

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 4th Meeting of
the Health and Environment Committee in 2017

Date : 13 July 2017 (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	6:38 pm
Ms YUE Shin-man (Vice-Chairman)	”	2:30 pm	5:01 pm
Mr HO Hau-cheung, SBS, MH	DC Chairman	2:33 pm	5:36 pm
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	2:30 pm	4:33 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	”	2:50 pm	3:15 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	”	2:30 pm	6:04 pm
Mr CHAN Nok-hang	”	2:47 pm	4:55 pm
Mr CHENG Tsuk-man	”	2:36 pm	5:38 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	”	2:30 pm	5:11 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	”	2:30 pm	3:47 pm
Mr CHIU Man-leong	”	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr HUI Yiu-yu, Rick	”	2:30 pm	5:35 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	”	2:49 pm	6:01 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan	”	2:30 pm	6:32 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	”	2:35 pm	5:23 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	”	2:36 pm	6:38 pm
Mr LI Sai-wing	”	2:42 pm	4:20 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	”	2:30 pm	6:14 pm
Mr MAK Yun-pui	”	5:20 pm	6:38 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	”	2:38 pm	3:13 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	”	2:30 pm	3:24 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	”	2:30 pm	2:40 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH	”	3:02 pm	6:38 pm
Mr SIU Hin-hong	”	2:30 pm	6:15 pm
Mr TONG Hok-leung	”	2:30 pm	5:41 pm
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	”	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	”	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger	”	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai	”	2:46 pm	6:00 pm
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	”	2:34 pm	4:14 pm
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	”	2:30 pm	6:32 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	”	2:35 pm	3:48 pm
Mr YIP Wing	”	2:30 pm	6:38 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun	”	2:42 pm	6:04 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	”	2:35 pm	6:38 pm
Mr MOK Man-lok, Mannix (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

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 (Tai Po, North District and Sha Tin) 1 /
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 LI Kam-tao, Philip

Ms Stephanie YEUNG

Mr FUNG Chi-hung, Eric

Dr LOH Lai-ting, Taron

Mr CHAN Wai-ching

Mr CHEN Che-kong

Ms AU Mui-bing, Anita

Title

Deputy Hospital Chief Executive /
Prince of Wales Hospital
Senior Manager (Communications and Community Relations) /
Prince of Wales Hospital
Senior Telecommunications Engineer (Spectrum Planning) 2 /
Office of the Communications Authority
Senior Medical and Health Officer (Community Liaison) 1 /
Department of Health
Senior Structural Engineer/C4 / Buildings Department
Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Transfer and
Development) / Environmental Protection Department
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Transfer and
Development) 2 / Environmental Protection Department

Absent

Mr TING Tsz-yuen

Ms TSANG So-lai

Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin

Title

DC Member	(Application for leave of absence received)
"	(")
"	(")

Action**Welcoming Message**

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the fourth Meeting of the Health and Environment Committee (HEC) of the year.

2. The Chairman said that since the previous meeting was aborted, four outstanding questions would be processed at the meeting today. He proposed placing those questions after Paper No. HE 39/2017. He asked whether members had any objection to the arrangement.

3. Mr WAI Hing-cheung asked whether representatives of related government departments would be able to be present for the questions after the rearrangement of agenda items.

4. Mr Mannix MOK, Executive Officer (District Council) 1 of the Sha Tin District Office (STDO) responded that representatives of related government departments had been notified before the meeting and asked to arrive at the conference room by 2:30 pm.

5. Mr Michael YUNG said that, as for the Paper entitled "Responses of Government

Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting” in the “Matters Arising” section, he still had some questions for the Hospital Authority (HA) regarding the decanting building at Sha Tin Hospital. He understood that HA representatives would be present for subsequent discussion items. He asked the Chairman whether the HA representatives could respond to his questions during the discussion on matters arising from the previous meeting.

6. The Chairman responded that representatives of government departments would not attend the discussion on matters arising from the previous meeting. He suggested that Mr Michael YUNG raised his questions during the discussion on the related item.

7. Mr Michael YUNG was willing to cooperate but hoped that the Chairman could give him some more time during the related discussion.

8. The Chairman stated that no other objection was received from members, who unanimously agreed to the said arrangement of agenda items.

Applications for Leave of Absence

9. The Chairman said that the Secretariat of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) had received the applications for leave of absence in writing from the following members:

Mr Alvin LEE	Official commitment
Ms TSANG So-lai	”
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	Physical discomfort

10. Members unanimously approved the applications for leave of absence submitted by the members above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 May 2017

(HEC Minutes 3/2017)

11. Members unanimously confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters Arising

Responses of Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting
(Paper No. HE 38/2017)

12. Members noted the above paper.

Discussion Items

2017-2018 Revised Work Plans and Funding Applications of Working Groups under the Committee
(Paper No. HE 39/2017)

13. The Chairman pointed out that according to section 40(6) of the “Sha Tin District Council Standing Orders”, “A ‘standing working group’ should draw up the work plan for the first quarter of each financial year, and submit it to the relevant committee for endorsement. Any amendment to the work plan should be submitted to the relevant committee for endorsement. The work plan should be submitted to the Council for endorsement if

necessary.” He asked whether any members needed to declare interests regarding any joint organiser or co-organiser in the amended work plan, including Teatism Alliance Hong Kong and Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth.

14. Ms Scarlett PONG declared that she was a consultant to Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth but did not work for the organisation.

15. The Chairman stated that according to the usual practice, members declaring their interests related to substantive positions in relevant organisations were allowed to attend the meeting but had no voting rights in respect of the related funding applications.

16. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

Question to be Raised by Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick on Recycling of Food Waste
(Paper No. HE 29/2017)

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

- (a) the waste charging scheme would be implemented from 2019 onwards. He was concerned about the progress of food waste recycling. As shown in the Paper, Phase 1 of the waste treatment facility in Siu Ho Wan had just started operation in 2017, with a daily processing capacity of 200 tonnes. Even after the completion of Phase 2 and Phase 3, the processing capacity would be only 1 300 to 1 500 tonnes in the long run. However, Hong Kong produced more than 3 000 tonnes of food waste each day, far beyond the capacity of the Facility. In other words, by 2019, the relevant facilities of food waste recycling would not be sufficient to support the waste charging policy. Members of the public would have to bear the cost of food waste recycling. He believed that the Government had launched the waste charging scheme in order to reduce waste instead of collecting money. If the programme of territory-wide food waste recycling could not be implemented by 2019, then he would suggest that the Government exempt the food waste recycling levy. He hoped that other members would support his suggestion; and
- (b) the Housing Department (HD) responded that food waste would be subject to the levy just like other types of garbage, upon the implementation of the scheme. Some food waste, such as durian skin and fish bones, could not be recycled or reused. He opined that the HD could make the differentiation by means of bags, instead of levying a charge on food waste. He enquired whether the HD would have any measures in conjunction with the on-site food waste treatment scheme of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

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

- (a) many housing estates, together with their Owners’ Committees and Owners’ Corporations, would like to implement the food waste recycling scheme, but were deterred by the insufficient facilities. The HD should have had a lot of research data on the efficiency. He enquired whether the Government had a long-term plan and any practical arrangements. He hoped that the HD could increase related resources and support; and
- (b) he opined that public participation was the most important part of the successful

implementation of the policy. However, the HD took a passive stance on the food waste recycling policy. He opined that the HD should reach out to the community and different housing estates for the implementation. Under policy bureaux there were different advisory committees, the role of which was to promote policies in the community. He asked whether the HD could reach out to the community. He believed that all members present were willing to assist in contacting relevant organisations, such as Mutual Aid Committees.

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

- (a) he said that the concept of food waste recycling had been a topic of advocacy for many years. EPD always mentioned the need of educating the public. He enquired about the effectiveness of the public education. He suggested that the EPD refer to the practice in South Korea, where five or six different types of garbage bags were used by each family. Hong Kong, instead, resorted to the waste charge as a solution, without any plan for relevant public education. The EPD said that there would be five to six food waste recycling networks in the long run. But the recycling capacity would be only 1 500 tonnes, far below the actual quantity of more than 3 000 tonnes per day. The EPD's food waste recycling scheme would come to an end in 2020, but the waste charging scheme would commence in 2019. He enquired how the EPD would deal with the situation. In addition, the HD had implemented a pilot scheme with good results. He asked whether the EPD would consider an extensive implementation of food waste recycling. He said that he would move a provisional motion later; and
- (b) he enquired about the qualifications for the on-site food waste treatment scheme. As the related treatment facilities mainly dealt with food waste generated by the commercial and industrial sector, he asked the EPD how household food waste was handled.

20. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) related treatment facilities of the EPD could handle 1 500 tonnes of food waste in the long run. However, according to his knowledge, government facilities could handle about 500 tonnes of food waste at most in the coming years. He enquired how the EPD would deal with the situation. Since the Organic Resources Recovery Centre (ORRC) in Siu Ho Wan was funded by the Government, he asked whether the Government would deliver food waste to the ORRC in Siu Ho Wan for treatment as a means to subsidise members of the public. If yes, he wondered how long the subsidy would last. He also asked how people currently living on food waste recycling could maintain their livelihood and whether they would receive subsidies; and
- (b) he opined that the EPD's on-site food waste treatment scheme was not successful. As far as he understood, under the scheme, housing estates were expected to install food waste composters on their own for use by their residents. However, in reality, it was difficult to ensure each resident use the machine.

21. Mr CHAU Wai, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North) 4 of the EPD

gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he said that the paper covered different aspects. Much attention was paid to waste treatment facilities in Siu Ho Wan and other places, which mainly dealt with food waste generated from the commercial and industrial sector. Food waste was difficult to handle. But food waste from the said sector was in a large quantity, so the recycling efficiency was ideal. The EPD encouraged on-site treatment of food waste generated at individual buildings or housing estates, since centralised treatment would involve a lot of manpower and resources. The news coverage also cited the example of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), which chose on-site treatment over delivery to Siu Ho Wan, although CUHK itself was a large organisation and generated a substantial amount of food waste. There was a government fund to subsidise on-site treatment of food waste. Owners of individual buildings or housing estates could apply. The EPD had taken measures to reduce food waste at source, which was consistent with the idea of the waste levy;
- (b) food waste was similar to other recyclables. The waste levy only applied to food waste which was disposed of together with other domestic recyclables. He emphasised that the charging scheme was intended to encourage people to reduce waste generation; and
- (c) as of January 2017, the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) had approved the funding applications by 30 private housing estates, granting a total of 31 million dollars to support their initiatives in food waste reduction and on-site recycling. A total of about 3 400 households from the said housing estates enrolled in the scheme.

22. Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin, Senior Housing Manager (Tai Po, North District and Sha Tin) 1 of the HD responded that the Housing Authority would support and coordinate with the Government's environmental protection policies and was committed to promote waste reduction at source. The shopping centres and wet markets in nine housing estates would participate in the pilot scheme featuring the Siu Ho Wan facility. There was no arrangement for a pilot scheme involving estate residents for the time being. She would relay members' views to relevant government departments.

23. Mr Billy CHAN moved the provisional motion below:

“The per capita quantity of waste disposal in Hong Kong is much higher than that in neighbouring cities, and the landfills are about to reach their capacities. The Government has recently announced that it will implement the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Scheme in the second half of 2019 at the earliest, in order to reduce solid waste. However, according to the statistics of the Environmental Protection Department in 2012, of the city's solid waste disposed of at landfills each day, more than 35% is food waste, which accounts for the largest percentage. To minimise waste disposal, priority should be given to the recycling, reuse and reduction of food waste.

Therefore, the Sha Tin District Council's Health and Environment Committee requests the Government to provide proper facilities for territory-wide food waste recycling before implementing the waste charging scheme. Otherwise the Government should exempt the charge on food waste. ”

Mr Rick HUI seconded the motion.

24. Mr HO Hau-cheung acknowledged the right direction of the provisional motion. However, the waste charging scheme was intended to reduce waste at source. The motion would be deviating from its original intent if it requested cancellation of the levy simply because of inadequate measures of food waste recycling. Therefore, the last sentence of the motion was debatable. He would support the motion if the mover was willing to delete the sentence.

25. Mr Thomas PANG said that the Chairman usually did not display the content of a provisional motion on the projector before asking whether members agreed to address it. He suggested that the Chairman pay attention next time in order to avoid controversy in future. He agreed with Mr HO Hau-cheung. Many places in the territory, such as old buildings in Tai Wai, might fail to accommodate food waste composters. It was therefore difficult to implement the initiative in the motion. He hoped that the mover could make appropriate amendments to make the initiative more feasible.

26. The Chairman said that the definition of food waste was a bit complicated. The EPD should clearly define the concept and provide supporting facilities; otherwise food waste recycling would be a mission impossible.

27. Mr Billy CHAN amended his provisional motion as follows:

“The per capita quantity of waste disposal in Hong Kong is much higher than that in neighbouring cities, and the landfills are about to reach their capacities. The Government has recently announced that it will implement the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Scheme in the second half of 2019 at the earliest, in order to reduce solid waste. However, according to the statistics of the Environmental Protection Department in 2012, of the city’s solid waste disposed of at landfills each day, more than 35% is food waste, which accounts for the largest percentage. To minimise waste disposal, priority should be given to the recycling, reuse and reduction of food waste.

Therefore, the Sha Tin District Council’s Health and Environment Committee requests the Government to provide proper facilities for territory-wide food waste recycling before implementing the waste charging scheme.”

Mr Rick HUI seconded the motion.

28. Members unanimously endorsed the provisional motion in paragraph 27.

Question to be Raised by Mr LAI Tsz-yan on Installation of Rooftop Transmitters
(Paper No. HE 30/2017)

29. Mr Michael YUNG wondered whether this question was similar to the subsequent one to be raised by Mr WAI Hing-cheung, since they were both about antenna transmitters and a cell-phone base station.

30. The Chairman responded that he asked the two members before the meeting whether their questions could be combined for discussion. However, neither of them was willing to do so probably because they wanted to have more opportunities to express their views. Therefore he allowed the two questions to be raised separately as per the usual practice.

31. The views of Mr LAI Tsz-yan were summarised below:

- (a) installing rooftop transmitters was a way to increase revenue, especially for private buildings. However, all members of a family living in a top-floor unit in Ting Ping Estate suffered from cancer after the installation of a rooftop transmitter. That was why he raised the question. He wondered whether the victims in the case developed cancer because of the transmitter. If yes, he wanted to know what measures the relevant government departments had taken for follow-up; if no, he wondered whether it meant that antenna transmitters were safe;
- (b) according to the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA), mobile network operators (MNOs) were required to provide the OFCA with measurement reports within one month from the commencement of operation of their base stations to demonstrate that the total radiation level of the base stations complied with the safety requirements. In the past three years, the OFCA received a total of about 300 enquiries and complaints concerning the radiation safety of base stations. He enquired whether there were any cases involving a radiation level beyond the safety standard. If yes, he wanted to know how many cases there were and what the follow-up measures were; if no, he wondered whether it meant no health hazards to the residents; and
- (c) if the radiation level of a base station was found to be excessive and it would affect the health of the residents, he wanted to know how relevant government departments would handle the case, who should be accountable, whether the MNO concerned would make a compensation and what assistance the OFCA would provide for the residents.

32. Ms Iris WONG said that such rooftop transmitters were found at all buildings in estates of the HD. She enquired how the HD reviewed installation applications by MNOs and whether the transmitters should comply with a certain standard. If yes, she wanted to know what exactly the standard was. She asked how many buildings in the Sha Tin District were installed with such transmitters, how many transmitters had been installed, and the places with the largest number of transmitters. She also asked how the HD would handle residents' enquiries or complaints.

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

- (a) he pointed out that he had pressed the "Request to speak" button since he had not seen anybody do so; otherwise he would not mind waiting to speak at the next question. The HD said that there were a dozen public housing estates in Sha Tin District, with more than 60 base stations installed. He enquired about the calculation method. He wondered whether a transmitter was regarded as a base station, or whether a base station in an estate included several transmitters; and
- (b) he asked whether the OFCA approved of any application for installation on its own, or whether it would request the MNO concerned to obtain the affirmation of legality from relevant government departments in advance. He enquired whether the OFCA, the Buildings Department (BD) and the District Lands Office/ Sha Tin

(DLO/ST) had discovered any illegal MNO devices and whether the relevant government departments would take the initiative to investigate the legality of such devices.

