

(Translation)

Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the Environment and Hygiene Committee of
Sham Shui Po District Council (6th Term)

Date: 3 June 2021 (Thursday)
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Venue: Conference Room, Sham Shui Po District Council

Present

Chairman

Mr CHUM Tak-shing

Members

Ms CHOW Wing-heng, Zoé

Mr HO Kai-ming, Calvin (Arrived at 10:00 a.m.; left at 11:20 a.m.)

Mr HO Kwan-chau, Leo

Mr KONG Kwai-sang (Arrived at 10:10 a.m.; left at 11:36 a.m.)

Mr LAO Ka-hang, Andy

Ms LAU Pui-yuk, MH

Mr LEE Hon-ting, Howard (Arrived at 9:38 a.m.; left at 10:38 a.m.)

Mr LEE Man-ho, Leos (Arrived at 11:00 a.m.)

Mr LI Chun-hei, Joshua

Mr LI Ting-fung, Jay

Mr MAK Wai-ming (Arrived at 10:00 a.m.; left at 11:27 a.m.)

Ms NG Mei, Carman (Arrived at 10:00 a.m.; left at 11:27 a.m.)

Ms NG Yuet-lan, Janet

Mr SIN Kam-ho, Jeffrey

Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, MH, JP (Arrived at 9:55 a.m.)

Mr TSUI Yat-hin, Ronald (Arrived at 10:10 a.m.)

Mr WAI Woon-nam (Arrived at 10:00 a.m.)

Mr WONG Kit-long (Arrived at 10:40 a.m.)

Mr YEUNG Yuk

Mr YUEN Hoi-man, Ramon (Arrived at 9:49 a.m.)

In Attendance

Mr LAM Wui-tsun, Brian

Assistant District Officer (Sham Shui Po) 2

Mr HUI Chi-ping, Edwin

District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sham Shui Po), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LIM Ying-lam	Chief Health Inspector 3, Sham Shui Po District, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr YAU Wai-yip	Senior Property Services Manager/Sham Shui Po & Tsuen Kwai, Architectural Services Department
Mr YIU Yau-man, Wallace	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional West) 5, Environmental Protection Department
Mr TO Chi-hung	Engineer/Kowloon (Distribution 2), Water Supplies Department
Mr CHAN Chi-suen, Rex	Police Community Relations Officer (Sham Shui Po District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr IP Yiu-cheung, Sunny	Neighbourhood Police Coordinator/Police Community Relations Office (Sham Shui Po District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr LAW Shiu-lun	Senior Engineer/Mainland South 3, Drainage Services Department
Mr KONG Yat-fai	Engineer/Kowloon 7, Drainage Services Department
Mr MOK Wai-hai, Sam	Chief Estate Officer/Kowloon West, Lands Department
Mr CHUNG Yan-chi, Jocky	Principal Estate Officer/Kowloon West (North), Lands Department

Secretary

Mr CHU Hei-yeung, Angus	Executive Officer (District Council) 1, Sham Shui Po District Office
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Absent with Apologies

Member

Mr LI Kwing, Richard

Absent

Co-opted Member

Mr CHUI Chun-choi

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives from government departments to the ninth meeting of the Environment and Hygiene Committee (“EHC”). To prevent the spread of the epidemic, he requested all attendees to check their temperatures and register their names before entering the Conference Room. He also said that the meeting would be completed as early as possible, and the public gallery would not be open.

2. The Committee noted the leave application from Mr Richard LI.
3. Mr Ramon YUEN said that a fire had broken out on a cargo boat off the Stonecutters Island the night before, giving off large clouds of thick smoke which affected the residents nearby. He hoped the departments concerned would update the Committee on the latest development of the incident under “Any other business” of the agenda.
4. The Chairman approved the discussion under “Any other business” of the agenda to explore whether there was room for improvement in the relevant departments’ contingency measures and dissemination of information.
5. Assistant District Officer 2 responded that as the fire was only largely put out in the morning, he believed the relevant departments might not have technical information about the incident, but representatives of the departments would still try their best to respond to members’ questions.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of minutes of the 8th meeting held on 15 April 2021

6. The Committee confirmed the above minutes without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters for discussion

(a) Concern over the cleansing and refurbishment of public toilets in the district Enhance the protection of public health (EHC Paper 36/21)

(b) Concern over the management and repair problems of public toilets in Sham Shui Po District (EHC Paper 37/21)

7. The Chairman suggested that Papers 36/21 and 37/21 should be discussed together since they were similar in nature.
8. Ms Zoé CHOW introduced Paper 36/21.

