

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of
the Health and Environment Committee in 2016

Date : 12 May 2016 (Thursday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Mr WONG Yue-hon (Chairman)	DC Member	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Ms YUE Shin-man (Vice-Chairman)	"	2:30 pm	7:53 pm
Mr HO Hau-cheung, BBS, MH	DC Chairman	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	2:30 pm	6:19 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	"	2:30 pm	7:56 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr CHAN Nok-hang	"	2:38 pm	8:13 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	"	2:30 pm	6:01 pm
Mr CHIU Man-leong	"	2:30 pm	6:07 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick	"	2:30 pm	6:17 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	"	2:47 pm	7:56 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	"	2:30 pm	6:55 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	"	2:30 pm	6:09 pm
Mr LI Sai-wing	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	"	2:30 pm	8:13 pm
Mr MAK Yun-pui	"	2:30 pm	6:05 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	"	2:30 pm	6:05 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	"	2:57 pm	8:25 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, JP	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr SIU Hin-hong	"	2:30 pm	6:39 pm
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	"	2:30 pm	7:50 pm
Mr TONG Hok-leung	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Ms TSANG So-lai	"	2:30 pm	7:50 pm
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	"	2:30 pm	7:45 pm
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr WONG Ka-wing	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	"	2:30 pm	6:08 pm
Mr YIP Wing	"	2:30 pm	5:24 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	"	2:30 pm	8:25 pm
Mr CHU Ho-fai, Kelvin (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1 / Sha Tin District Office		

In Attendance

Mr WONG Tin-pui, Simon
Mr TSAI Yu-sing, Eric

Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin
Mr CHAU Wai

Ms CHUI Mei-chun, Flora

Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek

Title

Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin)
District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin) /
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Senior Housing Manager (Sha Tin) / Housing Department
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North) 4
/ Environmental Protection Department
Deputy District Leisure Manager (Sha Tin) 2 /
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Senior Executive Officer (District Council) / Sha Tin District Office

In Attendance by Invitation

Professor CHAN Siu-chee, Sophia, JP
Ms WONG Shuk-han, Diane
Mr CHIU Yu-chow

Mr YEUNG Chung-kei
Mr HO King-chung, Stephen
Mr MIU Clement
Mr CHUI Chi-keung, Edwin

Mr KO Chi-wai
Mr TO Sun-yiu
Mr CHAN Hon-cheung, John

Mr MUI Tung-king, Tony

Mr WONG Cheuk-him, Jason

Title

Under Secretary for Food and Health
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2
Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development) /
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Senior Associate Director of Atkins Consultancy Services Limited
Senior Engineer /Sha Tin / Transport Department
Town Planner / Sha Tin 3 / Planning Department
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Assessment & Noise) 2
/ Environmental Protection Department
Senior Engineer 2 / Noise Mitigation / Highways Department
AECOM Consulting Services Limited
Senior Landscape Architect / Vegetation Maintenance (Urban & Islands)
/ Highways Department
Senior Landscape Architect / Vegetation Maintenance (New Territories)
/ Highways Department
Landscape Architect / Vegetation Maintenance (Special Duties)
/ Highways Department

Absent

Mr CHENG Tsuk-man
Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin

Title

DC Member (Application for leave of absence received)
” (No application for leave of absence received)

Action**Welcome Message**

The Chairman welcomed all members and representatives of government departments to the 3rd meeting of the Health and Environment Committee (HEC) this year.

Application for Leave of Absence

2. The Chairman said that the Sha Tin District Council Secretariat (Secretariat) had received the application for leave of absence in writing from the following member:

Mr CHENG Tsuk-man Official commitment

3. Members unanimously endorsed the application for leave of absence submitted by the member above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 10 March 2016
(HEC Minutes 2/2016)

4. Ms Scarlet PONG recommended revising paragraph 67(h) as the following:
- “Silt accumulated excessively high in the river; as a result, no standard dragon boat training could be carried out. She asked why the silt around Hong Kong China Dragon Boat Association was not cleaned up to safeguard the health of water sportsmen;”
5. Members confirmed the revised minutes unanimously.

Matters Arising

Response of Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting
(Paper No. HE 13/2016)

6. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:
- (a) the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) had told the owners’ corporation of Lakeview Garden that four additional vehicle pick-up and drop-off points would be built beside the new mortuary, which, however, was not mentioned in the paper; and
 - (b) as parking spaces for private cars at Yau On Street were insufficient, the Bureau said it would set up two additional parking spaces at Lower Shing Mun Road and study building additional parking spaces at the new mortuary and using the crematorium for entrance and u-turn of tour buses, but the above schemes were not mentioned in the paper.
7. Mr TONG Hok-leung expressed thanks to the Bureau for its sustained communication with residents of Lakeview Garden about traffic issues and intention to carry out the pilot scheme. He hoped that the Bureau would continue to pay heed to residents’ concerns, e.g. insufficient parking spaces, pick-up and drop-off activities of large buses, landscape greening, incineration facilities and so on.
8. The responses of Professor Sophia CHAN, Under Secretary for Food and Health were summarised below:
- (a) the Bureau had stayed in touch with residents. Regarding the schemes including adding two parking spaces at Lower Shing Mun Road, setting up additional parking spaces beside the new mortuary and using the crematorium for entrance and u-turn of tour buses, the Bureau had replied to the residents of Lakeview Garden after discussing with related departments on the feasibility; and
 - (b) the Bureau agreed to keep reasonable communication with residents. If the schemes could be implemented, the Bureau would surely make corresponding arrangements. If any further discussion was required, the Bureau would continue to follow up.

9. Members noted the above paper unanimously.

Discussion Items

Proposed Public Columbarium at Shek Mun
(Paper No. HE 14/2016)

10. The Chairman welcomed Professor Sophia CHAN, Under Secretary for Food and Health, Ms Diane WONG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2, and the representatives of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Architectural Services Department, consulting companies, Transport Department and Planning Department to the meeting.

11. The Chairman thanked the dissenters for expressing opinions in a rational manner and also the FHB for sending personnel to the meeting. The Secretariat conveyed civic opinions to all members but said earlier that it would not forward opinions for others. He hoped the Secretariat could make an explanation.

12. Mr Simon WONG, Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin) responded that before the meeting, some citizens wrote letters to the Secretariat to provide their opinions on the proposed public columbarium at Shek Mun, and the Secretariat had submitted the letters one by one to the Chairman of the Sha Tin District Council for his information. After obtaining the approval from the Chairman of the Sha Tin District Council, the Secretariat conveyed the opinions to all members.

13. Professor Sophia CHAN and Ms Diane WONG gave a brief introduction to the contents of the paper.

14. The views of Mr Thomas PANG were summarised below:

- (a) he asked whether residents in Sha Tin were given priority to use the columbarium at Shek Mun; and
- (b) he suggested relocating the refuse transfer station to Nui Po Shan to release land for construction of residential units or public housing estates. As for the columbarium, he believed that the Bureau could consider expanding the existing Fu Shan Columbarium or placing the columbarium in caverns.

15. The views of Mr TING Tsz-yuen were summarised below:

- (a) the proposed columbarium had been under discussion for many years, and he opined that the Government had made adequate consultation;
- (b) he, as the convenor of the Columbaria Consumer Rights Concern Group, had been exchanging views with the Development Bureau and the FHB on policies related to columbaria. At present, Sha Tin had two columbaria under Part A and 19 columbaria under Part B of the list of the Development Bureau. The Government had a compelling need of increasing supply of public niches during the implementation of *the Private Columbaria Bill* to proscribe illegal private columbaria; and

- (c) he hoped the stench of the refuse transfer station could be solved.

