

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 1st Meeting of
the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee in 2025

Date : 8 January 2025 (Wednesday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Sha Tin District Office Conference Room 441
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Dr LAM Kong-kwan (Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr DENG Kairong, BBS, MH, JP (Vice Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr WONG Wai-shing	2:35 pm	3:20 pm
Mr KU Wai-ping	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHU Wun-chiu	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss LEE Ching-yee, Janet	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr NG Kai-tai	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAM Siu-man	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAM Yuk-wa	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr HA Kim-kwan	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr AU Chi-on, Paul	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LEUNG Chun-pong, Maverick	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, MH	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms CHAN Sin-ming	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHAN Tan-tan	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss MOK Hei-man	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms WONG Po-yee	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr YEUNG Ying-hon, Ronald	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss TUNG Kin-lei	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr TSOI Ming-yang	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, BBS, MH, JP	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr CHOI Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr LAU Tak-wing	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LAW Yi-lam	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Miss LAW Yuen-pui	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms LO Tai-suen, Ada	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms KUNG Mei-chi	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms WONG Lok-yi	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Ms SUN Wan	2:30 pm	3:05 pm
Mr TANG Hoi-chung	2:30 pm	3:20 pm
Mr WONG Chiu-kwan, Andy (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)3, Sha Tin District Office	

In Attendance

Mr LEE Man-fai, Dave

Mr HUI Tsz-ming, Jaco

Mr CHAN Ka-kui

Ms NGAN Wai-ye

Mr LAU Kwok-ye

Title

Senior Executive Officer (District Council),

Sha Tin District Office

Executive Officer I (District Council)1,

Sha Tin District Office

District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Sha Tin),

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Chief Health Inspector (Sha Tin)3,

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North)4,

Environmental Protection Department

In Attendance by Invitation

Mr SHEK Wai-ming

Ms SUM Wai-ching, Tammy

Mr LO Hok-wing, Joe

Ms LAU Wing-yan

Mr KWONG Yat-fung, Brian

Dr CHIM Pak-wing

Dr KWAN Tan-sui, Daisy

Title

Leisure Manager (Tree) New Territories East,

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Deputy District Leisure Manager (Sha Tin)2,

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Sha Tin),

Lands Department

Maintenance Engineer/Sha Tin,

Highways Department

Landscape Architect 1,

Highways Department

Senior Medical and Health Officer

(Emergency Preparedness and District Relations)2,

Department of Health

Medical and Health Officer

(Emergency Preparedness and District Relations)4,

Department of Health

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the first meeting of the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee this year.

Application for Leave of Absence

2. The Sha Tin District Council Secretariat had not received any application for leave of absence in writing from members prior to the meeting.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31 October 2024

(FEHC Minutes 6/2024)

3. Members unanimously endorsed the above minutes.

Discussion Items

Sha Tin District Year-end Clean-up 2025

(Paper No. FEHC 1/2025)

4. A representative of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) briefly introduced the paper.

5. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Sha Tin District Anti-rodent Campaign 2025 (First Phase)
(Paper No. FEHC 2/2025)

6. A representative of the FEHD briefly introduced the paper.

7. Members' views were as follows:

- (a) members wished to know the effectiveness and statistics of employing new technologies such as thermal imaging cameras for rodent control;
- (b) members pointed out that rodent activities were found earlier in Man Wo House, Wo Che Estate, but with inspection and guidance of the FEHD and the Housing Department, progress had been made in rodent control at the location; and
- (c) indicating that they had received reports from residents on rodent activities in public areas near markets, members hoped that the FEHD could give market stall owners advice for better rodent control in markets.

8. A representative of the FEHD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the FEHD had adopted a new indicator, the Rodent Absence Rate, to replace the Rodent Infestation Rate since the previous year, applying artificial intelligence technologies in rodent activity identification. The Rodent Absence Rate for second half of the year would be reported to the Committee when available; and
- (b) in connection with rodent infestation in markets, the Cleansing and Pest Control Section of the FEHD was willing to conduct a site visit with members and provide advice. Members would be contacted in due course.

(Post-meeting note: The FEHD conducted a site visit with members at Wo Che Estate and Lek Yuen Estate on 7 January 2025, and had arranged another site visit with members after Chinese New Year to inspect rodent infestation in markets.)

9. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Questions

Question Raised by Mr YEUNG Ying-hon, Ronald on the Concern about the Impact of Overgrown Roadside Trees and Weeds on Vehicles and Pedestrians in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. FEHC 3/2025)

10. The Chairman asked if members had any further enquiries.

11. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:

- (a) members displayed photos of the following: the weeds in the vicinity of the expressway near World-Wide Gardens having grown to obscure traffic signs, branches obstructing traffic lanes at the location around Sai Sha Road on Hang Fai Street, and a road sign at Shek Mun Interchange covered in moss and obscured by branches of nearby trees. In light of such unsatisfactory situations, members enquired about the department responsible for clearing up;
- (b) members pointed out that according to the reply of the Highways Department (HyD), the pruning standard was keeping a clear headroom of at least six metres, but the photos members displayed reflected that the situations were unsatisfactory;
- (c) members indicated that there were a lot of trees and weeds that needed pruning along expressways in Sha Tin District. As overgrown trees during the rainy season affected road safety, members wished to know whether the HyD had a schedule for pruning trees and clearing weeds;
- (d) pointing out that roadside gravel might hit the glass of vehicles, members asked whether relevant departments had arranged street washing vehicles to clear gravel and litter on the roadside regularly in order to minimise the dangers posed to drivers and maintain environmental hygiene of the road surface; and
- (e) members said that they had received reports from the public on dust accumulation on the nets installed at roadside rails for preventing illegal parking of bicycles. Members enquired whether the FEHD or the HyD was responsible for cleaning the relevant location.

12. The Chairman's views were as follows:

- (a) he observed that many trees in the district were obscuring lamps along walkways, for example the walkways along On King Street from Garden Vista to Pictorial Garden; and
- (b) he hoped that relevant departments would regularly inspect road conditions to confirm whether there was sufficient lighting for walkways particularly at nighttime.

13. A representative of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the LCSD arranged contractors to conduct regular inspections on roadside trees and prepared tree risk assessment reports annually. Pruning would be arranged for overgrown trees or trees with broken branches discovered during inspections;
- (b) the LCSD had taken follow-up actions together with the HyD on overgrown trees along certain road sections mentioned by members earlier on; and
- (c) regarding the obscuration of lamps by trees on On King Street, the LCSD would deploy staff to inspect the location after the meeting and carry out pruning. The Department would also remind contractors to step up inspection and take timely actions if similar issues were identified.

(Post-meeting note: According to record, the LCSD conducted an inspection and pruned the trees on On King Street on 3 January 2025 to rectify the obscuration of lamps by trees.)

14. A representative of the District Lands Office, Sha Tin (DLO/ST) gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the Government adopted an integrated approach under which the management of trees and plants was administered by departments responsible for relevant public works or venue management. The Lands Department (LandsD) took care of trees and plants located on government sites without a responsible government department, where it conducted maintenance on a non-regular basis, including pruning, removing trees and clearing weeds, so as to mitigate the risks posed by trees to public safety, the nuisance caused by weeds to the public and potential mosquito infestation; and
- (b) the LandsD set work standards for contractors according to the Guidelines on Tree Pruning and corresponding technical circulars of the Development Bureau. It also conducted a quarterly performance assessment of contractors.

15. A representative of the HyD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the HyD would provide the schedule of tree pruning after the meeting;

(Post-meeting note: The HyD conducted a regular inspection on trees and plants within registered slopes and expressways under its purview through contractors at least twice a year, and would conduct pruning if needed. In addition, depending on the routine inspection reports from staff and relevant complaints from the public, the HyD would require contractors to arrange for tree pruning promptly from time to time. It would also compile a blackspot list of slopes under its purview in acute need of pruning, requiring contractors to inspect and prune trees more frequently during the rainy season (April to October) every year.)

- (b) contractors assessed whether trees had overgrown and posed dangers to road users during regular inspections in accordance with contract requirements. Trees that were found to endanger road users would be pruned accordingly;
- (c) the HyD had clear instructions for contractors on the length requirements for weed trimming;
- (d) in case of an emergency, such as obscuration of road signs or traffic lights by trees, the HyD would address it immediately;
- (e) through regular road inspections, the HyD observed whether there were overgrown weeds on roads under its purview and would arrange for clearance depending on the situations. Since weeds grew faster in summer and slower in winter, there was not a fixed schedule for clearing weeds; and
- (f) in connection with the conditions of the direction sign near Shek Mun Interchange mentioned by members, the HyD would arrange for replacement as soon as possible.

(Post-meeting note: The HyD had arranged the contractor to order components of the direction sign, and the sign was expected to be replaced in March 2025.)