9. Mr Ramon YUEN said that he hoped the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) would explain in detail whether the Department would implement the various recommendations put forward by the Ombudsman.

10. Mr Jay LI introduced Paper 37/21.

11. Mr Edwin HUI introduced Response Paper 36a/21.

12. Mr YAU Wai-yip responded that the Architectural Services Department (“ArchSD”) had carried out over 2 800 repairs in the 10 public toilets in Sham Shui Po District (“SSP District”) between 2015 and 2020, and among those, the Apliu Street Public Toilet and the Nam Cheong Street Public Toilet, the two most frequently used public toilets in the district, had been repaired the most, with almost 600 repairs each. Even the least repaired public toilets had been repaired roughly 150 times by ArchSD. Essentially, the number of repairs was proportionate to the frequency of use of toilets. He explained that there were mainly three types of public toilet repair works, namely, critical works that addressed safety issues, emergency works that addressed disruption to normal operations, and general works that followed up on issues posing no disruption to normal operations, and the complexity of the works would also be considered when designating their type. Most public toilet repair works that ArchSD was in charge of were undertaken to follow up on cases of damage reported by FEHD. The above-mentioned figures included cases reported by FEHD more than once and cases where FEHD requested follow-ups again for the same issue.

13. Mr Joshua LI said that water flows became slow after flow controllers were installed in certain taps in public toilets, which caused inconvenience. He hoped FEHD would follow up on the issue. He also suggested that FEHD should consider providing paper towels in public toilets.

14. Mr Ramon YUEN enquired what the differences were between refurbishment and facelifting works, when refurbishment and facelifting works had last been carried out in various public toilets, what criteria FEHD employed to evaluate the state of repair and maintenance of public toilets, and whether FEHD would conduct more frequent refurbishment in public toilets if they were near tourist attractions.

15. Ms LAU Pui-yuk said that significant improvement in hygiene was seen after the refurbishment of public toilets. She hoped FEHD would step up publicity and education, plan the next round of refurbishment works as early as possible, and consider refurbishing public toilets in public markets. She enquired whether ArchSD had made pledges on completion dates for the three types of repair works mentioned above. She also hoped that FEHD and ArchSD would pay attention to the common issues encountered in public toilets, such as malfunctioning automatic sensor water taps, low flushing pressure in the toilets,

insufficient hand cleansers, etc. She then said that used syringes were frequently found in the district's public toilets and hoped that the Police would step up patrols at relevant black spots, and that FEHD would further improve the security of public toilets to ensure the safety of toilet attendants.

16. Mr Jay LI said that a report by the World Toilet Organization stated that the hygiene of a city's public toilets was a measure of its degree of civilisation, and therefore frequent refurbishment and a good state of hygiene in the district's public toilets could indirectly reflect the prosperous development of SSP District. He hoped that FEHD would proceed to plan the next round of public toilet refurbishment works, and suggested that the relevant departments provide a channel for residents to report the damage found in public toilets. Moreover, leakage was frequently observed in the urinals of the district's public toilets, causing wet floors and risks of slipping.

17. Mr Edwin HUI gave a consolidated response saying that in listing public toilets in order of priority for refurbishment or facelifting works, FEHD would take a range of factors into account, including the actual state of the public toilet, the date of the previous refurbishment, its proximity to tourist attractions, the views of people of the district, and government resources, etc. FEHD had already implemented most of the recommendations in the Ombudsman's report, and the remaining recommendations were focused on public toilets in remote areas and those without toilet attendants. Most public toilets in SSP District had been refurbished in recent years, with relatively decent cleanliness. The Department would continue to arrange for the refurbishment and facelifting of public toilets in the district, including the frequently used Apliu Street Public Toilet, as well as the Sai Chuen Road Public Toilet and the Cheung Shun Street Public Toilet that had not been refurbished or facelifted in recent years, etc., in accordance with actual circumstances. Currently, FEHD staff would inspect each public toilet twice every day, and any damage to the facilities would be reported to relevant departments or contractors as soon as possible for follow-up action. If only simple repairs were required, the Department would request the contractor to complete repair works within 24 hours. In addition, any suspected violations of the law would be immediately referred by the toilet attendant or FEHD staff to law enforcement departments. To encourage environmental protection, public toilets under FEHD were mainly installed with hand dryers, and paper towels were not commonly provided. To reduce the risk of spreading the epidemic, the Department would replace traditional soap dispensers with automatic sensor soap dispensers. The Department had also installed blowers in public toilets to keep the floor dry. Given that proper use of facilities could help maintain the cleanliness of public toilets, FEHD would continue to step up publicity and educate the public through posters, flyers, FEHD's website, social media, etc. FEHD had already rolled out a pilot scheme to install suitable devices in some public toilets to let users rate the facilities and services of those toilets. The Department and its contractors would then use the opinions collected as reference and make improvements.