16. The views of Mr Victor LEUNG were summarised below:

- (a) he supported the Government's policies on columbaria but had reservations on the site selected due to its failure to address concerns of the residents;
- (b) there would be 3 000 units in Shek Mun Estate in future, and he hoped that the Bureau would carry out the policies on columbaria without affecting the public housing planning; and
- (c) at the meeting of Sha Tin District Council held on 22 July 2010, former Member WAI Kwok-hung said the site selected at Shek Mun was "suitable for study" rather than voicing support for building a columbarium at Shek Mun.

17. The views of Mr Tiger WONG were summarised below:

- (a) he asked why only 40 000 niches were provided if the need for building a columbarium at Shek Mun was so urgent as described by the Bureau. He doubted whether the plot ratio was fully utilised;
- (b) the Government should work out a long-term plan to calculate population growth and death rates and decide which district was suitable to build columbarium according to the geographical environment, instead of building columbaria in all 18 districts;
- (c) according to the Director of Audit's Reports 2015, there were a total of 8 178 vacant coffin burial spaces and 38 052 vacant urn burial spaces; besides, there were 200 000 public niches and a total of 430 000 niches available for interment of cremains, and the unused niches accounted for 76%. The Chinese Permanent Cemeteries also provided 170 000 vacant niches. After issue of the report, the relevant authority did not formulate any scheme to make good use of the vacant niches; otherwise, it was not necessary to build a columbarium at Shek Mun;
- (d) in October 2014, the Office of the Ombudsman announced that the FEHD sold the completed 45 000 niches in batches in three years; as a result, a lot of niches had been left idle for a long term. In the absence of a queuing system, if any winner gave up subscription, the vacant niche would be allocated to the next draw. For example, more than 5 000 niches at Wo Hop Shek Kiu Tau Road Columbarium Phase V were left vacant after completion of the last round of allotment. Data showed that there should be adequate niches at present and there was no urgency to build a columbarium in each district which would undermine the original planning of each district; and
- (e) he asked whether the columbarium works would be continued in case of any difficulty encountered by the pedestrian subway works and whether the columbarium would be extended after relocation of the refuse transfer station.

18. The views of Ms Iris WONG were summarised below:

- (a) the visitor and vehicular flow brought by the columbarium would affect residents in the community. In 2010, the Sha Tin District Council was first briefed on the sites selected for columbaria, including Fu Shan and Shek Mun. At that time, as many as 16 Members raised objection against the choice of site at Shek Mun, believing it was too close to dwellings. Population in Shek Mun was on a rise. The proposal to set up buildings before columbarium resulted in opposition by the residents on the plan. As the DC Member of that constituency, she objected to building a columbarium at Shek Mun;
- (b) Sha Tin was a well-developed new town with sound planning, but the implementation problem of government policies resulted in housing shortage, and later, the plot ratio was increased for massive construction of housing estates. Shek Mun already had a refuse transfer station and liquefied petroleum gas filling stations. It was unknown how many new infrastructure projects and housing estates there would be in Sha Tin in future. The Bureau's traffic impact assessment was based on the projected data for 2021-2026, and she asked whether the Bureau could ensure there would be no more new infrastructure projects in Shek Mun in the next decade. The visitor and vehicular flow to Shek Mun community would also increase if more new housing estates and commercial buildings were completed;
- (c) a wall effect would be created after completion of Shek Mun Estate Phase II, and the lasting odour of the refuse transfer station went with the wind from On Hing Lane to the schools and Shek Mun Estate and was difficult to disperse. Although the Bureau said it would address the pollution problem with new joss paper burners, he worried that burning of candles and incense sticks and joss paper would generate dioxin, which was insoluble in water. The eco-friendly burner introduced by the Bureau could reduce the smell of smoke but whether it could remove dioxin remained unknown. Long-term inhalation of dioxin would affect the health of teachers and students in the schools and residents nearby;
- (d) if the Bureau wanted to promote green burial, it should not unlimitedly build columbaria on the precious land parcels. The successful promotion of the family-sharing niche plan, as well as reconstruction of the existing places for earth burial and urn burial, coupled with existing niches, would provide nearly 1 million niches, which could meet the demand for 15 years after illegal private columbaria were proscribed;
- (e) among the 24 selected sites, 14 were located near the cemeteries, 5 were in the unpopulated remote places, and 4 were adjacent to incinerators and landfills. She asked why only the site selected at Shek Mun was located in a mixed community where there were residences, commercial buildings and schools; and
- (f) she hoped that the Bureau could promise that if the construction of the pedestrian subway was hindered, the building of the columbarium at Shek Mun would be stopped and no extension works would be carried out after completion of the columbarium.

19. The views of Mr MOK Kam-kwai were summarised below:

- (a) the Fu Shan Public Mortuary approved to be expanded was situated next to the village he lived in, and he believed that it was acceptable only if complete transportation facilities were provided and the villagers were not affected;
- (b) the Bureau should relocate the refuse transfer station to solve the stench problem. If there was any concern that burning of candles, incense sticks and joss paper would generate stench, a place could be designated for burning; and
- (c) the Bureau should address residents' concerns, listen more to residents' aspirations and formulate improvement schemes to alleviate the impact on residents. He supported the proposed columbarium at Shek Mun.

20. The views of Ms CHAN Man-kuen were summarised below:

- (a) in her view, the Bureau had accepted opinions of various parties and worked out improvement schemes;
- (b) there was a substantial demand for columbarium niches and the demand far exceeded the supply. A private niche would cost as much as \$100,000; and
- (c) she expected that the Government could listen more to Shek Mun residents, ease their concerns and try to meet their needs, e.g. setting up smokeless space, reducing the burning of joss paper, etc. She suggested prohibiting burning of incense sticks and candles or joss paper in the columbarium.

21. The views of Mr CHING Cheung-ying were summarised below:

- (a) as grass-roots citizens were unable to afford expensive private niches, he expected that the Government could find out a thoughtful solution;
- (b) he suggested comprehensive control on burning of incense sticks, candles and joss paper to thoroughly solve the stench problem. He requested using greener and more eco-friendly architectural design to integrate the columbarium with surrounding sceneries to foster a sense of harmony. As such, he suggested the whole building could be half-sunken. Besides, he advised to reduce the niche volume to 1/3 of the existing niche to increase the number of niches and restrict the niche's usage period, e.g. 10 years. After expiry of the usage period, the descendants would decide whether to continue the lease under certain conditions, and the unattended cremains would be enshrined in the form of collective memorial plaque;
- (c) regarding traffic control measures, he suggested prohibiting non-residents or non-school vehicles from entering the area of the columbarium during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals;
- (d) he suggested that the Bureau should first consider the extension of the existing columbaria to offer more niches if there was no dispute;

- (e) some temples hoped to extend their columbaria. He advised the Government to buy niches from them at a controlled price to enable citizens to lease the niches at a reasonable price and combat private columbaria seeking excessive profits; and
- (f) he hoped the Bureau could promise that it would continue to consult residents about how to optimise the columbarium plan after completion of the columbarium at Shek Mun.