16. A representative of the FEHD gave a consolidated response as follows:
- (a) the FEHD conducted mechanical cleaning at nighttime twice a week to clear roadside gravel at locations such as Shek Mun Interchange and Sai Sha Road Roundabout mentioned by members; and
 - (b) the roadside rails mentioned by members were roadside facilities, the cleaning of which was not the duty of the FEHD.
17. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:
- (a) members suggested that the HyD should consider the potential dangers of trees overgrowing towards highways. During the rainy season, leaves and branches of bushy trees might descend due to their weight when it was raining, affecting traffic safety of buses or other vehicles. There might even be falling dead branches hitting the windscreens of vehicles;
 - (b) members hoped that relevant departments could strike a balance between tree maintenance and road safety;
 - (c) members wished to know whether manpower shortage was the reason why the HyD was unable to prune trees and plants in a timely manner. They suggested introducing technologies that could detect trees with potential dangers to address the issue;
 - (d) members hoped that the HyD could review whether the frequency of regular tree inspections currently required of contractors each year was adequate;
 - (e) obscuration of traffic signs by trees might cause drivers to get in the wrong lane and even result in traffic accidents;
 - (f) members enquired whether there was a hotline for the public to report obscuration of traffic signs by trees so that the HyD could take follow-up actions;
 - (g) members pointed out that apart from the roadside, there were also overgrown trees and weeds along walkways;
 - (h) members indicated that overgrown weeds, especially in the rainy season, would result in mosquito infestation;
 - (i) members suggested that responsible departments could consider commissioning more contractors if there was a shortage in manpower for clearing. The departments should replace a contractor if its performance was below par so as to ensure public funds were used appropriately;
 - (j) members wished to know the area of unleased or unallocated government land in Sha Tin District and the number of trees managed by the DLO/ST;

(Post-meeting note from the DLO/ST: Aside from unzoned vacant government sites and country park areas, there were a few other vacant government sites scattering in various locations within Sha Tin District. The majority of sites fenced off by the DLO/ST were

vacant government sites, which were hillside slopes, village areas and dense vegetation, etc., with an estimated area of 10.7 hectares.

The LandsD was responsible for the non-regular maintenance of trees on unallocated or unleased government sites that were not managed by designated government departments. In view of the vast number of trees involved, specific figures were not available.)

- (k) upon receiving complaints and referrals related to trees and plants, the LandsD would conduct non-regular cleaning and maintenance. Members asked whether the same locations were often involved in the complaints received by the LandsD and suggested the Department consider better utilising these sites to prevent environmental hygiene problems caused by idleness;

(Post-meeting note from the DLO/ST: There were numerous complaints and referrals in connection with trees and plants on unallocated and unleased government sites in various locations, especially during the rainy season or the passage of typhoons. Therefore, very often the complaints did not involve the same locations.

The DLO/ST regularly reviewed vacant government sites within the district and would consider leasing suitable land for temporary use via tendering. In addition, for vacant government sites not suitable for lease via tendering, the DLO/ST would consider putting such sites on the list of vacant government sites for greening or community uses, which would be uploaded to the GeoInfo Map website of the LandsD for non-governmental and district organisations to browse or apply to lease the sites for the said uses.

Generally speaking, if there were any suggestions in connection with the use of unallocated and unleased government sites, the DLO/ST would provide support in respect of land management, for example allocating land to relevant departments or leasing land for the proposed uses.)

- (l) there were trees in Ma On Shan obscuring road signs and lamps, resulting in insufficient lighting on walkways and posing potential risk to public security;
- (m) pruned branches from tree maintenance were often piled up on the roadside of expressways or on the walkways, causing environmental hygiene problems. Members enquired whether responsible departments had any guidelines or mechanisms specifying the post-pruning clearing time; and
- (n) when there were branches accumulating on the roadside, it was often necessary to enquire different departments one by one for the responsible party, which was time-consuming. Members hoped that relevant departments could improve the situation.

18. A representative of the LCSD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the LCSD required contractors to clear up pruned branches or severed trees on the same day as far as possible, which they were able to accomplish under most circumstances; and
- (b) clearing might be delayed in exceptional situations, such as severe cases of fallen trees after the passage of typhoons. The LCSD would complete clearing as soon as possible if its resources and manpower allowed.