34. Mr Eric FUNG, Senior Telecommunications Engineer (Spectrum Planning) 2 of the OFCA gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) after receiving enquiries about the radiation safety of base stations, the OFCA would explain to members of the public about the requirements in that regard. During the past three years, the OFCA arranged some on-site measurements at the request of members of the public and found no case in which a base station failed to meet the radiation safety standard. As for the case of Tai Ping Estate in Sheung Shui, the OFCA had measured the radiation level in the unit and found that it was far below the radiation safety standard adopted by the Communications Authority (CA);
- (b) the radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (RF-EMFs) generated by radio base stations were a type of non-ionising radiation (NIR). In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), limits as recommended by the International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) were adopted by the CA as the radiation safety standard;
- (c) before applying for the installation of a radio base station, an MNO needed to obtain the agreement of the owner(s) or the manager(s) of the building concerned. Also, it had to ensure that the base station in question complied with relevant planning and land use restrictions as well as relevant requirements on structural safety. Besides, the MNO should declare that the application submitted to the OFCA complied with the relevant requirements of the Town Planning Board (TPB) and the Lands Department (LandsD), and should submit a declaration made by an Authorised Person (AP) on the compliance of the proposed base station with the Buildings Ordinance; otherwise the OFCA had the right to reject the application; and
- (d) the OFCA also proactively conducted random checks on authorised base stations, covering more than 3 500 base stations during the past three years, and had found no cases involving non-compliance with the radiation safety standard. If any non-compliance case should be discovered, the OFCA would promptly request the MNO concerned to take follow-up actions, to ensure the base station in question complied with the CA's radiation safety requirements. Upon the MNO's follow-up actions, the OFCA would measure the radiation level of the base station in question to ensure compliance. The CA would impose penalties according to the Telecommunications Ordinance against any MNOs in violation of their licence conditions.

35. Dr Taron LOH, Senior Medical and Health Officer (Community Liaison) 1 of the DH gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) radiation could be classified as ionising and NIR. Unlike ionising radiation such as X-rays and nuclear radiation, RF-EMFs generated by mobile phones and telecommunications base stations were a type of NIR. Generally speaking, NIR had lower energy and was insufficient to change the chemical properties of

substances. It could not cause harm by breaking chemical bonds in the human body. In addition, the strength of RF-EMFs decreased rapidly with distance from the source and generally had few health effects on the human body;

- (b) the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) under the World Health Organization (WHO) classified RF-EMFs as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B), indicating that there was less than sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals and limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans. After reviewing relevant research results, the IARC had pointed out that there was no indication that exposure to RF-EMFs (including those emitted by base stations) in the environment would increase the risk of cancer;
- (c) as for human exposure of NIR, the ICNIRP had formulated the “Guidelines for Limiting Exposure to Time-varying Electric, Magnetic, and Electromagnetic Fields” (the Guidelines) based on scientific literature and associated health risk assessments. The Guidelines were also recognised by the WHO. The WHO considered that at present, there was insufficient evidence to suggest that exposure to EMFs (including RF-EMFs) below the exposure limits recommended in the Guidelines would cause any adverse health effects; and
- (d) as for the situation in Tai Ping Estate, the OFCA had mentioned that the EMF identified at the site did not exceed the limits stipulated in the Guidelines and there was no information to show that it was a common carcinogenic source. As for members’ question on the clinical progress of individual cases, medical institutions (such as the Hospital Authority) would provide medical consultation and take follow-up actions.

36. Mr CHAN Wai-ching, Senior Structural Engineer/C4 of the BD responded that the antenna transmitters *per se* were not regulated under the Buildings Ordinance since they were not buildings or building works. However, the structures attached to buildings for the purpose of supporting the transmitters were building works. Their installation was subject to the BD’s approval and consent, or else subject to the simplified requirements under the “Minor Works Control System”. If related works were carried out as per the said simplified requirements, it was not necessary to obtain the BD’s approval of plans or written consent in advance. However, for “Class I minor works”, the BD should be notified both before and after the construction. The BD had received sporadic complaints about unauthorised installation of antenna transmitter stands, mostly in the Tai Wai Area.

37. Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin responded that after receiving an application from an MNO for transmitter installation, the HD would request the applicant to produce the licence issued by the OFCA and to prove its compliance with the law, before assess the feasibility of related works. If the HD approved the application, the applicant still needed to obtain the CA’s approval before activate the base station in question. Fifteen housing estates in Sha Tin were installed with base stations, including 13 in Wo Che Estate, which had the largest number of base stations in the district. The number of transmitters per base station was not subject to limits. The BD would refer any relevant enquiry to the CA for follow-up. If residents thought their health was compromised by any social factor and applied for transfer to elsewhere, the BD would make relevant arrangements as necessary.

Question to be Raised by Mr WAI Hing-cheung on the Cell-phone Base Station at Sha Tin Market

(Paper No. HE 31/2017)

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

- (a) the OFCA's response to his question was basically the same as that to Mr LAI Tsz-yan's. There was no official response as to whether government buildings were installed with similar devices. There were around two dozen transmitters at Sha Tin Market although it was not a high-rise building. He enquired which government departments had approved the installation of such devices, and whether they had had discussion or consultation with residents and merchants in the neighbourhood prior to the approval. He also wanted to know what the amount of total radiation was and whether it exceeded related limits. If the OFCA could not provide amount of total radiation at present, he wondered whether OFCA staff and relevant parties could schedule a time to measure the radiation level at Sha Tin Market;
- (b) upon news coverage on the case in Tai Ping Estate, low-level residents in the near the market were worried, since there so many transmitters and they were close to Shatin Centre, Lucky Plaza and Shatin Plaza. Although the DH stressed that the radiation from base stations was NIR and its strength would decrease with distance, he wondered what health effects there would be if the NIR was very close. He asked whether the health effects would vary depending on the number of devices, the height of installation and the direct/indirect facing to the devices;
- (c) he asked the DH whether residents in Shatin Centre, Lucky Plaza and Shatin Plaza, especially those living close to the transmitters, were safe. He wondered whether any hospital in the territory was installed with such devices. If yes, he wanted to know the specific locations; if no, he wanted to know the reasons; and
- (d) the OFCA said that there were 3 500 base stations in Hong Kong. He enquired whether the OFCA knew the number of unauthorised transmitters. Besides, the OFCA claimed that it was inappropriate to disclose the details of specific base stations. He did not agree. Members of the public had the right to know the information, which was not trade secrets after all, so that they could help monitor the use and prevent any illegal installation. He questioned about the specific reasons for the lack of transparency. He wondered whether the OFCA was concerned about the possible scenario of greater public panic after the disclosure or else about the possible discovery of any authorised base stations. He hoped that the OFCA could consider disclosing the information of all rooftop base stations across the territory, so that members of the public could help monitoring those devices.

