

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 5th Meeting of
the Health and Environment Committee in 2021

Date : 7 September 2021 (Tuesday)

Time : 2:39 pm

Venue : Sha Tin District Office Conference Room 441
 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 CHAN Pui-ming (Chairman) | DC Member | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr LI Chi-wang, Raymond | DC Chairman | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr WONG Hok-lai, George | DC Vice-Chairman | 2:39 pm | 3:40 pm |
| Mr CHENG Chung-hang | DC Member | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr CHOW Hiu-laam, Felix | " | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr CHUNG Lai-him, Johnny | " | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr HUI Lap-san | " | 2:44 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr LAI Tsz-yan | " | 2:52 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Dr LAM Kong-kwan | " | 2:45 pm | 3:10 pm |
| Mr LO Tak-ming | " | 2:55 pm | 3:06 pm |
| Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS | " | 2:48 pm | 3:10 pm |
| Mr NG Kam-hung | " | 2:39 pm | 3:14 pm |
| Mr SIN Cheuk-nam | " | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr WAI Hing-cheung | " | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Mr WONG Ho-fung | " | 2:39 pm | 3:41 pm |
| Ms LEE Yin-ching, Karen (Secretary) | Executive Officer (District Council)3, Sha Tin District Office | | |

| <u>In Attendance</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Ms WONG Yuen-shan, Candice | Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin)2 |
| Mr CHAN Ka-kui | District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department |
| Mr YAN Ka-kit, Ric | Chief Health Inspector (Sha Tin)3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department |
| Ms WONG Pui-wan, Cecilia | Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North)4, Environmental Protection Department |
| Mr LI Ho-yin, Simon | Deputy District Leisure Manager (Sha Tin)2, Leisure and Cultural Services Department |
| Ms CHAN Yuen-chi, Jess | Housing Manager (Tai Po, North & Shatin 3), Housing Department |
| Mr HO Kin-nam, David | Senior Executive Officer (District Council) (Atg), Sha Tin District Office |

| <u>In Attendance by Invitation</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|---|---|
| Mr LI Tak-pong | Engineer/Shan Tin, Drainage Services Department |

| <u>Absent</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|----------------------|---|
| Ms NG Ting-lam | DC Member (Application for leave of absence received) |
| Mr SHEK William | " (") |

Absent

Mr CHAN Nok-hang
Mr MAK Yun-pui, Chris

Title

DC Member
”

(No application for leave of absence received)
(”)

Action**Welcome Message**

The Chairman welcomed all members and representatives of government departments to the 5th meeting of the Health and Environment Committee (HEC) of this year.

Applications for Leave of Absence

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

Ms NG Ting-lam
Mr SHEK William

Official commitment
”

3. Members unanimously endorsed the applications for leave of absence submitted by the members above.

Election of Vice-Chairman of the Committee

4. The Chairman said that the office of the Vice-Chairman of the HEC of the STDC became vacant on 6 July this year. According to Orders 34(4) and 4(2) of the “Sha Tin District Council Standing Orders” (the Standing Orders), if the office of Vice-Chairman of a committee became vacant, Members must elect a Vice-Chairman from among themselves at the first meeting of the Council after the office became vacant. The election procedure would be conducted in accordance with Appendix II to the Standing Orders (Procedure for the Election of District Council Chairman and Vice Chairman). The Secretariat served all members with nomination forms for the Vice-Chairman of the HEC and the election procedure on 30 August this year. Nominations for the Vice-Chairman of the HEC closed at 1:30 pm today.

5. By the end of the nomination period, the Secretariat had not received any nomination form for Vice-Chairman of the HEC. Since there were no candidates, the Chairman announced that the office of Vice-Chairman of the HEC of the STDC would continue to be left vacant and the election of the Vice-Chairman would be held at the next HEC meeting.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 July 2021
(HEC Minutes 4/2021)

6. The Chairman proposed the following amendment:

Paragraph 32(b) he had written to the FHB and the DH regarding the cessation of the Ma On Shan Community Testing Centre and the collection of virus specimen. The DH advised that the issue was outside its jurisdiction. He said that the government was working as a whole, the Department should refer the matter to the relevant departments

for follow-up action, rather than answer questions by claiming that the issue was out of its ambit.