On the refurbishment and facelifting works of public toilets in public markets, the toilets of Pei Ho Street Market and Tung Chau Street Temporary Market had recently been refurbished. FEHD would continue to monitor the state of public toilets in various public markets as well as step up cleansing and arrange for repair and maintenance works in a timely manner.

18. Mr LIM Ying-lam gave a consolidated response saying that public toilet refurbishment works conducted by ArchSD mainly involved replacement of sanitary fittings, refurbishment of interior facilities, etc., during which the layout of toilets might be revamped and bigger and more changes were required, so the works usually took more than six months to complete; facelifting works, on the other hand, mainly involved replacement of various facilities and sanitary fittings in the toilets, during which the overall layout was rarely changed and less items were involved, so the works usually took approximately three months to complete, causing less inconvenience to residents.

19. Mr YAU Wai-yip gave a consolidated response saying that ArchSD had responded to the recommendations contained in the Ombudsman's report by contractually requiring contractors to maintain sufficient numbers of parts commonly in use in public toilets to facilitate repairs, as well as sufficient manpower to allow emergency repair works to be conducted at any hour. When conducting non-emergency repair works in public toilets, ArchSD would try its best to avoid disrupting their normal operations, and to arrange for non-emergency works to be conducted during FEHD's major toilet cleansing. However, ArchSD would sometimes have to close certain toilets for repair works to ensure the safety of users. ArchSD had set higher requirements for flushing parts and improved the design of the overall water supply and discharge system in order to enhance the durability of the facilities. However, as some toilets within the district had high usage, the flushing systems would inevitably be damaged when frequently used, and ArchSD would arrange for repairs as soon as possible after a referral was received.

20. Mr Ramon YUEN said that if FEHD could not arrange for toilet attendants to be on duty 24 hours a day to tackle the frequent presence of syringes in certain public toilets, he would suggest considering the use of the District Council ("DC") funds to hire night shift toilet attendants. He also enquired whether FEHD would update the Handbook on Standard Features for Public Toilets, including resetting the ratio of pedestal and squatting type water closets in public toilets.

21. Ms LAU Pui-yuk suggested that the departments concerned add baby care facilities to male and female toilets during refurbishment to cater for the needs of residents. Besides, as syringes were frequently found in the Apliu Street Public Toilet and the toilets of Pei Ho Street Market, she enquired whether FEHD had reported the situation to the Police or conducted joint operations to follow up on it.

22. Mr Edwin HUI gave a consolidated response saying that toilet attendants were stationed in all public toilets with the usual duty hours being 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., while the frequently used Apliu Street Public Toilet had toilet attendants stationed in it 24 hours a day. He stated that toilet attendants would try their best to monitor irregularities in public toilets, but it would be hard for them to know whether users were engaging in illegal acts inside the cubicles. FEHD had already instructed contractors and toilet attendants to report to their supervisors and the Police as soon as possible if they had reasonable grounds to believe that someone was engaging in illegal acts in public toilets. He also said that baby care facilities had been added to both male and female toilets in the district upon refurbishment to cater for the needs of residents. FEHD was in the process of updating the Handbook on Standard Features for Public Toilets to incorporate the recommendations in the Ombudsman's report as far as possible, including resetting the areas of male and female toilets, the ratio of pedestal and squatting type water closets, etc. in accordance with stakeholders' views and international standards.

23. The Chairman said that as FEHD had already increased the manpower for public toilet management, he did not find it necessary to hire night shift toilet attendants with DC resources at the moment. He then concluded that members were happy with the maintenance arrangements and refurbishment progress of public toilets in SSP District, and it was hoped that FEHD would further enhance cleansing services and educate the public to maintain the hygiene of public toilets, as well as consider adding channels to collect the public's opinions on public toilet services and facilities.