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

- (a) he previously asked the Chairman about the reason for not combining the two questions because the OFCA's responses to them were identical. Currently the CA adopted the ICNIRP standard. But he understood that the EU standard and the PRC standard were also used in the territory. He wondered whether some devices would comply with the ICNIRP standard but not the EU or the PRC one;
- (b) according to the DH's reply, NIR could not cause harm by breaking chemical

bonds in the human body. Such an answer must have been based on scientific research or medical literature. He enquired the DH about the quantity of scientific research or medical literature behind such a conclusion. The DH also said in its response that WHO classified RF-EMFs as “possibly carcinogenic to humans”, with limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans. However, it indicated the likelihood of causing pathological changes and problems in the human body, which seemed to contradict the statement that “NIR could not cause harm by breaking chemical bonds in the human body”;

- (c) he had invited the OFCA to measure the radiation level at Chevalier Garden. After the measurement, the OFCA claimed that the radiation level at the estate did not exceed the related limits. At that time he asked about the frequency, telecommunications standard and power rating of the antennae concerned. But the OFCA staff refused to provide related information. He asked on what grounds such information was regarded as confidential and whether it could be accessed upon application in line with the “Code on Access to Information”;
- (d) a news report by the Apple Daily on 23 February 2014 quoted a paper on mobile phone transmitters increasing the incidence of cancer, as published in the Internal Journal of Cancer Prevention in April 2004. According to the paper, residents in a small Israeli town were under long-term exposure to an EMF of 3 000 to 50 000 microwatts per square metres, after a base station was installed in the town. Although the figures did not exceed the ICNIRP standard, results showed that the incidence of cancer in the town was 4.15 times higher than places without a base station over three to seven years after the installation. If the story was true, then it was correct for the WHO to categorise RF-EMFs as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” (Group 2B). He said the DH failed to state the amount of literature it had referred to before drawing the said conclusion; and
- (e) the OFCA claimed that Germany followed the ICNIRP standard as well. However, according to standard of the German Institute of Building Biology (IBN), a radiation level exceeding 100 microwatts was very strong interference for sleeping area. Long-term exposure would cause damages to the central nervous system, the immune system, cardiovascular system, the blood system and the visual system, and was possibly carcinogenic. He enquired about the significance of the IBN standard and the PRC standard. He also asked which PRC standard (*Guobiao* or GB) was applicable in the latter case. He hoped that the DH or other government departments could provide additional information during the discussion on matters arising at the next meeting. To be specific, he asked the DH to provide all relevant medical literature. And he requested the following information from the OFCA: the ICNIRP, IBN and GB standards; the acceptable doses of exposure for frequencies of 800 to 900 MHz, 1 800 to 1 900 MHz, 2 300 MHz and 2 600 MHz; and details of different telecommunications formats such as TD-SCDMA, TD-LTE, LTE, WCDMA, GSM, and PCM. He would not accept it if answers could not be provided at this meeting and thus would request them after the meeting.

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

- (a) he believed antennae were installed all over the world. But nobody knew if they would affect human cells. The WHO only said they possibly had effects on

health. Today, nobody knew how many antennae were installed in their neighbourhood. In one case, the MNO was asked to remove the transmitter but it instead installed the antennae in different areas later. He asked whether such a practice could reduce the amount of radiation; and

- (b) he asked whether there were definitive criteria to measure the health effects of different radiation levels on human beings. He also enquired whether there was any data showing the increase in the number of brain cancer patients during the past two decades, so that we could infer whether using mobile phones or those base stations would have a bad influence on the human body. Some people rented out their rooftops for installation of antennae as a source of income. However, if there were hazards, the Government should legislate against such a practice and should organise more public education in that regard.

41. The Chairman opined that basic information of base stations, such as their frequencies and power ratings, should be made public. For the benefit of the public, he hoped that relevant government departments could adopt a more stringent standard in order to ensure safety. The Secretariat would record Mr Michael YUNG's request and refer the same to relevant government departments, which could then submit relevant information to be included in the paper on matters arising next time.

42. Mr Eric FUNG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) many government buildings in Hong Kong were installed with radio base stations. It would be up to the competent government departments to answer the question whether residents in the neighbourhood had been consulted before installing such devices at Sha Tin Market. He stressed that an MNO should submit an application to the CA before using any base station. In vetting the application, apart from examining the radiation level of the base station concerned, the OFCA, as the CA's implementing agent, would also conduct technical assessment of the total radiation level within the range of the base station, including all the antennae on the rooftop of the building. The OFCA would grant the approval only if the radiation level complied with the related safety standard, instead of only assessing the number and directions of the antennae of the base station concerned. Within a month upon the activation of the base station, the MNO should also submit a measurement report to the OFCA, substantiating that the radiation level of the base station complied with safety requirements. The OFCA welcome members to take part in on-site measurements if they would like to do so;
- (b) if members of the public were concerned about the radiation level of a base station in their neighbourhood, they could contact the OFCA for an on-site measurement. The OFCA's requirements for the radiation safety of base stations was to ensure that the total radiation level within the range of the base station did not exceed the CA's radiation safety standard, instead of vetting applications simply based on the transmission powers of individual base stations;
- (c) the OFCA had conducted random checks on more than 3 500 base stations during the past three years, and had found no cases involving non-compliance with the radiation safety standard. The information submitted by MNOs to the CA for the activation of base stations was mainly intended for their applications and

involved some trade secrets. Therefore it was inappropriate to disclose the details of individual base stations;

- (d) Germany adopted the NIR limits recommended by ICNIRP as the radiation safety standard, just like Hong Kong;
- (e) in consultation with the DH, the CA had adopted the NIR limits recommended by ICNIRP as the radiation safety standard. The ICNIRP standard specified different limits for different frequency bands. For example, the limits for the frequencies of 900 MHz, 1 800 MHz or over 2 000 MHz were 41 V/m, 58 V/m and 61 V/m, respectively;
- (f) the public and members might refer to the brochure and the leaflet on the OFCA's website about the details of safety limits for NIR generated by base stations. If members of the public were concerned about the radiation level of a base stations in their neighbourhood, they could also dial the OFCA hotline at 2961 6648 for an on-site measurement; and
- (g) in response to some members' questions on IBN and GB standards, he explained that both Germany and Hong Kong adopted the limits recommended by ICNIRP. IBN was an NGO and it advocated another radiation safety standard, which was not adopted by the German government. ICNIRP, on the other hand, was an independent science committee and it had formulated the NIR limits based on literature and research. Its recommended limits were also recognised by the WHO. The NIR safety standard adopted in the Mainland was GB8702-2014, with relevant limits being lower than those in the ICNIRP standard.

43. Dr Taron LOH gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) radiation could have health effects on the human body. However, NIR had lower energy and generally speaking it could not cause harm by breaking chemical bonds in the human body. The WHO classified RF-MEFs "possibly carcinogenic to humans" (Group 2B) based on the assumption that long-term heavy use of the mobile phone might increase the risk of cancer. The IARC under the WHO had reviewed relevant research and literature, before offering related advice for reference by member states;
- (b) the OFCA was responsible for regulating the installation and base stations. The Guidelines recommended by the DH to the OFCA was recognised by the WHO. Exposure to an EMF under the limits recommended in the Guidelines would not cause bad effects on human health; and
- (c) the health advice in question was developed by the IARC upon reviewing related literature and research, while the ICNIRP standard was recognised by the WHO and was objective and scientific. To the best of the DH's knowledge, the standard was adopted in many countries around the world, including Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, and South Korea.

44. Mr Eric TSAI, District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) responded that the FEHD had been notified by the Government Property Agency before the MNO was to install the antennae at Sha Tin

Market, and that the FEHD was not responsible for handling the application.

Question to be Raised by Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael on Refuse Transfer in Sha Tin District

(Paper No. HE 32/2017)

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

- (a) according to media reports, SITA Waste Services Limited (SITA) did not wash the waste storage cabinets (WSCs) as per contractual requirements. SITA's reputation had always been unsatisfactory and the situation was worrying. He was concerned that the EPD failed to properly monitor the refuse transfer stations (RTSs) operated by SITA. According to EPD's written response, the North East New Territories Landfill was operated by Far East Landfill Technologies Limited (Far East). He asked whether the shareholder structure of Far East was similar to or the same as that of SITA or a satellite company of SITA. If their shareholders were not the same, we could be ostensibly convinced that the two companies were different entities and then we could have peace of mind; otherwise the same problems might arise, which was worrying;
- (b) he enquired whether it was required to wash the WSCs each time refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) arrived at or departed from the RTS. Although the WSCs were enclosed, there was still leachate. RCVs with sump tanks were doing better; those without such tanks would have the leachate dripping everywhere. He enquired whether RTSs only allowed the entry of RCVs with sump tanks and how the EPD dealt with RCVs without sump tanks. As far as he could remember, the EPD had awarded a grant to RCV contractors and had requested that FEHD vehicles be enclosed and equipped with sump tanks;
- (c) he understood that a related contract was a BOT type, and that following the RTS enhancement there was an operation contract of several years, upon the expiry of which the facilities would be returned to the EPD. He enquired how the EPD monitored related the contractors since some of them might intentionally ignore damaged or non-complaint facilities. He asked whether the EPD had any practical measures to ensure contractors' compliance with the contractual terms and whether there was any penalty against default; and
- (d) he understood that RCVs full of construction waste should be prohibited from entering RTSs. With the imminent waste charging scheme, he enquired whether the EPD would update the contractual terms in order to monitor RCVs and prevent construction waste from entering RTSs.