22. The views of Mr PUN Kwok-shan were summarised below:

- (a) he supported the proposed columbarium plan. He opined even if there was a certain distance between the slope and the columbarium, the Bureau should also deal with the slope problem. He suggested carrying out stabilisation works or considering usage of underground space;
- (b) he believed the Bureau's traffic impact assessment was conducted in the early period and should be updated now. Assessment focus for housing estates differed from that for columbaria, and he suggested including the pedestrian subway into the assessment scope;
- (c) regarding environmental assessment, he suggested imposing a blanket ban on burning of incense sticks or specifying a designated place for burning joss paper to create smokeless space;
- (d) the stench problem of the refuse transfer station should be settled together, and the government departments should not act of their own free will; and
- (e) to alleviate residents' psychological pressure, the psychological assessment should be conducted from cultural and customary perspectives.

23. The views of Mr HO Hau-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) it was predicted there would be about 54 000 cremations every year, and the industry's estimate showed about 40 000 columbarium niches were in need every year; the Shek Mun Columbarium could only cater for demand in one year after completion;
- (b) niches in private columbaria compliant with planning and land use regulations in Sha Tin District were sold at an average unit price of \$200,000 to \$600,000, which was a heavy burden for most citizens;
- (c) the Civil Force believed that the Government should expedite the building of more public columbaria to curb the soaring prices of private niches. The previous term of the Government did not make an effort to solve the problem with the result that there was increasing demand for niches; and
- (d) the Sha Tin District Council should protect the wellbeing of local residents. He hoped that the columbarium at Shek Mun could not only reassure residents but also meet residents' demand.

24. The views of Mr SIU Hin-hong were summarised below:

- (a) the demand for burial services was increasing given the growing size of ageing population, and the Government was obligated to build columbaria. He understood that there was difficulty in selecting the sites;
- (b) there was only a gateway to the site selected at Shek Mun, and therefore he worried it would cause traffic jam. He asked whether there was a buffer area around the pedestrian subway. He believed the bidirectional pedestrian flow design would be dangerous and the Hong Kong Police Force should be required to participate in the design. Moreover, he hoped parking spaces for the disabled would be provided at the roundabout;
- (c) he opined that the Government should eliminate residents' negative perceptions and suggested trying to change residents' perceptions on death and columbaria, e.g. renaming columbaria as life education exhibition hall, or green burial education center etc. to promote green burial. The Government should inform residents that a columbarium would be built nearby before they moved into the new housing estate. He agreed to reduce the volume of columbarium niche or set up family-sharing niches, and building the columbarium in a cavern could also be considered; and
- (d) he suggested allowing hawking in the vicinity by residents in the district after the completion of the columbarium, in order to promote economy.

25. The views of Mr WONG Hok-lai were summarised below:

- (a) in 2010, Mr WAI Kwok-hung said the distance between the site selected at Shek Mun and the dwellings was acceptable, which was suitable to build a columbarium; and
- (b) the private columbarium near Mei Chung Court was less than 10 metres away from dwellings, the odour generated from burning of joss paper disturbed residents, and the Government should address it. Building a public columbarium would also cause a nuisance to residents, for example, burning of joss paper would generate odour. He hoped the Government could take into account local residents' feelings and take compensatory measures to reassure the residents.

26. The views of Mr NG Kam-hung were summarised below:

- (a) he suggested visiting activities should be held at the existing columbaria to have residents know about their actual operation;
- (b) niches at Po Fook Hill were sold at a unit price varying from \$110,000 to \$580,000. The number of columbaria under Part B was more than that under Part A;

- (c) the smoke problem of Wo Hop Shek Columbarium was actually insignificant. The proportion of people burning joss paper was relatively low, and only incense sticks and candles were offered in the columbarium; therefore, it had a minor impact on the surrounding environment;
- (d) the Government should solve the stench problem of the refuse transfer station; and
- (e) he agreed to reduce the volume of columbarium niches or set up family-sharing niches.

27. The views of Ms Scarlett PONG were summarised below:

- (a) she understood the concerns of residents, parents and teachers and also paid an inspection visit to Shek Mun and Wo Hop Shek. She hoped the Government could listen to stakeholders' requests. She asked whether the people flow leaving the columbarium would affect students coming back to the schools during holidays;
- (b) she suggested prohibiting the burning of joss paper, believing it would be more eco-friendly;
- (c) some columbaria abroad were named as memorial halls to tie in with green burial. She believed the design of memorial garden could be more aesthetic to attract visitors. The Government could shorten the distance between the proposed memorial garden and columbarium to encourage citizens to choose green burial, so as to lower the demand for niches;
- (d) she advised to relocate the refuse transfer station to improve the living environment in Shek Mun;
- (e) she believed the Bureau could consider building a columbarium at Nui Po Shan; and
- (f) the parking spaces for hearses should be provided by the service provider rather than the Government.

28. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) the number of private columbaria increased in the light of market demand, while the Government failed to build in time additional public columbaria to meet the demand. The Government should have planned to build columbaria before the development of the region; and
- (b) he supported the Government's plan to build public columbaria, but advised it to listen to the opinions of all parties and communicate with stakeholders. Residents held that the consultation period was too short, as such they might not have sufficient time to learn about the plan. Therefore, relevant information might also fail to be disseminated extensively in the community.

29. The views of Mr James CHAN were summarised below:

- (a) he opposed to building columbaria only in communities where low-income families live;
- (b) indigenous inhabitants also agreed to forbid burning joss paper in columbaria. With technological advancement, he held that the feasibility of the plan could be reexamined;
- (c) the Chairman of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong had expressed the hope that more columbaria would be built as soon as possible; and
- (d) in Hong Kong, the gradual replacement of earth burial by cremation was purely a matter of cost and irrelevant to the Government. He hoped that the Government could step up promoting green burial and wished to learn about the procedures for cremation.

30. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) regarding relocation of facilities to Nui Po Shan, the traffic load capacity of A Kung Kok Street should be taken into consideration. Parents and residents showed concerns about people flow of the columbarium and he asked whether the Bureau could ensure segregation of people and vehicles in all access routes. He suggested separation of routes going into and out of the columbarium to divert the people flow. In addition, pick-up and drop-off points for large tour buses and public transport vehicles should be added during the Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals;
- (b) the consultation period was inadequate regardless of its length. The key was how the Bureau responded to aspirations of residents and he hoped to achieve a win-win situation. He asked the Bureau about how to deal with the objections of stakeholders and maintain communication with them. Although the Bureau had responded to the opinions of stakeholders, he hoped the Bureau could promise to maintain communication with stakeholders and optimise the design after the plan was approved;
- (c) he said residents showed concerns about the wind direction of the columbarium and whether the cremains would be blown to dwellings and asked about how to deal with the landscape problems around housing estates adjacent to Shek Mun Estate; and
- (d) he asked how the Bureau cooperated with the Education Bureau to promote life education, teaching children to cherish life.

31. The views of Mr TONG Hok-leung were summarised below:

- (a) the shortage of columbarium niches in Hong Kong was ascribable to the Government, which should promote more environmentally friendly burial methods. However, the Government neither provided relevant information to citizens nor persuaded citizens to adopt such methods;

- (b) residents were concerned about the impact caused by the building of columbarium. The Government should communicate with residents regarding the stench problem of the refuse transfer station or consider relocating the said transfer station; and
- (c) the Government should also deal with the smell of smoke arising from burning joss paper to minimise the impact on residents.