(c) Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank emits an overwhelming stench Request for the Drainage Services Department to make improvements as quickly as possible (EHC Paper 38/21)

24. Mr Calvin HO introduced Paper 38/21. He added that certain residents told him foul smells were also present in other areas of the district, such as the crossroad opposite Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, and he hoped the departments concerned would attend to that.

25. Mr LAW Shiu-lun introduced Response Paper 38a/21. He added that the main cause of foul smells near the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank was illegal discharge into pipelines that collect stormwater upstream. Added to that, there was a dearth of rainfall in April and May this year, which contributed to the odour problem in May.

26. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu enquired about the reason for not installing a cover on the stinking manhole in the past. While the response paper of the Drainage Services Department ("DSD") showed that the hydrogen sulphide level at that location was safe, he said that the figure only showed whether the concentration of the gas posed a health risk,

without adequately showing the impact on residents' sense of smell. He hoped that DSD would step up inspections, optimise the mechanism for following up on foul smells and review the timetable for pipe cleansing.

27. Mr Calvin HO enquired whether dry weather flow interceptors were installed in pipelines of the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank. Also, as Tong Yam Street, Tai Hang Tung Recreation Ground and their surrounding area were plagued by a stench, he hoped DSD could address the root cause.

28. Mr LAW Shiu-lun gave a consolidated response saying that DSD had long paid attention to misconnection of sewers and illegal discharge of sewage in the district. To address the district's foul smell problem in the long run, DSD would step up inspections and refer cases of violations of the law to the relevant departments for follow-up action. He explained that dry weather flow interceptors were more suitable for medium and small pipelines, and therefore they were not installed in the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank, which was a large stormwater drainage facility. DSD was studying the expansion of the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank and would consider improvements on the existing facilities at the project planning stage.

29. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that the air quality of the area was crucially important since many residents exercised in the recreation ground above the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank. He hoped that DSD would measure the concentrations of different gases and carry out repair and maintenance works more frequently.

30. Mr Calvin HO expressed his understanding that dry weather flow interceptors might not be technically suitable for the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank, but hoped that DSD would study other similar flow intercepting options to address the root cause of the problem of wastewater accumulation.

31. Mr LAW Shiu-lun gave a consolidated response saying that as the large area of the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank made it relatively difficult to install a wastewater intercepting system, the suggestion concerned required more studies. DSD had already placed hydrogels in some of the pipelines in the district to mitigate foul smells given off by wastewater. DSD was also arranging for the installation of check valves in the downstream public stormwater outfall connected to the above-mentioned manhole, with an expected completion time of October this year. DSD would continue to follow up on the above-mentioned problems and improve on the existing repair and maintenance mechanism.

32. The Chairman concluded that it was hoped that the relevant departments would install the manhole cover and check valves near the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank as soon as possible, and study other flow intercepting options to address odour

problems caused by accumulation of wastewater.

33. Mr Kalvin HO moved a motion on Paper 38/21, which read as follows:

“The Committee requests DSD to address the stench and foul smell problem of the Tai Hang Tung Stormwater Storage Tank as soon as possible.”

34. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu seconded the motion.

35. The Committee voted on the motion.

36. The Chairman announced that the motion was carried unanimously.

(d) Reports by the District Lands Office / Kowloon West, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Environmental Protection Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Highways Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department on environmental hygiene problem, wild bird problem and poultry market relocation problem in the district (EHC Papers 39-46/21)

37. Mr WAI Woon-nam said that the activities of second-hand electrical appliance recyclers in the district were causing a severe nuisance to residents. He hoped the relevant departments would update the Committee on progress towards resolving the problems and study other effective mitigating measures. He said that partial road closures on Ki Lung Street, Kweilin Street and Tai Nan Street implemented by the relevant departments were effective in reducing unlawful activities like illegal extension of business by shops and hawking. He therefore suggested that similar measures be implemented on roads near Yee Kuk Street and Hai Tan Street to stamp out street occupation by second-hand electrical appliance recyclers.

38. Mr Ramon YUEN said that regarding the progress of relocation of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market, there were discrepancies between the report provided by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (“AFCD”) in Paper 42/21 and the one submitted by the Department to the Planning Development and Transport Affairs Committee. He enquired whether AFCD had updated the report in Paper 42/21.