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

- (a) Sha Tin Refuse Transfer Station was close to residential buildings and schools and was about to reach its capacity. She noticed that the RCVs of government contractors were enclosed, but not all private RCVs, which accounted for 37% of the total. She had maintained close dialogue with the EPD. She hoped that RCVs passing by residential areas could be properly cleaned and duly monitored, and that the Administration could help the industry to replace all existing RCVs with the enclosed type as soon as possible; and

- (b) at the invitation of the new operating company of Sha Tin Refuse Transfer Station, residents in the neighbourhood had visited the facility and noticed improvements, such as less odour nuisance to their flats. However, some RCVs were still parked illegally at the passing bay at the junction of On Ming Street and On Yiu Street. She hoped that the EPD could take follow-up actions and dissuade RCV drivers from illegal parking and could maintain communication with related stakeholders.

47. Mr CHEN Che-kong, Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Transfer and Development) of the EPD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) earlier a media report claimed that the contractor of the West New Territories Landfill in Nim Wan of Tuen Mun had not washed its WSCs according to the EPD's requirements for up to a year. After investigation, however, the EPD found that the report was inaccurate. Inspection records showed that the contractor had indeed washed the WSCs as per the normal process. Procedurally, the waste dumped by RCVs at an RTS was loaded into an enclosed WSC before being transported to the landfill for final disposal. The contractor of an RTS should wash the WSCs according to contractual requirements. There were also EPD staff members on site to monitor the washing process. In response to media and public concerns, the EPD had reviewed the process of washing WSCs and had stepped up inspections. Besides, an RTS was equipped with automatic facilities for the final washing of RCVs and refuse trucks leaving the venue;
- (b) the North East New Territories Landfill was operated by Far East as the contractor. As far as he understood, Far East and SITA had the same shareholders. He understood that members were concerned that similar problems might occur in the washing of WSCs since the shareholders of the two companies were the same. He explained that WSCs arriving at the landfill, no matter which company they belonged to, were washed by the contractor of the RTS concerned. In the case of Sha Tin Refuse Transfer Station, for example, WSCs were washed by SITA according to the related RTS contract. The EPD closely monitor the contractual performance of all contractors and deployed inspectors at all RTS for random checks. Relevant records showed that the rate of non-compliant washing of WSCs was very low;
- (c) the contractor was responsible for maintaining facilities within the RTS during the contract term and was required to report the maintenance status to the EPD on a yearly basis. The EPD also monitor the situation with its own staffing resources. In the last year of each contract, an independent organisation would conduct a detailed and comprehensive check on the RTS before it was returned to the Government. In case of any defects, the contractor was required to take follow-up actions and make proper rectifications before returning the station to the Government;
- (d) according to the law, RTSs could not receive construction waste. The EPD had always closely monitored the situation. The EPD had stepped up supervision and random checks in view of the recent increase in the construction waste disposal charge; and

- (e) as for the sealing requirements for RCVs, relevant legislative amendments had been introduced two years ago, stipulating that all RCVs entering landfills or RTSs under the EPD should be of the enclosed design. The back of an RCV should be enclosed to prevent emission of odour. And there should be a sump tank for leachate resulting from the compression of waste. In practice, the EPD conducted random checks on RCVs from time to time. The EPD would issue warnings for any problems and would even take prosecution actions against serious breaches. Before the implementation of the related ordinance, the Government had introduced a one-off grant scheme for the industry, so that operators could upgrade their RCVs. Costs of subsequent maintenance were to be borne by the vehicle owners.

48. Ms Anita AU, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Transfer and Development) 2 of the EPD responded that the EPD maintained close contact with the management of nearby schools and would take immediate actions upon any complaints. If RCVs were parked near RTSs or caused nuisance, the drivers would be asked to move their vehicles. And waste collectors were advised to wash their RCVs more frequently. The EPD had also installed ventilation and other facilities inside RTSs to reduce odour pollution.

2017/18 Work Plan of the New Territories East Cluster
(Paper No. HE 40/2017)

49. The Chairman welcomed Professor Philip LI, Deputy Hospital Chief Executive, and Ms Stephanie YEUNG, Senior Manager (Communications and Community Relations), of the Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH) to the meeting.

50. Professor Philip LI briefly introduced the contents of the paper.

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

- (a) he was much pleased to see that a number of measures had been introduced to improve hospital services. One of his family members had been admitted to hospital for treatment. Based on his personal experience, he expressed his sincere gratitude to the doctors and the hospital staff for their meticulous care for patients;
- (b) he wondered whether more information could be provided as to the improvements in medical-social collaboration. For example, some patients could not be reached after they were discharged from the hospital, but they might be hospitalised later again. He enquired whether the PWH could follow up on related cases after patients were discharged;
- (c) in terms of public-private partnership, some residents had hoped to be transferred to private hospitals for follow-up treatment after consultation at public hospitals. However, the transferral might not be easy because their previous medical records were maintained with and were the properties of public hospitals. More convenient measures could help divert patients to private hospitals for consultations; and
- (d) as for Phase II of the PWH expansion project, the hospital management had met

with members for communication and members had expressed their views and concerns. The waiting time for Accident and Emergency (A&E) services was long. Although he believed the hospital management had professional decisions on patient diversion, it was more or less a fact that the A&E services were in short supply. He hoped that PWH could make improvements.

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

- (a) he appreciated the efforts of the New Territories East Cluster (NTEC) in optimising management. For example, the NTEC had engaged more physiotherapists in response to stroke cases in its patients. He asked how many patients could be served by the new recruits and whether there was related data;
- (b) in orthopaedics, the NTEC would engage more specialists in family medicine. Many people were affected by physical pain, which was related to orthopaedics. He asked whether there were specific measures in that regard. As for the infertility clinics, he supported the NTEC's strengthening related services. However, while related therapies were technically demanding, he was aware that some therapeutic plans were supervised by nurses. He wondered whether more information could be provided in that regard; and
- (c) the NTEC planned to increase the number of MRI and endoscopy services. However, some residents said that the waiting time was long and they were advised to go to private hospitals for such examinations. He enquired whether related data could be provided and what improvements could be made. He also wondered related examinations could be done at hospitals within the NTEC. In terms of training, the NTEC would hire specialists from the UK and the USA to Hong Kong for limited practice. He enquired about relevant figures.

53. Ms Iris WONG pointed out that as far as optimising demand management was concerned, the NTEC had promised to provide an extra 600 new attendances in the psychiatric section, in order to enhance the support by multi-disciplinary teams of specialist out-patient (SOP) services for general psychiatric patients. She asked to what extent such a practice would help reduce the waiting time of psychiatric patients. She asked how the 600 new attendances would be allocated and whether they would be allocated equally among related clinics. She also wanted to learn about the triage system regarding new attendances. She pointed out that patients with serious mental illness needed in-depth treatment but had to wait for a long period for such treatment, during which time they would cause pressure to the community and their conditions might worsen. She enquired whether there was an assessment mechanism to definitely reduce the waiting time of those patients, whose physical and mental pain during the waiting period could not be addressed thoroughly by related medicine.

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

- (a) he said that he had some understanding of related procedures in the hospital because his mother had suffered from cancer two or three years ago. He remembered there was a time-consuming blood test requiring the patient to visit different sections due to the meticulous division of labour. He wondered whether all the sections taking samples could be located at one place so as to save time; and

- (b) he understood that currently appointments could be made for SOP services by means of mobile phone APPs. He enquired whether the practice could be extended to other services, such as collection of drugs, so as to save patients' waiting time. Besides, he asked why patients seeking SOP services still had to wait for four or five hours even if they had made appointments. He questioned why the patients could not be informed in advance if the waiting time could be estimated and whether improvements would be made. In its annual work plan, the NTEC's promised to provide an extra 16 500 attendances of general out-patient (GOP) services. He asked how those attendances would be allocated.