7. Members unanimously confirmed the amended minutes of meeting.

Matters Arising

Responses of the Relevant Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting
(Paper No. HE 35/2021)

8. Members noted the above paper.

Questions

Question to be Raised by Mr WAI Hing-cheung on Rising Water of Shing Mun River
(Paper No. HE 36/2021)

9. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:
- (a) according to the information provided by the Drainage Services Department (DSD) on the water level of the river being higher than the riverbank, except on 24 July this year, the other four times when the water level of the river being higher than the riverbank did not occur on or around the 15th day of the lunar calendar. He believed that most of the occasions of river flooding had nothing to do with the tides. He wanted to know the causes of river flooding;
 - (b) he would like to know why the DSD needed to clear up a large amount of silt between September and November 2019. In addition, he pointed out that more than 80 tonnes of silt were removed in April 2018 and March 2021. He would like to know the reasons behind; and
 - (c) he said that the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) carried out dredging works with dredgers, while the DSD planned to test the use of robots to remove silt from the river bed. He would like to know the effectiveness of the two methods and the details of using robots to remove silt.
10. Mr Felix CHOW said that plenty of algae would sometimes appear on both sides of the river embankment. He wanted to know the species of the algae, the impact on the riverbank ecology, the methods of removing algae, and the factors leading to algae growth. He pointed out that there was a large amount of algae in Shing Mun River near Fo Tan Road footbridge. He wanted to know whether it could be related to the discharge of organic matters nearby.
11. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:
- (a) he wanted to know the water levels and the reason for the five occasions that the water level of the river being higher than the riverbank;
 - (b) he pointed out that more silt was cleared up in November 2019 and March 2021, but fewer silt was cleared up earlier. He wanted to know the relevant reasons; and

- (c) he said that the sewage discharged from factories and garages in Fo Tan and Tai Wai could have promoted the growth of algae in Shing Mun River. He wondered whether the authorities would monitor the pollution.
12. Mr NG Kam-hung wanted to know the source and composition of the silt.
13. Mr LI Tak-pong, Engineer/Sha Tin of the DSD, gave a consolidated response as follows:
- (a) he said that in addition to the astronomical spring tide, the water level of the river could also rise under the influence of monsoon and typhoon;
- (b) the DSD would arrange for dredgers to enter Shing Mun River for dredging works during the ebb tide. However, the silt removal work would be vulnerable to the rise and ebb of the tide. The Department would try its best to carry out dredging work to reduce silt accumulation;
- (c) regarding the composition of the silt and the five occasions that the water level of the river being higher than the riverbank in recent years, he said he would provide supplementary information after the meeting;
- (d) as the CEDD was responsible for coastal dredging, it would be easier for dredgers to enter and clear up the silt. The DSD was responsible for the dredging work near Man Lai Court, and the dredger would be easy to run aground due to the shallow water, so it could only arrange the dredger to clear up the silt when the tide receded; and
- (e) the Department had introduced remote-controlled desilting robots to replace manual staff entering flooded box culverts to clear up silt, which would help to improve work efficiency and reduce the safety risk of the staff entering a confined space. Also, the desilting work needed not be limited to the dry season. At present, the Department was studying the application of remote-controlled dredging robots to clear up river bed silt.
14. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:
- (a) he would like to know why there was a big difference in the weight of silt cleared up by the Department;
- (b) he wanted to know whether the silt flowed from the upstream, from the sea, or whether other factors in the area led to the accumulation of silt on the river bed; and
- (c) he wanted to know whether dredgers or remote-controlled dredging robots would be more effective in clearing up river bed silt.
15. Mr NG Kam-hung wanted to ascertain the time when the DSD cleared up the silt. He wanted to know whether it would be more difficult to excavate the silt when the water rose, resulting in less weight of the silt cleared up, as well as the source of the silt.

16. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he would like to learn about the work concerning silt examination and investigation of the source of the silt; and
- (b) he would like to know the progress of the pilot project of remote-controlled dredging robot and whether the relevant technology would be widely used in the future. In addition, he would like to know the water depth in which remote-controlled dredging robot could be used and whether it could be used in Tolo Harbour.