39. The Secretary said that before each EHC meeting, the Secretariat would request by email that the relevant departments submit the most up-to-date regular reports, and the report AFCD submitted on the above-mentioned matter for the current meeting was the same as the previous meeting. The Secretariat could assist in enquiring about the issue with AFCD after the meeting.

40. Mr Ramon YUEN expressed his dissatisfaction with AFCD's lack of update on the report, and hoped that AFCD would provide a timetable for the relocation of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market. He further suggested that AFCD report on the progress of technical feasibility studies in its regular report.

41. The Chairman suggested that the Secretariat forward the member's enquiry and suggestion to AFCD after the meeting.

42. Ms Janet NG said that while the work of FEHD was starting to yield results, there was still room for improvement. She hoped FEHD would request more resources and manpower to address environmental hygiene problems in the district.

43. Ms LAU Pui-yuk said that the high level of noise from shops near various public markets and Apliu Street in the district was causing a nuisance to residents. She hoped that the relevant departments would step up law enforcement and study other noise control measures. Besides, there was an increase in the amount of fly-tipped construction waste cleared by the Highways Department ("HyD") in March and April this year, and she enquired whether that was related to the "HoHoSkips App" pilot scheme introduced by the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") in SSP District. She then said that illegal hawking of bicycles frequently occurred on the streets near the junction of Pei Ho Street and Kweilin Street and hoped that the relevant departments would follow up on it.

44. Mr Leos LEE said that staff of a certain shop near the junction of Castle Peak Road and Wing Lung Street often placed goods on the roads, and he had seen the shop owner hurling abuse at FEHD staff non-stop. He hoped the Police would assist with law enforcement to increase deterrence.

45. Mr Jay LI said that he had received complaints from an owners' corporation of an estate in the district that a vehicle repair garage was spray painting vehicles on the streets, and hoped that the relevant departments would step up patrols and regulations. Also, there were a high number of illicit cigarettes confiscated by the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED") in February and March this year. He opined that the Housing Department ("HD") should step up inspections and follow-up work if most of the confiscated illicit cigarettes were seized in public housing estates.

46. Mr Jeffrey SIN said that the 3-coloured recycling bins in Mei Shing House of Shek Kip Mei Estate were often full, and suggested that the departments concerned replace the bins with larger volume ones. Also, he hoped FEHD would proactively patrol black spots of dripping air conditioners, such as Yen Chow Street, Un Chau Street and Pei Ho Street.

47. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that with the approaching of the rainy season, many

residents told him about severe mosquito infestation in public housing estates. He hoped that FEHD would follow up on the issue and asked whether FEHD would adjust mosquito control actions according to the ovitrap index. Besides, he learnt of someone unlawfully hanging a banner containing provocative language on railings on a street outside a church in the district, and hoped that the relevant departments would deal with it as soon as possible.

48. Mr Edwin HUI gave a consolidated response saying that FEHD had all along given much attention to illegal extension of business by shops and street obstruction caused by second-hand electrical appliance recyclers. The Department would continue to conduct joint operations with relevant departments and warn or prosecute offenders, as well as stepping up patrols at black spots. Since the occupation of public places and roads by businesses around Pei Ho Street often resulted in environmental hygiene problems, traffic congestion problems, etc., FEHD and relevant departments would adopt a new law enforcement strategy with regard to streets around Pei Ho Street Market, with actions including prosecution, arrest and monitoring of specific spots to increase deterrence. Besides, FEHD had arranged for patrols at black spots of dripping air conditioners and would tackle dripping problems that affected bus stops and pedestrian crossing points as soon as possible. On mosquito infestation, besides regular inspection of construction sites for accumulation of stagnant water or proliferation of mosquitoes, FEHD would maintain close contact with HD and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) to conduct joint patrols of mosquito and rodent black spots in the district regularly and exchange opinions on the issue. To increase the speed and accuracy in the compilation of indices on mosquito infestation, FEHD had already replaced old ovitraps with newly-designed gravidtraps in April 2020 for a direct count of the number of adult mosquitoes. He added that FEHD currently conducted at least one joint operation with the Lands Department (“LandsD”) per week to clear non-commercial publicity materials that were unlawfully displayed in the district and would follow up on the banner hung unlawfully outside the church that a member just raised as soon as possible.