55. Mr CHING Cheung-ying opined that the quality of the PWH's services was generally satisfactory. However, members of the public often complained about the long waiting time for tests and surgeries due to the limited facilities at the hospital. While the quality of ophthalmic surgeries was satisfactory, the waiting time was often one or two years. As a result, patients were advised by doctors to receive such surgeries at private hospitals. But not everyone could afford that. There was room for improvement in that regard.

56. The views of Mr LI Sai-hung were summarised below:

- (a) he understood that frontline health care personnel were under a lot of pressure due to the limited resources. Here at the meeting, he would like to express gratitude to frontline health care personnel on behalf of a Mr KO. Mr KO's wife had a fall accident on 10 March this year. Luckily she was taken good care of by the ambulance staff. And she was even offered some macaroni by some kind health care workers while she was waiting for treatment. Sometimes front-line health care personnel were misunderstood and criticised by members of the public. But outstanding ones should be encouraged and their good performance should be appreciated as well;
- (b) he had recently received two complaints about the waiting time for oncological services. A patient did not want to wait for such a long time, so he borrowed money for the surgery at a private hospital. He sought A&E services the night before and hoped that his case could be handled by a public hospital as soon as possible. In another case, an elderly person had made phone calls for two or three days before successfully making an appointment for out-patient services; and
- (c) the waiting time for collection of drugs was long and was inconvenient for the elderly. The Ophthalmic Centre only accepted Octopus card payments and required cash payments to be made elsewhere. He hoped that the hospital management could make improvements.

57. The Chairman said that Mr MAK Yun-pui had arrived at the conference room and asked members to note that.

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

- (a) the new work plan did not seem to specify how the A&E services would be improved. The hospital management said a daily waiting list of more than 500 patients for the A&E services had not been witnessed for a long time. He enquired about the average number of patients on the daily waiting list when it was below 500. With the constantly growing population, he wondered why the

hospital management expected a fall rather than a rise in patients seeking A&E services;

- (b) the hospital management had mentioned the problem of general psychiatric patients. He asked whether the number of such cases was on the rise and whether more young people were affected;
- (c) he asked how the 16 500 extra attendances of GOP services would be allocated. He had quoted a case in the previous year. A patient was denied intensive care at the PWH and had to ask a private hospital to help save his life. The PWH had mentioned improving the A&E services and adding beds. He enquired whether the entire NTEC considered it unnecessary to increase the manpower for A&E services; and
- (d) the PWH had mentioned providing clinical staff with formal CPR training. He questioned whether it implied that the previous training had been “informal” and whether the CPR training would involve the use of the AED. The hospital had also mentioned providing first aid training for security staff. He questioned whether they had not been provided with such training or equipped with related knowledge before.

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

- (a) the NTEC had mentioned that it would provide an extra 600 new attendances of psychiatric consultations. Hong Kong people were under great pressure and the related demand would only increase. Psychiatric patients needed post-discharge services and community support. He understood that the NTEC had set up community psychiatric support teams. But it did not mention the need for additional manpower. He asked whether more resources would be added in this regard; and
- (b) the NTEC had mentioned that more in-patient beds would be provided. A patient was hospitalised for only a week and then discharged after a 10-hour surgery. While he would not challenge the doctor’s decision, he wondered whether it proved the insufficiency of resources.

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

- (a) she was concerned about old psychiatric cases. She asked whether related resources would be added, such as increasing the number of follow-up consultations;
- (b) of the 16 500 extra attendances of GOP services, 8 000 would be allocated to Sha Tin. She enquired whether the NTEC would consider providing evening out-patient (EOP) services. She had repeatedly expressed the hope for such services at Yuen Chau Kok General Out-patient Clinic, so that ease the demand for A&E services to some extent. She asked for the reasons if EOP services could not be provided; and
- (c) the NTEC would add 1 873 external radiation therapy attendances in order to strengthen its cancer treatment services. Patients with financial means were

encouraged to seek treatment at private hospitals, while patients who could not afford related medical expenses had to wait. As a result, some people might fail to receive timely treatment because they did not have adequate financial means. She asked whether related surveys or data could be shared.

61. The views of Mr CHIU Man-leong were summarised below:

- (a) the HA had recently increased the charge for A&E services. He asked whether there was any improvement in the waiting time after the charge increase and whether the HA had reviewed the allocation of resources;
- (b) he was concerned about the waiting time for A&E services. Professor Philip LI said that more than 500 patients waited for A&E services each day. The 2016 Population By-census showed that the population on Hong Kong Island was decreasing, probably many people were moving to the New Territories. The demand for hospital cluster services was smaller on Hong Kong Island. He knew that some specialists referred their patients to other clusters. He enquired whether patients waiting for A&E services could be diverted to other clusters as well; and
- (c) the three cross-harbour tunnels in Hong Kong were installed with digital displays to show the time required to cross them. He wondered whether similar displays could be installed at A&E Departments, so that patients could be better informed of the waiting time for different SOP services in each cluster and make wise choices, thus alleviating the pressure on the NTEC.

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

- (a) the long waiting time for A&E services was a structural problem. There were insufficient attendances of SOP and GOP services. Currently it was difficult to make appointments over the telephone and even to get through to related hotlines. Elders would choose to wait if they believed their conditions were less serious and would seek A&E services when things got worse. He enquired whether the attendances of out-patient services lagged behind the population growth and should be adjusted. He also asked whether more attendances of EOP services could be provided in order to ease the pressure on A&E Departments;
- (b) cancer is not uncommon in today's fast-paced life. He asked whether it was possible to streamline some early-stage testing procedures. He pointed out that patients had to wait one or two months after each test before they could see the doctor. And some of them might see their conditions rapidly deteriorating during that period of time. He understood that there was great pressure on SOP services. Therefore it was generally hoped that Phase II of the PWH expansion project could be implemented as soon as possible. He asked whether the hospital management could provide any latest news in that regard; and
- (c) as for the said expansion project, the PWH had provided the map and the information of the decanting building at Sha Tin Hospital. He asked whether the PWH would proceed with the design upon obtaining the funding approval from the Legislative Council Finance Committee (LegCo FC) and whether its representatives would present related arrangements at the STDC again in future. The traffic congestion in A Kung Kok Street was serious. He hoped that the

traffic impact assessment report would disclose how the hospital management would refrain from aggravating the congestion problem in that street while ensuring smooth construction and operation.

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

- (a) she thanked representatives of the NTEC for explaining the future plan. The NTEC had mentioned that it would enhance coordination and collaboration with Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital/Tai Po Hospital. Sha Tin District covered a large area. Some patients live in Ma On Shan but they had to seek treatment in Tai Po. She was concerned about such an arrangement. Some patients and their families complained about the excessive distance of travelling. She asked whether related services could be added at Sha Tin Hospital; and
- (b) most GOP clinics in Sha Tin were closed on Sundays. She asked whether they were closed on public holidays as well. With the rising number of patients for A&E services, she wondered whether some of them could be diverted to out-patient sections on public holidays.

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

- (a) the waiting time for A&E services at the PWH was longer than hospitals in other districts. As for A&E services in future, he enquired whether the entire mechanism, including the computer system, could be improved. He understood that A&E patients would be unwilling to leave the hospital unless they received treatment, which, however, would actually cost them eight to ten hours. He wondered whether there a mechanism could be established in the system or on the Internet, so as to inform patients of the approximate waiting time and minimise their torment of waiting;
- (b) many problems ensued from the ageing population, including dementia and cancer. While Hong Kong people had a long life expectancy, he asked whether there was a growing incidence of cancer, and if yes, how it should be dealt with;
- (c) the NTEC had mentioned that it would work with district elderly community centres (DECCs) to launch a pilot scheme featuring the model of medical-social collaboration. He believed such a scheme would be worth promoting and asked whether more information could be provided;
- (d) he said he had registered in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System. He asked whether the system could be accessed by other organisations such as insurance companies, apart from doctors; and
- (e) there would be more than 200 000 residents in Ma On Shan by 2019. He hoped that more medical services, such as A&E services, could be provided in the area.

