

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 6th Meeting of
the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee in 2025

Date : 22 October 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	3:34 pm
Mr DENG Kairong, BBS, MH, JP (Vice Chairman)	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr WONG Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr KU Wai-ping	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr CHU Wun-chiu	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Miss LEE Ching-yee, Janet, MH	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr NG Kai-tai	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms LAM Siu-man	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms LAM Yuk-wa	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan, Nancy, MH	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr HA Kim-kwan	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr AU Chi-on, Paul	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr LEUNG Chun-pong, Maverick	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, MH	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen, MH	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms CHAN Sin-ming	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr CHAN Tan-tan	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Miss MOK Hei-man	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms WONG Po-yee	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr YEUNG Ying-hon, Ronald	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Miss TUNG Kin-lei	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr TSOI Ming-yang	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, BBS, MH, JP	2:30 pm	3:32 pm
Mr CHOI Wai-shing	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr TANG Siu-fung, Calvin	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr LAU Tak-wing	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms LAW Yi-lam	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Miss LAW Yuen-pui	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms LO Tai-suen, Ada	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms KUNG Mei-chi	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms WONG Lok-yi	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Ms SUN Wan	2:30 pm	3:34 pm
Mr WONG Chiu-kwan, Andy (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)3, Sha Tin District Office	

In Attendance

Ms ZHONG Shek-wa, Sophia
Mr LEE Man-fai, Dave

Mr HUI Tsz-ming, Jaco

Ms YIP King

Ms LAM Wai-ki

Mr LAU Kwok-ye

Title

Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin)²
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)¹,
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North)⁴,
Environmental Protection Department

In Attendance by Invitation

Mr TAM Chung-wing, Vincent

Mr NG Ka-keung

Miss SUM Wai-ching, Tammy

Mr HUI Wai-keung, Kenny

Mr LAM Yan-nok, Enoch

Mr CHAN Yee-hing

Title

Chief Transport Services Officer(Ops)³,
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Transport Services Officer I(NT),
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Deputy District Leisure Manager(Sha Tin)²,
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Senior Engineer/Sewage Treatment 1/2, Drainage Services
Department
Electrical & Mechanical Engineer/Sewage Treatment 1/2/2,
Drainage Services Department
Engineer/Shatin,
Drainage Services Department

Absent

Mr TANG Hoi-chung

Title

Co-opted Member (Application for leave of absence received)

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

2. The attendees noted that some persons observing the meeting were taking photographs, or making video or audio recordings in the public gallery.

Application for Leave of Absence

3. The Chairman said that the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) Secretariat had received an application for leave of absence in writing from the following member prior to the meeting:

Mr TANG Hoi-chung

Sickness

(with medical certificate submitted to the STDC Secretariat)

4. The FEHC unanimously consented to the application for leave of absence submitted by the above member.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 August 2025 (FEHC Minutes 5/2025)

5. Members unanimously endorsed the above minutes.

Questions

Question Raised by Mr TANG Siu-fung, Calvin on the Infrastructure Failure Incident at Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works (Paper No. FEHC 33/2025)

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

- (a) it was pointed out that current inspection capabilities were limited, permitting only visual inspections at ground level. Members wished to know how the Department assessed the internal structural risks of pipelines that had been in use for many years. It was suggested that new technologies be actively adopted to enhance pipeline inspection capabilities;
- (b) it was suggested that the information dissemination mechanism during incidents be reviewed, enabling District Council members and stakeholders to promptly gain access to complete and accurate information to address public enquiries;
- (c) it was stated in the Department's written reply that since priority had been given to ensuring that the pipeline in question could resume normal operation as soon as possible and to minimising environmental impact, an in-depth technical investigation could not be conducted. It was suggested that a more in-depth investigation report, if available, could be submitted to the STDC;
- (d) it was learnt that Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works (STSTW) would be relocated to caverns, and the Department was reminded to maintain the upkeep of existing facilities to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents;
- (e) it was asked whether this was the first leakage incident occurring in the underground sewage conveyance pipes that had been in use for over 40 years, and about the status and frequency of inspection and maintenance of underground or riverbed pipelines;
- (f) members wished to know whether the existing pipelines would be utilised or new ones would be laid when STSTW was relocated into caverns in the future, and the projected service life of the existing pipelines;
- (g) members wished to know whether the Drainage Services Department (DSD) had employed technologies and devices to detect leakage in the existing pipelines, and whether there were plans to introduce relevant technologies and devices in the future;
- (h) members wished to know the impacts of the preliminarily treated sewage flowing into Shing Mun River on the ecological environment and water-based activities;

- (i) members wished to know whether the DSD had specific plans to strengthen communication with stakeholders in the district and other departments;
- (j) members enquired about the current pipeline inspection methods, seeking to understand how the Department addressed pipeline ageing issues and prevented the recurrence of similar incidents;
- (k) residential estates along the Ma On Shan Promenade were affected by intermittent foul odour during the incident. It was learnt that the DSD would dispatch staff to monitor the odour in the area using instruments only after receiving complaints. It was suggested that the Department install odour monitoring devices in residential estates near STSTW to facilitate the implementation of preventive measures. Consideration could also be given to installing real-time hydrogen sulphide monitoring equipment, drawing upon practices from other areas; and
- (l) it was suggested that the DSD assign additional resident engineers to oversee the daily operations in STSTW to address unforeseen incidents.