17. Mr LI Tak-pong gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he said that the silt mainly came from the mountains. When it rained, sand, mud and garbage were washed into Shing Mun River and accumulated on the river bed. Due to the bend of the river near Man Lai Court, it was difficult for the silt to be discharged directly into the sea; and
- (b) due to the varying times of tide rising and falling, the Department could only arrange dredgers to carry out desilting work at low tide during daytime in order to reduce the impact on nearby residences at night. Since the remote-controlled dredging robot could work under water, it would be less restrained by the rise and fall of the tide. However, it would raise the silt during excavation, affecting the ecology in the river, and more space would be needed to place containers for settling the silt. The Department had been using remote-controlled dredging robots in box culverts for more than a year with satisfactory results. However, due to the water depth, this technology might not be suitable for Tolo Harbour.

18. Mr WAI Hing-cheung referred to the DSD's statement that the silt mainly came from the mountains, was washed into Shing Mun River by rainwater, and accumulated on the river bed near Man Lai Court. According to the information provided by the DSD on the clearing up of silt, the weight of silt cleared in the rainy season such as April and June in 2019 was only about 7 tonnes. In the non-rainy season such as September and November in the same year, dozens of tonnes of silt were cleared. He believed that this was not in line with the explanation of the DSD and wanted to learn of the reason behind.

19. Mr Felix CHOW hoped that the DSD or the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) could respond to the enquiries about algae growth in Shing Mun River.

20. The Chairman would like to know whether the DSD would pass the silt excavated to the Government Laboratory for examination.

21. Mr LI Tak-pong gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he said that the heavy rain during the rainy season in April and June could wash away the silt, so the Department cleared up less silt. On the contrary, silt would easily accumulate in the dry season, so more silt was cleared up; and
- (b) he said that the DSD had not examined the silt. According to his understanding, the EPD had assisted in examining the silt.

22. Ms Cecilia WONG, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North)⁴ of the EPD, said that if members of the public found abnormal growth of algae, they could report to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). The AFCD would send staff to follow up and collect samples for examination. When the EPD received the red tide report issued by the AFCD, the EPD would also inspect the spot to identify and intercept the source of pollution. Red tide reports were also regularly updated on the AFCD's website. She said that no red tide or algae growth had been found in Shing Mun River in recent months.

23. The Chairman hoped that the departments could provide written responses to the supplementary information and ended the discussion of this agenda item.

Information Papers

Sha Tin District Anti-mosquito Campaign 2021 (Third Phase)
(Paper No. HE 37/2021)

Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Service (as at 31 July 2021)
(Paper No. HE 38/2021)

24. The Chairman suggested discussing “Sha Tin District Anti-mosquito Campaign 2021 (Third Phase)” and “Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Service (as at 31 July 2021)” together. He asked members if they agreed.

25. Members unanimously agreed to discuss the two agenda items together.

26. The views of Mr Felix CHOW were summarised below:

- (a) he said that the slopes in Kau To Village were more prone to waste accumulation, breeding mosquitoes and pests. He hoped that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) would pay more attention to the garbage accumulated by the sidewalks and railings. He would also refer the situation to the FEHD for follow-up if he found any such situation; and
- (b) he pointed out that mosquito traps had been widely used in the district. He would like to know their effectiveness, such as reducing the growth of adult mosquitoes and the breeding in different aquatic systems.

27. Mr WAI Hing-cheung said that the illegal placement of goods by shops at the area around Mei Tin Road near Chik Fai Street was serious, but the information paper only showed one case of prosecution. He wanted to know the reason. In addition, he asked for clarification on whether the number for removal of billboards / banners / flyers / posters referred to the number of cases or the number of pieces. If the figure was the number of cases, he would like to know why there were only two prosecutions. He said that he was finding more advertisements for sale and purchase of properties being indiscriminately posted in recent months. He wanted to know why the Department had not successfully prosecuted the persons involved.

28. Mr Johnny CHUNG would like to know the locations of the four fixed penalty notices issued for fouling public places by feeding wild pigeons / wild animals. He said that there were still visitors illegally feeding wild monkeys in the parking lot on Piper's Hill Road. He believed

that the feeding behaviour would affect the health of wild monkeys and environmental hygiene, and also cause monkeys to gather. He asked about the number of inspections conducted by the Department on illegal feeding black spots.