49. The Chairman said that he hoped FEHD and LandsD would respond to the banner issue as soon as possible as its wording might easily cause panic among the public.

50. Mr Wallace YIU gave a consolidated response saying that in addition to patrolling, advising and verbally warning shops that generated noise, EPD would also conduct noise assessment at the complainant’s residential unit. EPD welcomed additional details from members to facilitate follow-ups. Also, the total amount of fly-tipped construction waste cleared by HyD between January and April this year was similar to the amount recorded in the same period the previous year, and EPD would continue to monitor the problem of fly-tipping of construction waste in the district. EPD had also rolled out the “HoHoSkips App” pilot scheme to help the public and the renovation trade properly dispose of small amount of construction waste. The scheme had received favourable response due to its

convenient and affordable service, and the Department would step up promotion for the scheme. He then said that EPD would keep following up on the complaint case involving a car washing shop washing cars on the street and would step up patrols at it. EPD would also work with relevant departments to follow up on the proposal to increase the volume of 3-coloured recycling bins in Mei Shing House of Shek Kip Mei Estate.

51. The Chairman said that he hoped EPD would step up prosecution against noise-generating shops near wet markets to increase deterrence.

52. Mr Rex CHAN responded that it was primarily the responsibility of C&ED to combat the selling of duty-not-paid cigarettes. If the activities in question were jeopardising personal safety and the normal way of life, members of the public might also report them to the Police for investigation and follow-up action.

53. Mr Jocky CHUNG gave a consolidated response saying that it was the responsibility of private landowners to ensure the use of land complied with the terms of land leases, and members who had enquiries about user restrictions applicable to a particular piece of land might contact LandsD in writing for follow-up action. Moreover, LandsD noted the black spots of illegal parking of bicycles raised by a member, and would study enhanced joint operations in this regard.

54. Assistant District Officer 2 responded that the relevant departments had all along paid much attention to street obstruction resulting from the activities of second-hand electrical appliance recyclers, and would continue to step up law enforcement. Along with relevant departments, the Sham Shui Po District Office (“SSPDO”) had in the past suggested arranging for second-hand electrical appliance recyclers to relocate to Wang Cheong Factory Estate to run their business, but the suggestion was shelved due to issues with site selection, the building’s facilities, etc. Given that second-hand electrical appliance recycling was a legitimate form of business activity, the departments concerned would need to consider the receptiveness of the recyclers and gather the views of various stakeholders when formulating the relevant policies. SSPDO was open to the recommendations made by members and would continue to explore long-term solutions with relevant departments.

55. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that he hoped the relevant departments would deal with the above-mentioned unlawful banner seriously to avoid causing panic among the public. He also enquired whether FEHD had placed gravidtraps in public housing estates or other government-managed premises such as parks in the district.

56. Mr Edwin HUI responded that FEHD could provide members with the numbers of gravidtraps in public housing estates and parks in the district after the meeting, but it would not be appropriate to disclose the actual locations of gravidtraps lest they would be tampered

with, thus affecting the accuracy of the gravidtrap index.

57. The Chairman concluded that the Committee noted the above eight reports.

Agenda Item 3: Any other business

58. The Chairman said that a fire had broken out on a cargo boat off the Stonecutters Island the night before, giving off pungent and thick smoke that affected residents of numerous areas nearby. Although the fire had been put out in the morning, many members saw room for improvement in the contingency response and information dissemination work of various government departments, and he therefore approved the discussion of the issue in the meeting, and hoped that the departments concerned would respond to members' questions.

59. Mr Ramon YUEN said that apart from nearby residents being affected by the thick smoke, a resident had told him that their house pet was also feeling unwell, and hoped that the departments concerned would explain what materials had caused the fire and whether the thick smoke was harmful to humans as soon as possible. He also enquired whether the concentrations of air pollutants met EPD's Air Quality Objectives ("AQOs") and were at a safe level during the incident, and what follow-up work EPD undertook in relation to the incident.

60. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that according to the information provided by EPD and residents, the concentrations of air pollutants in nearby areas were extremely high while the cargo boat was on fire, posing a degree of health risks to residents. Given that EPD was responsible for measuring the concentrations of air pollutants and monitoring air quality, he hoped the Department would take the initiative to explain to the public and release all relevant details whenever there was a surge in air pollutants.

61. Ms Janet NG said that many of the affected residents had told her they did not know the cause of the thick smoke, and that demonstrated the absence of an effective communication channel between the Government and the public. She hoped the relevant departments would review the current mechanism for disseminating information about emergency situations.

