme and the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Programme were in place for many years. If housing estates applied for participating in these programmes, EPD would provide recycling bins and arrange for the collection service.

35. The Chairman expressed gratitude to the representatives of EPD for explaining MSW charging, which enhanced Members’ understanding of the policy. If Members received views from stakeholders in the district, they could include those views in the form of the Summary of District Consultation on the “Issues of Concern to Sai Kung District – Environmental Hygiene” due on 20 February. Relevant views and matters could then be discussed at the meetings of the respective committees and relayed to EPD after consolidation in the future. Furthermore, if Members would like to obtain more information about different programmes, they could contact the Secretariat, so that dissemination of relevant information to Members could be arranged.

[Post-meeting note: EPD had provided the promotional materials to Members via the Secretariat on 15 February. Each Member was provided with 300 sets of promotional materials, i.e. 300 promotional leaflets and 600 DBs.]

II. Any Other Business

36. No other business was raised.

III. Date of Next Meeting

37. The next full council meeting was scheduled for 5 March 2024 (Tuesday) at 10:00 a.m.
38. The meeting ended at 6:16 p.m.

Sai Kung District Council Secretariat
February 2024