29. The views of Mr Raymond LI were summarised below:

- (a) he said Wo Che Estate was a rodent black spot. He wondered whether the Department would strengthen the rodent and pest control work at rodent black spots, and asked for the relevant figures in order to understand the situation of rodent infestation in Sha Tin District; and
- (b) he would like to know the criteria for removing billboards / banners / flyers / posters and making prosecution. He reported that posters and flyers were put up on traffic signs and could affect road safety. He believed that penalties should be increased to achieve deterrence effect.

30. The views of Mr HUI Lap-san were summarised below:

- (a) he said that he had inspected the rodent infestation in the district with the FEHD on 1 September this year. He appreciated the staff of the Department for checking locations such as planters under the heavy rain that day; and
- (b) he would like to know the form and activity venues of the “Keep Hong Kong Clean and Anti-Mosquito Publicity Broadcasting Service”.

31. Mr CHENG Chung-hang pointed out that some real estate agents had posted flyers along Ning Tai Road. He believed that it would not be difficult for the Department to track down the offenders. He said that some agents would tear away the flyers of other agents and throw them on the ground. In addition, when cleaning up flyers, bus companies would leave debris and it would in turn affect hygiene. He believed that the Department should strengthen law enforcement to tackle the problem from the root cause. It could also consider working out the solutions with the Police and DC Member of the constituency.

32. Mr WONG Ho-fung said that he had inspected mosquito black spots in the district with the FEHD in summer. He pointed out that mosquito and midge infestations at the bus stop on Mei Fai Street were still serious and hoped that the Department would strengthen the anti-mosquito work.

33. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he would like to know the main types of publicity materials removed by the Department. He also found that there were publicity materials covering road signs, and wanted to know whether relevant statistics were available. In addition, he would like to know the occupations of the persons prosecuted in the two cases involving publicity materials;
- (b) he would like to know whether the locations where the Department prosecuted illegal wildlife feeders were urban or rural areas and the number of prosecutions for cases taking place near country parks;

- (c) he said that he had inspected the new mosquito traps with the FEHD in August this year. He thanked the Department for adopting new technology to control mosquitoes and hoped that it could be used continuously in Sha Tin District in the future; and
- (d) he said that two food samples had recently been found with African swine fever virus. He wanted to know whether food inspection included testing for that virus, and if found, whether it would be referred to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Hong Kong Customs for follow-up. In addition, he asked whether the Department would consider strengthening the inspection of pork products.

34. Mr CHAN Ka-kui, District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin) of the FEHD, gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the Department was aware of the garbage and mosquito problems in the vicinity of Kau To Shan. It would arrange contractors to clean up the garbage, and would also increase the frequency of inspections and follow-up;
- (b) he said that the mosquito traps had only been set up in the district for a short time and there was no relevant data for the time being;
- (c) he pointed out that the environment around Mei Fai Street bus stop was relatively dark, and some members of the public abandoned garbage there, which would facilitate breeding of mosquitoes and pests. The Department would conduct more inspections, remove garbage and clean up stagnant water;
- (d) he said that some areas around Mei Tin Road and Chik Fai Street were within the private areas of buildings, and the Department would only prosecute hawking beyond the private areas. As most shops sold their goods within the private areas, the number of prosecutions was not high;
- (e) he said that the number for publicity materials removed referred to the number of pieces, and the publicity materials were commercial advertisements. He said that when the Department found that someone was putting up publicity materials, it would issue a fixed penalty notice to that person on the spot. The Department had sent more plainclothes officers to inspect the black spots where publicity materials were posted. In addition, the Department would issue warning letters to the benefiting parties based on the information on the flyers. If the warning was ignored, the Department would issue a summons to the benefiting party where there was sufficient evidence and information;
- (f) he said that the details of the four fixed penalty notices issued for fouling public places by feeding wild pigeons / wild animals were not available for the time being and he would provide supplementary information after the meeting. He said that the Department would arrange at least four operations each month in which plainclothes officers would inspect the black spots of illegal feeding of wild pigeons / wild animals;
- (g) if the pilot scheme of mosquito traps was effective, he would report members' views on the long-term installation of mosquito traps to the headquarters;

- (h) he said that the CFS would regularly test high-risk and seasonal food products; and
- (i) he pointed out that there were workers specifically responsible for removing publicity materials at bus stops, and the Department would remind them to clean up the debris on the ground.