7. A representative of the DSD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) under normal circumstances, if the operation of a sewage pipeline could be suspended or the water flow could be diverted, the DSD would conduct an internal inspection using closed-circuit television (CCTV) equipment to assess its conditions. However, due to environmental constraints, neither the operation of the pipeline in question could be suspended nor the water flow be diverted, as this would affect the overall operation of STSTW;
- (b) following the incident, the DSD promptly identified the leakage point and took measures to intercept sewage. As the primary objective at that time was to undertake emergency repairs for the pipeline in question and restore normal operations at the STSTW as soon as possible, a comprehensive and in-depth investigation of the pipeline, such as deploying CCTV equipment for internal inspection or conducting material analysis, could not be conducted;
- (c) due to environmental constraints, leak inspections of the pipeline in question were primarily conducted visually at ground level. Following the incident, the DSD had planned to step up the inspection of underground pipelines and was exploring the adoption of new technologies (such as sonar detection) to improve the monitoring capabilities for such sewage pipelines, with the aim of identifying underground pipelines with potential risks at an earlier stage;
- (d) in response to last year's incident involving sludge overflow from the digestion tanks in STSTW, the Department had installed monitoring systems at all digestion tanks to step up monitoring after conducting a review. This incident bore no relation to the incident that occurred last year. The Department would also explore preventive measures in relation to this underground pipeline incident;
- (e) over the past five years, expenditure on the STSTW maintenance and repair had not decreased. Even though STSTW was to be relocated, the DSD would continue to carry

out necessary maintenance and repair work to ensure that the facilities operate normally until relocation;

- (f) on the day of the incident (2 September), the DSD proactively released relevant information on its social media page “Drainy” and immediately implemented contingency measures, including pumping away the sludge that emitted foul odour, using odour suppressing agents and clearing the leaked sewage;
- (g) following the incident, the DSD had been closely monitoring its developments and had actively responded to public enquiries. On 13 September, the Department provided the public with the latest updates via its social media page “Drainy”. The DSD would consider releasing information through different channels as early as possible in the future, including providing more detailed information on its website; and
- (h) the DSD had always been highly concerned about the odour impact of sewage treatment works on nearby residents. Over the years, STSTW had actively implemented various odour management measures, including covering relevant facilities as far as possible, installing odour treatment systems, and adding chemicals to the sewage to reduce hydrogen sulphide emissions by over 95%. The DSD dispatched staff daily to inspect the facilities in STSTW so as to ensure that they all operated normally.

(Post-meeting note: When STSTW was relocated to caverns in the future, new pipelines would be laid. The DSD would carry out necessary maintenance and repair work for the existing pipelines within STSTW to ensure their normal operation.

STSTW was not equipped with a fully automated monitoring system at present. Owing to technical feasibility constraints, STSTW primarily relied on CCTV monitoring and scheduled manual inspections. If any pipeline leakage was detected, the DSD would take immediate and appropriate actions to address the issue.)

8. A representative of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) upon receiving notification from the DSD, the EPD had immediately dispatched staff to conduct on-site monitoring and collect water samples for laboratory testing. Continuous monitoring of the water quality in Shing Mun River revealed that key water quality parameters (such as pH level, five-day biochemical oxygen demand and ammonia nitrogen) remained comparable to the background levels recorded in the main channel of Shing Mun River in 2024. In response to the incident, the EPD also deployed unmanned submersibles to conduct monitoring in Shing Mun River and Tolo Harbour, and no adverse environmental impacts were observed as a result of the incident;
- (b) all sewage discharged into Shing Mun River during the incident had been preliminarily treated; and
- (c) the EPD had initially suggested that the DSD could consider employing ground penetrating radar to enhance monitoring of underground pipelines, and planned to explore its feasibility with the DSD. Any progress would be reported to the STDC.

9. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:
- (a) it was hoped that the Department would continue to actively conduct studies on underground pipeline inspection technologies;
 - (b) members raised concerns over the transparency of information, noting that following the incident on 2 September, the Department's initial response indicated that the foul odour was suspected to have originated from hot weather and the accumulation of scum in the sedimentation tanks, which differed from the statement made at a later time;
 - (c) it was suggested that a reporting mechanism be established to enable the Department to proactively disseminate accurate and comprehensive information to affected communities and residents in the event of an incident; and
 - (d) it was pointed out that the odour treatment system mentioned by the Department was only applicable to daily operations. It was suggested to optimise the reporting mechanism for emergencies, and it was hoped that the Department would actively consider installing additional fixed-point odour-monitoring devices outside STSTW.