62. Mr Leos LEE said that in order to prevent the spread of misinformation which might create panic among the public, he hoped the relevant departments would inform the public about the types of metal waste carried by the burnt cargo boat.

63. Mr Jeffrey SIN said that the Government had responded slowly to the incident and released the press statement concerned too late, residents and Members had to rely on news

media to learn about the course and development of the incident, and the Education Bureau failed to issue a guideline on the air pollution problem for students.

64. Ms Zoé CHOW said that fires frequently broke out in the area around the Stonecutters Island, and with the successive completions of residential estates in the coastal area of SSP District, the relevant departments should formulate contingency measures to deal with thick smoke caused by fires, so as to mitigate the impact on nearby residents. She also opined that EPD should make data on air pollutant monitoring more transparent so that residents could take prompt response measures.

65. The Chairman suggested that the departments concerned improve on their contingency measures for similar incidents and hoped to explore the issue in depth in the next DC meeting.

66. Mr Wallace YIU gave a consolidated response saying that EPD had paid close and continued attention to the development of the incident, and kept monitoring the concentrations of specific air pollutants under AQOs using its air quality monitoring network while publishing the relevant data as soon as possible after it was received, and higher concentrations of suspended particulates were recorded by the air quality monitoring station in Sham Shui Po in about two to three hours during the day before.

67. Assistant District Officer 2 gave a consolidated response saying that the Fire Services Department (“FSD”) was chiefly responsible for fire-related emergency rescues, and SSPDO would forward members’ recommendations on enhancing communication with various stakeholders to FSD after the meeting for appropriate follow-up action. SSPDO had paid close and continued attention to the development of the incident, and in its assessment, SSPDO believed there was no need to activate the emergency co-ordination mechanism in the district.

68. The Chairman suggested that SSPDO liaise with Members as soon as possible during an incident to help Members communicate with residents since many of them relied on Members to obtain the latest information.

69. Mr Ramon YUEN enquired which government departments would advise on the activation of the emergency co-ordination mechanism. He also hoped that the relevant departments would inform the public as soon as possible whether any harmful air pollutants were emitted during the fire.

70. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that it was difficult to gauge changes in the levels of air pollutants during an emergency, and therefore EPD should monitor the data all the time and set clear criteria for the activation of contingency measures.

71. Mr WONG Kit-long enquired about the criteria for the activation of emergency response mechanism in the district, and the situations under which residents would be evacuated.

72. Mr Wallace YIU gave a consolidated response saying that a summary of pollutant concentrations over the past 24 hours was available on EPD's website, and the Department had published its monitored data on its website as quickly as possible.

73. Assistant District Officer 2 gave a consolidated response saying that in the event of major incidents or when an adverse weather warning was issued, SSPDO would activate the district's Emergency Co-ordination Centre as necessary to provide emergency support and relief services, as well as supporting affected residents as necessary by providing temporary shelters, food, cash, etc. During the above-mentioned incident, SSPDO had made a comprehensive assessment on the prevailing situation and the impact on residents. Given that the fire broke out at the waters outside SSP District and did not pose a major threat to the safety of residents, SSPDO determined that there was no need to activate the above-mentioned emergency response mechanism. SSPDO valued its working relationship with DC on district administration, but given that FSD was chiefly responsible for disseminating information on the above-mentioned incident, SSPDO would forward members' opinions in this regard to FSD.

74. The Chairman concluded that it was hoped that the departments concerned would include similar incidents into the emergency response mechanism, and that EPD would make an announcement and issue health advice as soon as possible when there was a surge in air pollutants. He then said that he hoped the relevant departments would prepare details about the above-mentioned incident and give a full account of it and the measures for improving on the response mechanism in the next DC meeting.

75. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that there was panic due to the Government's slow dissemination of information about the incident. He hoped the relevant departments would review the workflow pertaining to the handling of emergencies.

76. Ms Janet NG said that prompt dissemination of information could help the public take timely preventive and response measures in an incident. She hoped the departments concerned would consider improving on the emergency response mechanism.

Agenda Item 4: Date of next meeting

77. The next meeting would be held at 9:30 a.m. on 22 July 2021 (Thursday).

78. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:55 p.m.

District Council Secretariat
Sham Shui Po District Office
July 2021