65. The views of Mr MAK Yun-pui were summarised below:

- (a) the NTEC said that it would work with DECCs to launch a pilot scheme featuring the model of medical-social collaboration. He hoped that the NTEC would promote the scheme among elderly patients and asked whether such collaboration

would be extended to neighbourhood elderly centres and day care centres as well; and

- (b) residents in Ma On Shan had to take a taxi if they wanted to go to the PWH. He asked whether patients with milder conditions could be diverted to Sha Tin Hospital. The NTEC said that it would engage and train ten more nurses. He wondered whether ten nurses would be sufficient and whether the NTEC would consider increasing resources to ease the manpower shortage.

66. Professor Philip LI gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) in terms of medical-social collaboration, the NTEC was working with community centres of NGOs, with the hope that community resources of other organisations, such as rehabilitation resources, physiotherapists, and meal delivery services, could help alleviate the manpower pressure. The NTEC had always been working with NGOs to explore different ways to assist patients in rehabilitating;
- (b) the HA was promoting electronic health records. When patients had registered in the system and verified their consent, they would be issued passwords. When private doctors had registered in the system and received the said passwords from their patients, they could access the health records and other inspection records of their patients. Therefore, both patients and doctors were encouraged to register in the system;
- (c) as for Phase II of the PWH expansion, stakeholders in the neighbourhood, including some members, had participated in the visit and tea gathering organised by the hospital. He thanked everyone for their support. The hospital management would continue to report on the progress and the traffic environment via related communication platforms in future. It would also launch a website for news releases and progress announcements. The PWH was now waiting for the funding approval from the LegCo FC and hopefully more beds could be provided at the PWH in future. If the said funding approval was obtained, the consultant's report would include a traffic impact assessment of the decanting building. The HEC would be provided with relevant information in due course;
- (d) he apologised for the long waiting time for A&E services and said that the charge increase had not helped much in reducing the waiting time. On one day two weeks ago, there were a total of 530 patients visiting the PWH. Currently there were more than 500 consultations each day. He hoped people could understand that the PWH's manpower and resources were limited. Diverting patients to other hospitals might not necessarily be the solution, since other hospitals were also more than overloaded in recent days. The PWH encouraged patients with milder conditions to go to private hospitals for treatment. The PWH had launched a mobile APP called "PWH AE Aid", which displayed information about the waiting time for A&E services at the PWH. The HA's website also showed the waiting time of A&E Departments across the territory;
- (e) the PWH had added resources for stroke patients on top of the existing physiotherapy. Among others, arrangements could be made for physiotherapists to help patients at home, so as to reduce the length of stay for patients;

- (f) pain was not only caused by orthopaedic problems. Some cases might be related to rheumatology or oncology. A number of specialities at the hospital could help patients with pain, such as family medicine, orthopaedics and rheumatology. There were also specialists in pain management, who were anaesthesiologists and helped patients in different ways;
- (g) the PWH's Assisted Reproductive Technology Unit (ART Unit) was run by the CUHK. Both the hospital and the university understood some infertile patients had to wait for a long time before they could receive treatment. The nurses appointed by the hospital had considerable knowledge and skills in infertility treatment. They would conduct initial processing and triage so as to provide assistance as soon as possible;
- (h) as for CT scanning and similar examinations, the turnover rate in the X-ray Department was high and applicable doctors were in high demand. The hospital would make arrangements based on the degree of urgency. Doctors would like to know the examination results earlier if patients could afford related costs. While the PWH understood that it was not an ideal practice, it could help the patients as quickly as possible in this way. In fact, the hospital received many stroke patients or suspected cases every day and provided them with CT scanning and MRI services. The NTEC did not have any data about delayed treatment;
- (i) the media published the number of doctors with limited registration on a regular basis. There was only a small number of such doctors coming to work at the PWH over the past year or two, some of them in the Department of Family Medicine;
- (j) there was a Blood Taking Centre under the PWH, conveniently located at the Li Ka Shing Specialist Outpatient Clinics. Tissue sampling was related to pathology, so it was conducted elsewhere. Hopefully clear instructions could help the patients;
- (k) the HA had launched a mobile APP called "TouchMed". After registration, patients would be notified by the ring tone to collect their medicine, instead of waiting at the pharmacy for a long time. In terms of appointments for SOP services, every morning specialists firstly conducted ward rounds, before they provided consultations at out-patient clinics. It was well-known that the hospitalisation rate at the PWH was 120% to 130%, which meant that three or four more wards would be needed to meet the demand. At present, more than 140 patients had to settle for extra beds crammed into existing wards. Sometimes certain specialists might not be able to reach out-patient clinics on time because their patients were in critical conditions. Many doctors continued working in the afternoon without lunch and most of them were under great pressure;
- (l) of the extra 16 500 attendances of GOP services, about 8 000 would be allocated to Sha Tin District. Both Ma On Shan Health Centre and Lek Yuen Health Centre provided evening GOP services. The latter also provided services on Sundays and public holidays. At present, four clinics in New Territories East provided evening services. It would be difficult to provide such services elsewhere. Apart from venues, it would also require additional backup such as nurses and pharmacists. There was no plan to set up other evening clinics in New Territories East;

- (m) he understood that people were deeply concerned about the waiting time for oncological services. The length of waiting time, however, should be subject to oncologists' decisions. As for drug dispensing, the PWH had been implementing the "quick-queue" arrangement at its pharmacies for patients who were to collect fewer drugs, thus reducing the overall waiting time. The Ophthalmic Centre accepted Octopus card payments while cash payments should be made at other shroff offices;
- (n) the Department of Psychiatry did not just treat severe cases. Instead, most of its patients were those with common mental illnesses, such as anxiety disorders. If milder cases could be diverted, the waiting time would be reduced and resources could be used to help patients with more serious conditions. The incidence of mental illnesses was on the rise. The NTEC provided community psychiatric services for old cases. Outreach psychiatric nurses would follow up on related cases and refer them to hospitals if necessary;
- (o) the PWH's Intensive Care Unit was under certain demand pressure. If patients needed intensive care and there were no beds for them, then they would be transferred to other hospitals within the NTEC;
- (p) the NTEC provided two first aid training programmes, with different levels of difficulty. The easier one was intended for security staff, while the more comprehensive one was offered to clinical staff. According to the annual plan, ten more nurses would be engaged, in response to the departure of senior nurses due to the business development of private medical institutions; and
- (q) Sha Tin Hospital was a rehabilitation hospital and there was no plan to change it into an acute one for the time being. Advance care planning was provided at present. If patients preferred non-invasive procedures during hospitalisation, they would be sent to Sha Tin Hospital directly.

Information Item

Reports of Working Groups (Paper No. HE 41/2017)

67. The Chairman said that he had been notified by Ms Scarlett PONG that the words "Education and Welfare" should be changed to "Health and Environment" in paragraph 21 of Annex II of the paper.

68. Members noted the above paper.

Information Papers

Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Service (as at 31 May 2017) (Paper No. HE 42/2017)

Sha Tin District Anti-rodent Campaign 2017 (Second Phase) (Paper No. HE 43/2017)

2017-2018 Revised Estimates of an Expenditure Head under the Committee
(Paper No. HE 44/2017)

69. The Chairman enquired whether members had any views on the three information papers above.

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

- (a) a fruit stall had been newly opened at the junction of Mei Tin Road and Chik Fai Street. There were many complaints about how the owner placed goods on the road during business hours and failed to dispose of the junk after closing. She asked whether the stall was included in the prosecutions against illegal extensions in April and May as mentioned in the report; and
- (b) the hygiene conditions had deteriorated on Mei Tin Road, especially at the railing behind Glamour Garden, where many shop owners disposed of foam boxes illegally. She enquired whether the FEHD would define such foam boxes as goods, articles obstructing the street or refuse. Related shops would not exercise self-discipline if the FEHD did not pay adequate attention to the problem.

71. Mr CHIU Man-leong said that recently in his constituency, many tarpaulins were hanged on the railing opposite Kam Tai Court across Hang Tai Road. He had just shown related photos to Mr Eric TSAI. Some residents had also complaint about people sleeping at the site. He hoped that the FEHD could deploy staff to deal with the problems.