35. Mr Ric YAN, Chief Health Inspector (Sha Tin)³ of the FEHD, pointed out that the monitoring site on Wo Che Street, which was included in the Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS) last year, had a high Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) recorded in the first monitoring. The Department had immediately conducted inspection with the Housing Department (HD), relevant management offices and Link REIT, and put forward improvement suggestions on the places with rodent infestation problems. The above departments and management companies had also immediately taken improvement measures. When the RIS was later carried out again, a drop in the index was seen. All departments and stakeholders had been maintaining contact. If the Department found any rodent infestation, it would remind relevant departments and stakeholders to take measures to prevent and control rodent infestation.

36. Ms Jess CHAN, Housing Manager (Tai Po, North & Shatin 3) of the HD, said that she had no information about rodent infestation of Wo Che Estate at the moment. She would provide supplementary information after the meeting.

37. Mr CHENG Chung-hang understood that it was difficult for the FEHD to take enforcement action against indiscriminate posting of publicity materials, but he thought that the fixed penalty was low when compared with the substantial commission income of estate agents and had no deterrent effect. He hoped that the Department would report to the relevant departments for improvement.

38. The views of Mr Raymond LI were summarised below:

- (a) to his understanding, Pok Hong Estate was also a rodent infestation black spot. He wanted to know the RIR of other places in the district and the Department's rodent control work in those rodent infestation black spots. He hoped that the Department would step up its rodent control work at rodent infestation black spots;
- (b) he said that there was a shopping mall under Link REIT in Wo Che Estate. When the HD carried out rodent control work, the rodents would flee to the area managed by Link REIT. He believed that the HD and Link REIT should coordinate the rodent control work; and
- (c) he said that the rodent infestation in Wo Che Estate did not develop overnight and hoped that different departments would pay more attention to it. He asked about the current situation of rodent infestation in Wo Che Estate.

39. Mr Johnny CHUNG said the fact that only four fixed penalty notices were issued for fouling public places by feeding wild pigeons / wild animals was unsatisfactory. He understood that it was difficult to prosecute those who fed wild pigeons, but he believed that quite a lot of people fed wild monkeys in the parking lots on Golden Hill Road and Piper's Hill Road. If the Department could send more staff to inspect the areas concerned, more offenders could be

prosecuted.

40. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) regarding the illegal posting of publicity materials, he would like to know how many warning letters the Department had issued in Sha Tin District and whether the benefiting parties were mainly real estate agents; and
- (b) apart from Wo Che Estate and Po Hong Estate, he would like to know what other rodent infestation black spots were in the district.

41. Mr Felix CHOW wanted to learn the causes of rodent infestation in Wo Che Estate. He asked whether it was difficult to eradicate rodent infestation because Wo Che Plaza and the wet market provided food sources for rodents. He pointed out that the wet market had been renovated and the hiding place of rodents should have been cleared. He wanted to know why rodent infestation was still serious.

42. Mr CHAN Ka-kui gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he stated that the Department's "Keep Hong Kong Clean and Anti-Mosquito Publicity Broadcasting Service" was publicised in the district by broadcasting vehicles;
- (b) he said that the Department would send staff to the parking lots on Golden Hill Road and Piper's Hill Road to step up inspection and follow-up; and
- (c) he said that issuing a warning letter required information of the benefiting party, such as address, but most of the flyers were only printed with the benefiting parties' telephone numbers and last names, so it was difficult for the Department to issue warning letters.

43. Mr Ric YAN gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he stated that the 3 monitoring sites of RIS were the vicinity of Wo Che Street (including Wo Che Estate and Lek Yuen Estate), the vicinity of Sha Kok Street (including Sha Kok Estate and Pok Hong Estate), and the vicinity of Hang Hong Street (including Heng On Estate and Chung On Estate). He said that the overall RIR of Sha Tin District was not high, but Wo Che Street had a higher index in the first RIS last year; and
- (b) he said that the two prosecutions related to publicity materials were made near Wu Kai Sha Station and We Go Mall.

44. Ms Jess CHAN said that she would provide supplementary information on anti-rodent operations in Wo Che Estate after the meeting.

45. Members noted the above paper.

Date of Next Meeting

46. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 2 November 2021 (Tuesday).

47. The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/40

October 2021