32. The views of Mr Wilson LI were summarised below:

- (a) residents held that consultation was inadequate and hoped the Government could make improvements to communicate more with stakeholders. He believed that the Bureau could consider renaming the columbarium to reduce the resistance of the citizens;
- (b) he hoped that the Bureau would help residents solve the stench problem of the refuse transfer station. Besides, smokeless venues were less polluted. If the Bureau determined to forbid burning incense sticks and candles and joss paper, it could inform citizens in advance; and
- (c) he hoped the Government could assess whether the pedestrian subway could cope with the people flow and its impact on residents.

33. The views of Mr WONG Ka-wing were summarised below:

- (a) the Bureau consulted the Sha Tin District Council regarding site selection in 2010. The Bureau had improved the design in recent years and adopted the opinions of all parties. If the columbarium was successfully completed, he hoped the Bureau could keep making improvements to minimise the impact on residents;
- (b) he suggested forbidding burning joss paper to reduce smoke. The refuse transfer station was odourless while the odour was generated during the refuse transportation process. He suggested relocating the refuse transfer station; and
- (c) he understood the concerns of residents in Shek Mun and hoped the Bureau could minimise the impact on local residents.

34. The views of Mr Rick HUI were summarised below:

- (a) the impact generated by the columbarium was mainly on psychological and environmental aspects. This plan did have a problem in that the residents moved in before the building of the columbarium. He hoped some compensations could be made to local residents;
- (b) he asked how the Government dealt with the problem of the refuse transfer station or made compensation in the plan;
- (c) he suggested regulating the burning of joss paper to gradually change the social culture; and

- (d) he asked about how to allocate the 40 000 columbarium niches in the future.

35. The responses of Professor Sophia CHAN were summarised below:

- (a) the Bureau must consider the opinions of members and study the suggestions from every sector of the community;
- (b) the Bureau noted members' requests for increasing supply of public columbarium niches;
- (c) the Bureau held an open attitude on any proposals and would take into account any suggestions in favor of promoting the columbarium project. The Bureau was also concerned about the psychological burdens of residents, teachers and students and various stakeholders. Apart from relieving problems in terms of environment, air, people flow and transportation, the Bureau also hoped to work with the Education Bureau to advocate life education. The landscape would be made greener and more vibrant to the greatest extent to alleviate their psychological burdens. The Bureau hoped to transform the social customs and encourage more people to select green burial to reduce demand on public niches. He believed that public education should start at an early age and suggested educating different communities. The Bureau had said at the relevant panel meeting of the Legislative Council that additional resources would be allocated to promote green burial and it would cooperate with different stakeholders including the school and organisations in the community;
- (d) regarding the surrounding environment, the Bureau would actively consider implementing greening measures and improving air quality and would conduct a preliminary assessment on environmental impact, with the assessment report to be approved by the Director of the Environmental Protection. Regarding the sanitation and odour problems of the refuse transfer station, improvement works, including a series of upgrade and improvement works in the refuse transfer station, had commenced from the end of 2015, which were expected to help improve the operational efficiency and environment, enhance odour control and reduce the impact on the environment. The Bureau would convey the opinions of all sectors to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) so as to make improvements. Besides, the "subsidy scheme for retrofitting refuse collection vehicles" of the EPD would be carried out in the form of one-off subsidy to assist the industry in installation of metal tailgate covers and waste water sump tanks on refuse collection vehicles, in order to reduce odour and improve sanitation and hygiene. Relevant regulations took effect on 1 April 2015;
- (e) the pedestrian subway was still under preliminary discussion and a detailed feasibility study would be conducted later. The Bureau was updating the relevant traffic impact assessment which would cover the impact of local development in recent years and the optimisation brought by building the pedestrian subway and would report the results to the Sha Tin District Council after completion of the assessment. At present, the Bureau had no plan for increasing the number of niches to be provided by the proposed columbarium at Shek Mun;

- (f) regarding the site selection, the Bureau had consulted the public in 2010 and the Sha Tin District Council in 2010 and 2013. After discussing the feasibility of various alternative sites with various departments, the Bureau believed that Shek Mun was a relatively suitable site among the sites selected in the district. Afterwards, from February 2016 onwards, the Government held briefing sessions and workshops and met with residents and members regarding the Shek Mun plan to collect opinions. She hoped that the next consultation work could be done better and the Bureau would pay attention to various problems and maintain communication with stakeholders. After winning the in-principle support from various district councils, the Bureau would revise the planning outline and carry out detailed design to have public columbaria built as soon as possible;
- (g) the Government suggested regulating the private columbaria by legislation, hoped that scrutiny of the relevant bill could be completed during the current Legislative Council session and would speed up building public columbaria;
- (h) cremation of dead bodies would not be conducted in columbaria. The Bureau welcomed stakeholders to visit the columbaria or joss paper burners therein; and
- (i) the Bureau would consider suggestions such as reducing the niche volume or setting up family-sharing niches. Whether or not to increase the number of niches depended on the surrounding environment, transportation and other factors.

36. The responses of Mr YEUNG Chung-kei, Senior Associate Director of Atkins Consultancy Services Limited were summarised below:

- (a) the assessment work included “assessment tests”, whose results showed that any increase in the surrounding traffic flow could be coped with;
- (b) the vehicular flow to the columbarium would be considered in planning the infrastructure project in Shek Mun Estate, and related parties of the columbarium would also examine the vehicular flow after completion of the infrastructure project in Shek Mun Estate;
- (c) the design of the pedestrian subway had been included in the assessment scope and its width would be decided according to the people flow;
- (d) as to the impact on the schools, according to the past experience and data, most citizens paid tributes to their ancestors before the noon of the Chung Yeung Festival and Ching Ming Festival and only a few of them went there during the normal school hours. Therefore, he believed that it had a minor impact on students. After reexamination, it was proposed that the crowd should be concentrated at wider roads in the periphery without passing through the schools, thus minimising the impact on the schools; and
- (e) apart from the pedestrian subway and passages in the venue, crowd control measures would also be taken to avoid crowd congestion in case of emergencies.

37. The responses of Mr Stephen HO, Senior Engineer / Sha Tin of Transport Department were summarised below:

- (a) the width of the pedestrian subway was adequate to cope with the bidirectional people flow. Whether or not the requirement for coping with the maximum bidirectional people flow could be satisfied was taken as an indicator during the assessment. The Transport Department would not accept it until the requirement was satisfied; and
- (b) in case of emergencies, there was a space near the pedestrian subway that could be used to control the people flow, and moreover, the subway could lead directly to the columbarium; therefore, he believed that the subway could cope with relevant people flow and provide a buffer in the event of any incident.

38. The responses of Ms Diane WONG were summarised below:

- (a) after revising the planning outline and carrying out detailed design, it was expected that the funding application would be made in 2018 and the columbarium would be completed in 2021 or 2022 according to circumstances;
- (b) the Bureau held an open attitude towards allotting the 40 000 niches of the columbarium at Shek Mun in phases, and any further arrangement would be made based on actual circumstances. Allotting niches in different regions would help share the traffic pressure;
- (c) she noted the stakeholders' concerns about the refuse transfer station, and the Bureau maintained close communication with the EPD. Regarding the sanitation and odour problems of the refuse transfer station, the EPD said improvement works had commenced from the end of 2015 and the situation would gradually improve while construction was underway. The refuse collection vehicles of the EPD were all up to standard. The EPD also amended the regulations, stipulating that private refuse collection vehicles were required to be equipped with tailgate covers, waste water sump tanks and so on. The EPD also maintained close communication with DC Members so as to implement improvement measures. For example, industry participants were reminded that the refuse collection vehicles were not allowed to be parked near On Muk Street, and extra cleaning services for nearby streets would be arranged as required in addition to the services of the FEHD. DC Members would be informed of any other improvement measures. The EPD had no plan so far for relocating the refuse transfer station;
- (d) the Bureau would conduct traffic impact assessment according to the development. In the future, the departments in charge of each development project would conduct traffic impact assessment and take mitigation measures according to the development at that time. Therefore, relevant systems would effectively take into account the latest development and the resulting traffic impact; and

- (e) the Bureau commissioned the Civil Engineering and Development Department to carry out assessment on the construction of pedestrian subway, whose results showed that it was technically feasible and a detailed feasibility study would be conducted later.