72. Mr LI Sai-hung said that he had received complaints from residents of Grandway Garden about the rodent problem. Many food establishments and shops on Tai Wai Road and Mei Tin Road disposed of junk and refuse illegally after closing, which affected the environmental hygiene. He had seen FEHD contractors cleaning the site. However, in view of the large number of people and food establishments, he hoped that the FEHD could deploy additional staff for follow-up. Rat holes had been discovered in the planters opposite the fast food restaurant at Exit D of Tai Wai MTR Station. The problem had been addressed. But he enquired whether the FEHD continued to pay attention to and follow up on the case.

73. The views of Mr MAK Yun-pui were summarised below:

- (a) he raised three issues. Firstly, there was a lot of waste paper, foam boxes and various types of junk at the footbridge connecting Wo Che Plaza and Wo Che Estate. The site was not a property of Link Asset Management Limited (Link AML) or fell under the HD's purview. As a result, the hygiene conditions were terrible at the site. And he had been threatened and asked to leave the matter alone;
- (b) secondly, in Lee On Constituency there was a footpath from Sha On Street leading to a plot under Road T7. He often went there with FEHD staff to follow up on hygiene problems involving mosquitoes, weeds and other pests. However, the site fell under the purview of several government departments, including the DLO/ST, the Highways Department (HyD), the Drainage Services Department (DSD) and the FEHD, making it difficult to solve related problems. He said that the DLO/ST was not active enough in following up on the matter, which he thought many members would agree. He hoped that the DLO/ST could appoint a

permanent representative to HEC meetings. There were often cases in which people cut off the barbed wire to do laundry at the site, and the place where they washed clothes fell under the DSD's purview. He wondered which government department would be held accountable if someone got injured when doing laundry at the site. He suggested that government departments should try to stop people from entering the site and CCTVs could be installed near the barbed wire. He had also asked the HyD to install an extra row of street lamps. The problem had been in existence for many years. The STDO was aware of it and had taken some measures, which were unsatisfactory. He wondered whether several government departments should join hands to tackle the issue. In his opinion, the LandsD, the HyD, the DSD, the FEHD, the Police and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) should convene a joint meeting to deal with the illegal entry into government land and to prevent damages to public objects. Different government departments should have balanced enforcement powers and could jointly manage the site; and

- (c) in addition, he hoped that related government departments would step up mowing efforts in the small park on Road T7 near the cemetery.

74. Ms LAM Chung-yan said that she had received complaints from residents about the increasing number of *Aedes albopictus* in the District. She wondered whether the cleansing efforts in Hin Ka Area were adequate and she wanted the FEHD to specify the measures of enforcement. Besides, the STDO had recently distributed cleaning packs to DC Members and the move was welcomed by the public. She asked whether the STDO had a plan to distribute more cleaning packs to members of the public. She also hoped that the FEHD could step up publicity on mosquito prevention.

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

- (a) on a morning last month, the STDO invited him and other DC Members to witness the tackling of the street sleeper problem under the bridge over Shing Mun River. He had thought the Administration was about to clear the site. That day, he could see personnel of the FEHD, the Police and the STDO, including around two dozen FEHD employees. When he arrived there, he found that the governments were just going to do some cleansing instead of clearing the site. He wondered whether so many people were needed to inspect the cleansing effort;
- (b) he learned on the same day that the joint operation was taken because the government departments had received several complaints. The STDC had raised the problem a long time ago but the Administration had taken no actions. Now it organised a major operation just because of several complaints. He wondered whether the Government followed up on issues raised by DC Members at relevant meetings. He wondered why the complainants had such a great influence. He said he had never seen such a major operation involving so many FEHD employees, and even DC Members as witnesses;
- (c) he understood that other district offices could serve as coordinators and clear such sites. He had question STDO staff that day and got the reply that the STDO had no relevant powers. He questioned why other district offices could do it but the STDO could not. He hoped that the STDO could make good use of the human resources of different government departments;

- (d) he had also received complaints from residents of Grandway Garden about rats, which were in a greater number and larger sizes. He wondered whether it had something to do with the back alley cleansing campaign and the stepped-up supervision of food premises in Tai Wai recently. When rats could not find food in one place, they would go to another. If that was the case, it meant that the FEHD's campaign was not satisfactory, because the rodent problem was just diverted to elsewhere. He wondered whether the entire area and related housing estates could be cleaned up; and
- (e) he opined that the Chairman had the right to decide whether or not to invite representatives of government departments to the meeting, and that the STDC was not a subsidiary of any government department. The Chairman could ask a government department to deploy a permanent representative. However, for the enhanced effectiveness of meetings, he opined that the Chairman could decide and determined when representatives of relevant government departments were required to attend meetings, so as not to waste the time of such representatives.

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

- (a) some people just painted bills or posters directly on buildings or walls in public places. In some places overseas, some special liquid could be used to remove such authorised bills or posters. He hoped that the FEHD could follow up on the issue;
- (b) when residents replaced large furniture, they would just dump the old pieces at refuse collection points and even places in the open, which caused hygiene problems. He enquired how the FEHD could make better allocation of RCVs; and
- (c) the number of clean-ups at Shing Mun River might be inadequate. The river was affected by the tides and there was a lot of rubbish in the riverbed at times of low tidal levels. He asked whether the FEHD would clean it up.

77. Mr Michael YUNG pointed out that the STDC was an advisory body, while the Secretariat was served by the STDO. He understood that the Chairman, out of respect, asked the Assistant District Officer to coordinate the matters out of respect.

78. The Chairman understood that some members were concerned about problems regarding the DLO/ST. Most of the time, hygiene problems involved slopes and mowing, which were within the DLO/ST's purview. He enquired whether a permanent representative of the DLO/ST could be stationed at the HEC, so that questions relating to the DLO/ST could be answered each meeting.

79. Mr Simon WONG, Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin) gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he understood that some members were concerned about the frequent hygiene problems within the DLO/ST's purview. He suggested conveying members' views to the DLO/ST. In addition, based on members' suggestion, a DLO/ST representative would be invited to the next meeting to answer questions related to the matters arising;

- (b) the cross-departmental operation under Sand Martin Bridge in early June was carried out because complaints had been received about junk piling up at the site causing environmental hygiene problems. That day, the DLO/ST carried out the operation together with several government departments, including the Police, the FEHD and the HyD, in line with the powers endowed by the law, to deal with such problems. Some junk was placed in the voids of piers and was difficult to remove, according to relevant government departments. The STDO was in duty bound to coordinate the actions of different government departments to handle matters in the district. It would continue to discuss with relevant government departments on how to solve the problems at the site thoroughly; and
- (c) the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was following on several cases of street sleepers at the site. The STDO maintained close contact with the SWD to keep updated on the progress, with the aim of solving the problems without causing any conflicts.

80. Mr Eric TSAI gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the FEHD had taken prosecution action against the owner of the new fruit stall at the junction of Mei Tin Road and Chik Fai Street. He said that, due to the lack of relevant information, it was difficult to answer a member's question about whether the rodent problem was caused by the anti-rodent campaign in back alleys in Tai Wai. In that campaign, the FEHD not only clear up the junk accumulated in back alleys, but also placed rat poison to kill rats instead of driving them elsewhere. The FEHD would deploy staff to inspect and handle the rodent problem in Grandway Garden and would work with members to follow up on individual cases;
- (b) the FEHD was responsible for clean up garbage on the surface of Shing Mun River; the clean-up work at the bottom of the river was the responsibility of other works departments;
- (c) in the cross-departmental operation under Sand Martin Bridge in early June, the FEHD dealt with the environmental hygiene problems at the site according to its terms of reference. Apart from cleaning up the site, the FEHD also arranged for street washing vehicles to cleanse the ground; and
- (d) as for the footpath from Sha On Street leading to a plot under Road T7, he and members had inspected the site. The area within the barbed wire was within the DLO/ST's purview, while the FEHD was responsible for the environmental hygiene outside and was willing to participate in cross-departmental meetings.

81. Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin responded that the HD was aware of the case that an elder person accumulated cardboards near the footbridge connecting Wo Che Plaza and Wo Che Estate. The HD had stepped up efforts in dealing with the problem, such as asking Link AML tenants not to provide cardboards for the elder person and remove the existing cardboards. The HD would continue to step up enforcement.

82. Members noted the above paper.

Date of Next Meeting

83. The next meeting was scheduled for 2:30 pm on 14 September 2017 (Thursday).

84. The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/40

August 2017