19. A representative of the DLO/ST gave a consolidated response as follows:
- (a) given that the distribution of relevant sites was scattered, there were no data relating to the area of these sites at hand; and
 - (b) the DLO/ST would handle the complaints or referrals received as soon as possible in accordance with its internal guidelines.
20. A representative of the HyD gave a consolidated response as follows:
- (a) regarding the allocation of duties for plant maintenance, the HyD was mainly responsible for the maintenance of plants within the area of registered roadside slopes and expressways under its purview, including pruning and clearing dead branches, whereas the maintenance of plants in green belts and general roadside trees was the duty of other departments;
 - (b) although the HyD required contractors to handle the refuse produced from plant maintenance on the same day as far as possible, time was required to apply for road closure of expressways. Consequently, the HyD would handle the issue depending on the amount of refuse and the road conditions;
 - (c) if there was a need for leaving refuse on the road temporarily, the HyD would require contractors to fence off the refuse and put up a notice specifying when it would be handled;
 - (d) apart from the routine check-ups conducted twice a year, the HyD also received reports via internal inspections or 1823 and would arrange contractors to handle the cases; and
 - (e) if there were fallen branches affecting the traffic, the HyD would still provide emergency pruning service even if the trees were not under its management.
21. A representative of the FEHD said that after typhoons, the FEHD would arrange for clearing of refuse as soon as possible, but clearing of roadside trees was generally not its duty.
22. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr KU Wai-ping on the Public Health Issues at Tai Wai Station Public Transport Interchange Near Tai Wai Station Exit B
(Paper No. FEHC 4/2025)

23. The Chairman asked members if they had any further enquiries.
24. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:
- (a) members thanked the FEHD for arranging District Council members to participate in the year-end clean-up activities;
 - (b) refuse and stains were often found on the ground of the public area at Exit B of MTR Tai Wai Station near The Pavilia Farm;

- (c) members wished to know whether the FEHD would deploy contractors to conduct regular cleaning at the location; and
- (d) members suggested that the FEHD provide additional refuse collection bins at the location to make it convenient for the public to dispose of refuse near the entrances/exits of The Wai and the MTR station.

25. A representative of the FEHD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the FEHD was responsible for the general cleaning of the public area at Exit B of MTR Tai Wai Station near The Pavilia Farm, where one refuse collection bin of the FEHD had been provided and another one would be added in response to members' request; and

(Post-meeting note: The FEHD provided an additional refuse collection bin at the above location on 17 January 2025.)

- (b) it was necessary for contractors to conduct regular cleaning at locations provided with refuse collection bins of the FEHD.

26. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Question Raised by Miss LAW Yuen-pui on Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Catch-up Programme in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. FEHC 5/2025)

27. The Chairman asked members if they had any further enquiries.

28. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:

- (a) members thanked the Department of Health (DH) for its comprehensive reply. They pointed out that 67% of the schools in Sha Tin District had participated in the HPV Vaccination Catch-up Programme (Catch-up Programme), and 33% of them had not participated yet. Members asked whether the DH knew the reason why those schools did not participate, and enquired whether it would act more proactively in the future for further promotion to encourage more schools to participate in the Catch-up Programme;
- (b) members noted that boys were not included in the HPV vaccination under the current Schedule of Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. However, there were statistics showing that the percentage of men contracting HPV was even higher than that of women in Hong Kong. Therefore, members suggested that the DH consider subsidising HPV vaccination for boys;
- (c) members pointed out that whilst many parents might have the misconception that only women needed to receive HPV vaccine, men also had the risk of contracting HPV, which might lead to other health problems such as genital warts. Hence, HPV vaccination was equally important for men; and
- (d) members hoped that the DH could relay district views to the Government for the provision of free vaccination to school-age boys.

29. A representative of the DH gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the DH would continue to promote the Catch-up Programme via various means and would contact schools that had not participated in the programme to learn about their reasons for not participating. It would make persistent effort in encouraging schools to engage in the programme to achieve a participation rate of 100%;
- (b) even if schools did not participate in the Catch-up Programme, girls still had the opportunity to receive the vaccine since they could join the second phase of the Catch-up Programme after they entered post-secondary institutions or universities. The DH was currently preparing for the third phase of the Catch-up Programme to provide vaccination to eligible local graduates;
- (c) it was necessary to consider various factors with regard to the inclusion of HPV vaccine in the immunisation programme for boys. The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (Scientific Committee) under the Centre for Health Protection held regular meetings to provide advice from the perspective of public health. Generally speaking, the introduction of a new vaccine into the immunisation programme was based on scientific evidence and consideration of various public health factors, including the overall healthcare burden of the disease on the society, effectiveness and safety of the vaccine, availability of other effective preventive measures, cost-effectiveness, and public acceptance of the vaccine. After analysing overseas research data and the circumstances in Hong Kong, experts did not recommend the introduction of HPV vaccine into the immunisation programme for boys at the current stage; and
- (d) the Scientific Committee would regularly follow up on the latest scientific research to consider whether HPV vaccine should be included in the immunisation programme for boys.

30. The Chairman announced the end of discussion of the agenda item.

Information Paper

Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Services (as at 30 November 2024)
(Paper No. FEHC 6/2025)

31. Members noted the above paper.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

32. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on 26 February 2025 (Wednesday).

33. The meeting was closed at 3:20 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/70

February 2025