39. The Chairman hoped that the Bureau could convey the opinions of members on the refuse transfer station to the EPD and submit information of cremation procedures to relevant members after the meeting. He hoped that the Bureau could include the opinions and requests of members into the traffic impact assessment report in the future. Members voted on the proposed construction of about 40 000 niches by the FHB. If the columbarium was extended in the future, consultation would be conducted again. The traffic impact assessment had not yet been completed and this voting was based on the assumption that there was no problem with the traffic impact as confirmed upon assessment.

40. The Chairman asked the members to vote on the paper.

41. Mr MAK Yun-pui required that the names of members who voted for and against be recorded, which was supported by four members.

42. The Chairman announced that the members endorsed the above paper with 25 votes in favour, 3 against and 8 abstentions.

The 25 members in favour were:

Mr TING Tsz-yuen, Mr HO Hau-cheung, Mr NG Kam-hung, Mr LI Sai-hung, Mr Wilson LI, Ms LAM Chung-yan, Mr TONG Hok-leung, Mr Michael YUNG, Mr MOK Kam-kwai, Mr Rick HUI, Mr Billy CHAN, Mr James CHAN, Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Mr CHAN Nok-hang, Mr MAK Yun-pui, Ms TSANG So-lai, Mr CHING Cheung-ying, Mr WONG Ka-wing, Mr WONG Hok-lai, Mr YIP Wing, Mr Sunny CHIU, Mr PUN Kwok-shan, Mr LAI Tsz-yan, Mr SIU Hin-hong and Ms Scarlett PONG.

The 3 members against were:

Mr Tiger WONG, Mr Victor LEUNG and Ms Iris WONG.

The 8 members who abstained were:

Mr YAU Man-chun, Ms YUE Shin-man, Mr LI Sai-wing, Mr CHIU Man-leong, Mr YIU Ka-chun, Mr Thomas PANG, Ms TUNG Kin-lei and Mr WAI Hing-cheung.

PWP Item No. 6804TH - Retrofitting of Noise Barriers at Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section)
(Paper No. HE 15/2016)

43. The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Highways Department, the EPD and consulting companies to the meeting.

44. Mr KO Chi-wai, Senior Engineer 2 / Noise Mitigation of Highways Department and Mr TO Sun-yiu of AECOM Consulting Services Limited gave a brief introduction to the contents of the paper.

45. Mr CHING Cheung-ying held that such issues should be discussed together at the meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC). Members were concerned about whether road closure or route diversion was required.

46. The views of Ms Scarlett PONG were summarised below:

- (a) the project directly influenced the residents in Fo Tan, and the Highways Department would consult local communities and stakeholders this May and June. She hoped to learn about how the consultation would be conducted;
- (b) at the meeting of the Health and Environment Committee on 12 May 2011, she had requested building noise barriers along The Palazzo and Jubilee Garden. However, the relevant authority pointed out that voluntary installation of soundproof glass had been carried out at The Palazzo, and besides, there was insufficient space; therefore, no noise barrier could be built. As noise barriers could even be built on the relatively narrow road section at the New Town Plaza, noise barriers should also be able to be built on the aforesaid road section at Fo Tan; and
- (c) the Government pointed out that the noise level along The Palazzo and Jubilee Garden was within set standards, but citizens found the noise problems were serious after move-in. She hoped that the Government would seek other solutions.

47. The views of Mr Thomas PANG were summarised below:

- (a) he supported the construction of noise barriers and hoped that the Highways Department could provide the Secretariat with the briefing information for easy reference by members in the future;
- (b) cantilevered noise barriers had been set up at the road section of Tai Po Road heading north to Fo Tan. He worried that the noise could not be kept out given the insufficient height of the barriers. He hoped that the Highways Department would conduct reevaluation and consider increasing the height or extending the length of the barriers;
- (c) he believed that it was right to remove the Acacia, hoping this tree species would not be replanted due to its relatively short lifespan and fragile trunk, and suggested planting taller trees with luxuriant flowers and leaves; and
- (d) he held that there was a lack of comprehensive planning for trees in Sha Tin and hoped that the horticulturists could provide opinions.

48. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) he was concerned about whether the two departments could coordinate with each other regarding the building of noise barriers at Tai Po Road and it would be better to discuss the issue at the same meeting;
- (b) he hoped that relevant noise barrier works could be simultaneously completed;
- (c) he asked which district organisations would be consulted if cycle tracks were required to be changed; and
- (d) he hoped to know when the works would be completed.

49. The views of Mr SIU Hin-hong were summarised below:

- (a) as cantilevered noise barriers might have the noise bounce back to the opposite side, he suggested building full enclosure noise barriers to safeguard the interest of residents in Sheung Wo Che and Ha Wo Che;
- (b) he suggested measuring the noise level of the road section from Royal Ascot to New Town Plaza in Sha Tin and adding noise barriers if the noise level exceeded 70 decibels. He asked whether or not building noise barriers was based on the noise level or factors related to the works; and
- (c) if the proposed noise barriers were put in use, residents of Scenery Court living above the 15th floor would still be affected by noise and the noise would also rebound.

50. The views of Ms YUE Shin-man were summarised below:

- (a) the noise barrier problem had been under discussion since 1994, but no results had been reached so far. As residents suffered from noise nuisance from large vehicles at night, noise barriers must be built;
- (b) as Man Wo House of Wo Che Estate was closest to the construction site, she asked whether the noise and air pollution during construction would affect the residents. If yes, what corresponding measures would be taken; and
- (c) Wai Wah Centre was also close to the construction site. She hoped that measures could be taken to alleviate the noise.

51. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) he held that the retrofitting works for noise barriers and works at Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) were complementary to each other and did not understand why relevant departments acted in their own way. If no synergy effect could be achieved, more public funds would be spent;
- (b) the widening works of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) had been gazetted, but given that this project had not been gazetted until now, he asked what measures would be taken in case of any objection;
- (c) regarding cycle tracks outside Wai Wah Centre and Scenery Court, he hoped to know the results of the feasibility study on using fire services access and whether or not the Fire Services Department allowed building structures on the fire services access; and
- (d) as temporary traffic control measures caused inconvenience to drivers unfamiliar with the roads and easily led to accidents, he asked whether or not the frequency of traffic control measures would be minimised.

52. The views of Ms Iris WONG were summarised below:

- (a) resurfacing the roads with low noise materials would not have much practical effect and the low frequency noise from large vehicles was hard to measure; and
- (b) the transport interchange at Shek Mun also caused noise problems and she hoped to know the criteria for building noise barriers.

53. The responses of Mr KO Chi-wai were summarised below:

- (a) the consulting companies also designed the widening works at Tai Po Road at the design stage of this project. Regarding the construction, the goal was to hire one contractor to simultaneously conduct the two works. Therefore, there would not be any problem in coordination. The current goal was to carry out this project together with the widening works;
- (b) the Highways Department and the Civil Engineering and Development Department planned to introduce to members the preliminary temporary traffic arrangement concerning Tai Po Road, Sha Tin Rural Committee Road, cycle tracks and pedestrian ways at the meeting of the TTC to be held this July. He hoped that the design and proposed measures of noise barriers would first be explained and then the arrangement for implementing the two works simultaneously would be introduced;
- (c) the fire fighting access beside Wai Wah Centre would be shortened during the construction of noise barriers. The Highways Department contacted the Transport Department and the Fire Services Department at the end of April. All parties initially agreed on the above arrangement and the detailed construction arrangement would be introduced to members in July; and
- (d) as to the height and shape of noise barriers, the noise reflection would be taken into account in design and the Highways Department had added sound-absorbing materials to the lower portions of noise barriers and noise enclosures to strengthen the silencing effect. Two rows of noise barriers were planned to be set up at the road section near Scenery Court, and the design of this project would further help reduce the noise.

54. The responses of Mr Edwin CHUI, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Assessment & Noise) 2 of EPD were summarised below:

- (a) the section of Tai Po Road near The Palazzo had been in place for years. When setting the land grant provisions for The Palazzo, the District Lands Office required the developer to make a noise assessment during planning and take noise mitigation measures. The developer of The Palazzo had carried out assessment on the traffic noise of Tai Po Road and taken a variety of appropriate noise mitigation measures in the housing estate; and
- (b) as the MTR maintenance depot near The Palazzo and Jubilee Garden was only about one metre away from Tai Po Road and there were many overlying and underground facilities, there was not enough space for installation of noise

barriers. Building noise barriers on existing roads often failed due to insufficient space. There were also similar limitations on the roads near The Palazzo and Shek Mun. The developer of The Palazzo had heightened the terrace to reduce the traffic noise for some units, and some units were arranged to be constructed far away from Tai Po Road in building layout. Moreover, the developer installed an eight-metre-high noise barrier on the terrace and added such facilities as vertical fins and balconies to the facades of some units. Regarding the units which were still affected by the noise due to design limitations, the developer had installed quality windows and air conditioners for them to provide a quieter indoor environment.

Strategy and Work for Improvement of Environmental Hygiene in Hong Kong
(Paper No. HE 16/2016)

55. Mr Eric TSAI, District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin) of FEHD gave a brief introduction to the paper.

56. The views of Mr TONG Hok-leung were summarised below:

- (a) he hoped the FEHD could step up efforts to deal with the serious street obstruction near Tai Wai Market;
- (b) the footbridge on Mei Fai Street was not cleaned thoroughly and there were lots of rubbish and weeds on the earthfill slope outside Mei Tin Estate;
- (c) the mosquito problem near Mei Tin Estate, Mei Chung Court, Park View Garden and Granville Garden was serious and insufficient efforts had been made for mosquito elimination. Pik Tin Street, Heung Fan Liu Street, etc. were also affected;
- (d) wild monkeys often disturbed the residents of Mei Tin Estate, Mei Chung Court, Park View Garden and Granville Garden and foraged in the garbage cans; and
- (e) the environment of Tai Wai Market was poor and there was no air conditioning facility. He hoped the Government could build a complex to solve this problem.

57. The views of Ms CHAN Man-kuen were summarised below:

- (a) the residents said the midge problem was serious. She asked the FEHD whether it had compiled statistics regarding the midge problem in Sha Tin District, and how it would follow up with that; and
- (b) some places at Kwong Yuen Estate had been enclosed by the District Lands Office/Shan Tin. Although the District Lands Office/Shan Tin had conducted cleaning exercises, a lot of rubbish was still piled up there. She hoped the FEHD could contact the District Lands Office/Shan Tin to step up cleaning.

58. The views of Ms TUNG Kin-lei were summarised below:

- (a) she wanted to know about the progress of installation of air conditioning system in Tai Wai Market;
- (b) given rising population, she hoped the FEHD could identify a site in Tai Wai to build a new market;
- (c) the serious midge problem could particularly affect the children. She hoped the FEHD could strengthen coordination with other departments, for example, urging the Leisure and Cultural Services Department or the Housing Department to intensify efforts for replacing anti-midge patches at parks;
- (d) she hoped the District Lands Office/Shau Tin and the FEHD could clear up the rubbish piled up at Man Lai Court as soon as possible; and
- (e) she hoped the fixed penalty of \$1,500 for illegal shop front extensions would be implemented as soon as possible.

59. The views of Ms LAM Chung-yan were summarised below:

- (a) every summer, there were citizens complaining about dripping air conditioners. She asked the FEHD about the progress of follow-up action, how many complaints it had received and how many cases were successfully prosecuted. Although some housing estates had drainage pipes, the problem still existed;
- (b) she hoped the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (the Joint Offices) could introduce new technologies to solve the long-lasting water seepage problem for the residents; and
- (c) residents had anti-mosquito awareness, but knew little about midge problem. Besides, the FEHD seemed to have taken no countermeasures. She held that the FEHD should promote some effective prevention methods to the citizens.

60. The views of Mr HO Hau-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) regarding the cleanliness problems of footbridges and pedestrian subways, the Highways Department only carried out repair and maintenance works occasionally. As a result, the cleanliness was unsatisfactory all the time; and
- (b) he hoped the FEHD could coordinate with the Highways Department regarding street cleaning.

61. The views of Mr PUN Kwok-shan were summarised below:

- (a) he extended thanks to the FEHD for dealing with the stink from the excrements of wild boars and discarded articles on the mountain behind Lung Hang Estate. He hoped the FEHD could prosecute those who fed wild boars in Lung Hang Estate;

- (b) the environment of Tai Wai Market had been improved in recent years. He suggested providing more diversified services. For example, the FEHD could cooperate with youth service organisations, social enterprises or other non-governmental organisations to provide opportunities for starting up businesses. He hoped it could do a better job than Link Real Estate Investment Trust (Link REIT) which charged a higher rent;
- (c) he urged the FEHD to pay attention to the problem of hawking on the “Octopus Bridge”;
- (d) some shops and tenement buildings in Tai Wai were undergoing renovations. He hoped the FEHD could be aware of any mosquito and midge breeding; and
- (e) the FEHD carried out improvements to public toilets every year. He hoped the project would cover Tin Sam Village.

62. The views of Ms TSANG So-lai were summarised below:

- (a) the FEHD initiated 32 prosecutions by invoking section 27 of the *Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance* (Cap. 132 of the Laws of Hong Kong). She wanted to know in what circumstances prosecutions could be instituted and what the penalties were; and
- (b) if the situation did not improve after any private housing estate had paid a penalty, she asked how the FEHD would follow up.

63. The views of Mr Billy CHAN were summarised below:

- (a) he asked the FEHD how it would solve the serious midge problem in housing estates;
- (b) he asked the FEHD how it would follow up with the hygiene blackspots; and
- (c) regarding illegal parking of bicycles, he hoped the FEHD could enhance coordination with the District Lands Office/Shau Tin and the Sha Tin District Office to solve the problem. He pointed out that there were also carts and accumulated debris at bicycle parking spaces.

64. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) he suggested moving the large garbage cans outside Chevalier Garden into the housing estate;
- (b) the FEHD had made efforts for mosquito elimination after outbreak of dengue fever. He hoped mosquito elimination would be classified as regular work;
- (c) a good job had been done on issuance of penalty tickets at Fok On Garden, which solved the street obstruction and hygiene problems. He suggested strengthening law enforcement at the blackspots of illegal hawking or shop front extensions; and

- (d) the FEHD might consider advising those cardboard collectors not to place the cardboard on the street.

65. The views of Mr Tiger WONG were summarised below:

- (a) the FEHD said strengthened efforts in mosquito elimination would be made by outsourced contractors. He wanted to know about the frequency of mosquito elimination on each street or in each area;
- (b) he pointed out that the mosquito problem in the Kwong-Hong area was serious; and
- (c) he hoped the FEHD could solve the serious problem caused by wild monkeys on mountains situated at Wong Nai Tau.

66. The views of Mr NG Kam-hung were summarised below:

- (a) stagnant water left on the ground after clearing of large garbage cans on the streets might attract mice. He hoped the FEHD could pay heed to the problem. Food could easily heap in gaps between the eco-friendly bricks outside the food shops, which might attract mice. He hoped the FEHD could deal with that;
- (b) he asked the FEHD whether it could prosecute smokers at bus stations at the entrance of Shing Mun Tunnel or on the street. Unextinguished cigarette butts in ashtrays on the top of garbage cans might burn. He hoped the FEHD or Tobacco Control Office could deal with that; and
- (c) the mosquito problem had been very serious in recent years. He asked whether there was any more effective method for mosquito elimination apart from using larvicidal oil or larvicidal sand. He held that shrubs could easily breed mosquitoes.

67. The views of Mr LI Sai-wing were summarised below:

- (a) midges could be seen everywhere. He doubted whether the FEHD had made sufficient efforts to deal with the midge problem and asked what measures could be taken to effectively deal with the mosquito and midge problem in Ma On Shan District apart from using anti-midge patches; and
- (b) the management offices of many housing estates did not necessarily have professional knowledge. He hoped the FEHD and the management offices could exchange opinions or step up efforts for inspection.

68. The views of Ms Iris WONG were summarised below:

- (a) mosquitoes and midges could be seen everywhere in the district. There were also a very large number of mosquitoes and midges in the many greenbelts along On King Street. Anti-midge patches were pasted everywhere at the bus stations. She hoped the FEHD could replace the anti-midge patches frequently. Many schools had greenbelts, which might easily breed mosquitoes. She

hoped the FEHD could enhance public education;

- (b) signs were often posted near the bus stations or railings, but they were left unattended at all. Someone parked a damaged bicycle for posting of advertisements. She wanted to know whether it was an act of illegal parking of bicycles or illegal posting of advertisements; and
- (c) she hoped the greenbelt near Pictorial Garden Phase 2 under the bridge at Shek Mun Transport Interchange could be listed as a pest infestation and hygiene blackspot.

69. The views of Mr CHAN Nok-hang were summarised below:

- (a) he hoped the FEHD could intensify efforts for dealing with the serious mosquito and midge problems, especially midge problem;
- (b) he asked how the FEHD would provide assistance if any private housing estate faced the rodent problem but was incapable of solving it; and
- (c) bird droppings could be a transmission medium of avian flu or other pathogens and bird droppings might be found under trees in parks or at bus stations. He hoped the FEHD could intensify efforts for cleaning.

70. The views of Mr WONG Hok-lai were summarised below:

- (a) the mosquito and midge problems were serious. He had advised the Highways Department to remove the weeds before and asked whether the FEHD would enhance efforts for mosquito elimination;
- (b) he wanted to know about the distribution of ovitraps in Tai Wai and hoped ovitraps would be set up in more places so as to collect more data; and
- (c) as there were many wild monkeys in the district, he hoped the frequency of clearing rubbish could be increased.

71. The views of Ms Scarlett PONG were summarised below:

- (a) the mosquito problem at the barbecue site behind Ficus Garden. She hoped the FEHD could deal with that;
- (b) she advised the FEHD to remind the management companies to pay attention to the mosquito blackspots in such places as pebble roads and ditches under wooden boards; and
- (c) excrements of dogs on the streets generated strong odour. She hoped the FEHD could deal with that.

72. The Chairman pointed out that some discarded bicycles had been piled at bicycle parking spaces under Sha Tin Rural Committee Road for over half a year and were left unattended, and there were also discarded personal articles. He hoped the FEHD could deal with that.

73. The responses of Mr Eric TSAI were summarised below:

- (a) the FEHD attached great importance to the work of mosquito elimination as mosquito was a transmission medium of diseases. As midge was not a transmission medium of diseases, there was no specific midge elimination plan. Female midges sucked blood. Efforts made by various government departments, private housing estates and the FEHD for mosquito elimination could effectively reduce the number of midges. Moreover, spraying of pesticides could also eliminate midges. As far as the FEHD learned, the District Lands Office/Shan Tin had made efforts to eliminate mosquitoes on lands under its management. Besides, Shan Tin District Office would hold an inter-departmental meeting to discuss matters concerning mosquito elimination to support the mosquito elimination works in Shan Tin. As for construction sites at Nui Po Shan, the FEHD also enhanced efforts for mosquito elimination on the hill apart from prevention of dengue fever. The FEHD had also followed up with the mosquito problem at the barbecue site behind Ficus Garden. Furthermore, the FEHD reminded the residents to deal with the stagnant water via publicity and education. It would also make a site inspection in the schools and instructed the schools how to deal with stagnant water and eliminate mosquitoes;
- (b) leaflets with guidelines for midge prevention and control were available in the District Environmental Hygiene Offices and on the website of the FEHD for reference of the public;
- (c) the monkey problem was not within the scope of duty of the FEHD, but the FEHD would deal with the garbage cans turned over by the monkeys and often clear the garbage cans;
- (d) the Architectural Services Department was now making a technical feasibility study and preliminary design for the installation of air conditioning system in Tai Wai Market, which was expected to be completed in the coming few months. Later, it would further consult the market traders, residents of Grandeur Garden and various members;
- (e) the reasons for recent increase of rubbish accumulated at Shing Mun River were not clear and the FEHD had kept sending staff to deal with that. From April to September, the FEHD dispatched boats to clear the rubbish floating on the river every day. In recent months, the FEHD had deployed additional manpower to clear the rubbish along the riverside near Man Lai Court;
- (f) about 1 600 complaints about dripping air conditioners were received from Shan Tin District every year. Many buildings did not have any drainage pipes so that water dripping from air conditioners caused disturbance to the residents downstairs. The FEHD would issue a "Nuisance Notice" to urge the residents/owners concerned to repair the air conditioners or install pipes. If the residents/owners failed to deal with dripping water within the period specified in the notice, the FEHD would initiate prosecution. Information about the number of prosecutions concerning dripping water from air conditioners would be submitted to the relevant members after the meeting;

- (g) the Joint Offices consisted of personnel from the FEHD and the Buildings Department. Consulting companies had been engaged to test the new examination methods. The new testing methods were tried out for some cases in Sha Tin District. Whether the testing methods would be changed in the future was to be determined after completion of the consultant report;
- (h) regarding the hygiene problems of footbridges and pedestrian subways, the FEHD would cooperate and discuss with the Highways Department regarding handling arrangements. Moreover, the FEHD would follow up with the problem of hawking on Octopus Bridge;
- (i) the FEHD had dispatched plainclothes personnel to Lung Hang Estate to investigate the incidents of discarding of food waste and feeding of wild boars, and would enhance cleaning or initiate prosecutions. In addition, the FEHD regularly cleaned the wild pigeons' excrements near the bus stations. The bird droppings in the parks should be dealt with by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department;
- (j) the public toilets on Shing Ho Road and at Tin Sam Village in Tai Wai had been included in the scope of renovation works of this year. As Tin Sam Village would celebrate Da Jiu Festival at the end of the year, the renovation work would be postponed until after the Da Jiu Festival;
- (k) the FEHD would advise those cardboard collectors not to obstruct and spot the streets;
- (l) smoking in public places would be dealt with by the Tobacco Control Office. In places with a large flow of people, the FEHD would add water to ashtrays on the top of garbage cans to prevent burning of cigarette butts;
- (m) enhanced efforts had been made for cleaning of the greenbelts at Pictorial Garden Phase 2;
- (n) it was the physical need of dogs to defecate, which was not subject to prosecution under the existing laws. The FEHD would clear the excrements when cleaning the streets; and
- (o) the FEHD would, together with Sha Tin District Office, deal with the problem related to bicycle parking spaces under Sha Tin Rural Committee Road.

Proposal of Replacement Planting Programme of Senescent Acacia and Biodiversity Enrichment of Highways Landscape (Phased Replacement)
(Paper No. HE 17/2016)

74. Mr Tony MUI, Senior Landscape Architect / Vegetation Maintenance (New Territories) of Highways Department and Mr Jason WONG, Landscape Architect / Vegetation Maintenance (Special Duties) of Highways Department gave a brief introduction to the paper.

75. Mr CHING Cheung-ying pointed out that acacia had a short lifespan and its fallen flowers might make cars skid in rainy days, which was a common occurrence on the

Kowloon-bound section of Tai Po Road and affected the safety of pedestrians and drivers. He hoped the Highways Department could deal with the aforesaid road section first.

76. Mr Billy CHAN said he knew acacia trees had a short lifespan and their wind resisting capability was weak and therefore needed to be replaced. But, he wanted to know the reasons for replacing the species of acacia and whether the new species could withstand wind and rain.

77. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) there were about 130 acacia trees in his constituency. He understood the Highways Department's intention to replace trees in poor health conditions and hoped to conduct a site investigation with the Highways Department after the meeting to learn about the distribution and conditions of the trees in his constituency; and
- (b) he asked the Highways Department whether the proposed substitute trees were better than acacia trees, how old they were and how long their lifespan was, whether they would release fragrance and whether their fruits would drop. Besides, he also asked about the priorities for replacement of trees.

78. Mr YIU Ka-chun expressed support for the programme. He wanted to know whether the acacia trees on slopes in such places as housing estates and villages were included in the scope of the programme. He hoped the Highways Department would also consult different stakeholders apart from the DC Members of relevant constituencies.

79. Ms LAM Chung-yan said some residents of Ka Tin Court held that trees should be planted on the slope near Lion Rock Tunnel Road. She hoped the Highways Department would follow up with that. Moreover, she wanted to know about the number of acacia trees in each area of Sha Tin, which could serve as reference for the members in the future.

80. Mr NG Kam-hung asked whether *tristania*, *pinus elliottii* and *eucalyptus* had been planted in Sha Tin apart from acacia. He wanted to know about the species of trees that would replace acacia trees to stabilise the soil and know how the Highways Department would solve the mosquito and midge problems resulting from replacement of trees. He asked whether the ten species of trees on the pamphlets of the Development Bureau would be planted on slopes in Sha Tin.

81. The responses of Mr Jason WONG were summarised below:

- (a) when choosing the tree species, the Highways Department would refer to the opinions of the DC Members, overseas and local experts, scholars and Tree Management Office to select the most appropriate species for planting. Moreover, it would follow the Development Bureau's guidelines on planting by adhering to the basic principle of "Right Species at the Right Place", comply with the Geotechnical Engineering Office's technical guidelines for slope works, and consider the local environmental factors (such as slope conditions), in order to promote healthy growth of plants. For example, the Highways Department would take into account the effect of mature trees on the safety of road users and slope stability; design concept; environmental factors (including space for planting, microclimate within the planting area,

soil quality, visual impact, traffic flow and landscape characteristics); site limitations; market supply of saplings; and conservation requirements;

- (b) for instance, according to the Geotechnical Engineering Office's technical guidelines for slope works, if the slopes were too steep or the soil there was so thin that tree roots of big trees could not anchor those trees firmly, then only small trees or shrubs would be planted to ensure healthy growth of plants. Moreover, the Highways Department would try its best to plant native plants or diversified plants to create a sustainable urban ecology; and
- (c) the mosquito problem mainly resulted from stagnant water. The Highways Department would closely monitor the conditions of slopes under its management to avoid accumulation of stagnant water. If mosquito problem really occurred, the Highways Department would actively follow up with the problem together with relevant departments.

82. The responses of Mr Tony MUI were summarised below:

- (a) regarding the species to be planted in the future, the Highways Department's initial idea was focused on plantation of native plants, such as phoebe zhennan and other indigenous plants in Hong Kong. The aforesaid plants were suitable for growing on slopes and could form a shade and stabilise the slopes. Moreover, they had a longer lifespan. Therefore, they were better than acacia trees. The Highways Department would consult the DC Members of relevant constituencies after formulating the proposal for replacement of trees; and
- (b) some members held that trees should be planted at some road sections and the Landscape Unit of the Highways Department could follow up with that. The Highways Department would contact different members after the meeting to learn about the conditions of slopes in different areas and would follow up with the slopes under its management and refer other slopes to relevant government departments for follow-up.

83. The responses of Mr John CHAN were summarised below:

- (a) regarding fallen flowers at some road sections, the Highways Department would make an appointment with the members to make a site inspection after the meeting in order to learn about the conditions and would decide on the priorities for replacing trees after that;
- (b) the Tree Management Office had requested various departments to work out a prospective plan for replacement of senescent acacia trees, so as to improve tree risk management and biological diversity and sustainability; and
- (c) the ten species proposed by the Development Bureau were only suggested species and the most appropriate species should be selected according to the actual conditions.

84. Members endorsed the above paper unanimously.

Formation of Working Groups under the Committee
(Paper No. HE 18/2016)

85. The Chairman said he would ask the Secretariat to summon the absent members to attend the meeting as the quorum was not attained.

86. As a quorum was still not present after 15 minutes, the Chairman declared that the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm and decided to postpone the discussion item of “Formation of Working Groups under the Committee”, Motion on the Development of a Recreation and Sports Complex in Fo Tan, and the four problems, namely, Pollution Problem of Shing Mun River, Noise Problem of Ma On Shan Bypass, Issues Related to Pok Hong Wet Market and Environmental Hygiene Problems of the Bridge Connecting Wu Kai Sha Station and Double Cove, and the Public Transport Interchange, to the next meeting for discussion, and to deal with the Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Service (as at 31 March 2016), Sha Tin District Anti-mosquito Campaign 2016 (Second Phase), 2016-2017 Approved Estimates of Expenditure under the Committee and Shing Mun River Action Plan by circulation of papers.

(Post-meeting note: Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Service (as at 31 March 2016), Sha Tin District Anti-mosquito Campaign 2016 (Second Phase), 2016-2017 Approved Estimates of Expenditure under the Committee and Shing Mun River Action Plan were approved by the HEC on 24 May 2016.)

Date of Next Meeting

87. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 7 July 2016 (Thursday).

88. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/50

June 2016