10. A representative of the DSD stated that in addition to the previously mentioned odour management measures, regular odour monitoring would be conducted both inside and outside STSTW, including Sha Tin and Ma On Shan areas. If any unusual odour was detected in STSTW or nearby communities, immediate action would be taken to follow up the issue.

11. A representative of the EPD stated that the incident had received serious attention. In response to the incident, they had also maintained close liaison with the DSD to monitor the operation of STSTW. Regarding the optimisation of the existing reporting mechanism, any further information or improvement measures would be reported to the STDC in the future.

12. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr LEUNG Ka-fai on the Use of Drones for Investigating Issues of Water Dripping from Air-conditioners and Water Seepage in Buildings in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. FEHC 34/2025)

13. Members' further enquiries and views were as follows:
- (a) members noted that the development of low-altitude economy was receiving significant attention, with relevant pilot schemes already underway in Sha Tin District. Certain government departments had commenced utilising drones for rescue operations and road surface monitoring. It was proposed that drones be employed to detect issues of water dripping from air-conditioners or water seepage in buildings, thereby enhancing operational efficiency. It was hoped that the departments would formulate more specific guidelines and measures to promote the application of drones in the future;
 - (b) members noted that the current application of drones was primarily focused on building exterior maintenance, while the Joint Office (JO) formed by the Buildings Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) focused on investigating indoor water seepage, and hence drone technology had not yet been applied. It was recommended to explore the introduction of new technologies beyond drones to enhance

the effectiveness of water seepage investigations. It was noted that some enterprises had developed drones capable of detecting internal water seepage in buildings, and it was enquired about the departments' deployment plans regarding the application of new technologies;

- (c) members considered that if the Civil Aviation Department were to recognise drone pilot licences issued by the Civil Aviation Administration of China, this would enhance the mutual recognition of professional qualifications between the two regions;
- (d) members recommended that the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data strengthen communication with property management companies to assist them in complying with the guidelines on protecting personal privacy when using drones, thereby reducing the occurrence of related complaints; and
- (e) members recommended that the departments and relevant organisations strengthen cooperation to offer more training courses on drone operation, including route planning and knowledge of relevant legislation, thereby promoting the application of drones in various fields.

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

- (a) the FEHD had consistently sought to employ new technologies to assist in investigating the sources of air-conditioner dripping and water leakage. The Department had explored the use of drones to help locate the source of air-conditioner dripping, but due to privacy concerns and the high operational risks associated with the dense concentration of tall buildings in urban areas, drone technology had not yet been adopted;
- (b) the JO was responsible for investigating water seepage cases in buildings, employing various advanced testing technologies such as microwave tomography and infrared thermography. However, when such technologies proved ineffective due to site conditions (such as concrete spalling from the ceilings, uneven surfaces, or obstructed pipes), the JO had to resort to conventional methods (such as ponding test and wall spray test for walls) to identify the source of the seepage;
- (c) at present, drone technology could be employed to inspect external walls of a building, but it remained difficult to investigate water seepage issues stemming from damage to the internal structure, waterproofing layers, or pipes of the building; and
- (d) the Department had consistently maintained an open approach towards the application of new technologies and would continue to research and explore the adoption of new techniques or more efficient methods to assist in investigating issues of water dripping from air-conditioners and water seepage in buildings.

15. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Question Raised by Mr HA Kim-kwan on Noise at the Riverside of Shing Mun River, Sha Tin
(Paper No. FEHC 35/2025)

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

- (a) members previously conducted an on-site inspection with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) staff, learning that frontline LCSD staff currently used decibel meters to monitor the noise levels of venue users and advised them to reduce noise level through displaying advisory signs. It was recommended that the LCSD review the current practices in a timely manner and consider introducing technology to enhance the effectiveness of noise monitoring;
- (b) members wished to know the details of the technical support provided by the EPD to the police, and pointed out that after residents reported noise problems to the police, they had to attend court to testify before the police could proceed to take further action; otherwise, the matter could only be handled through advisory measures;
- (c) members considered that uniform noise standards were not necessarily required to determine whether noise constituted a nuisance. It was pointed out that residents on the lower floors of Sha Kok Estate and Jat Min Chuen suffered from singing and dancing noise and were unable to concentrate on their studies or rest. This situation should not become the norm;
- (d) participants in recreational activities might not be fully aware of the noise impact on nearby residents. It was recommended to adopt Shenzhen's approach by installing decibel meters in parks to raise participants' awareness of noise levels, thereby encouraging them to engage in recreational activities without disturbing others;
- (e) members noted that they frequently received noise complaints from members of the public, but often encountered issues such as noise levels not reaching specific decibel standards and noise occurring outside statutory control periods, rendering the department unable to pursue further action; and
- (f) it was suggested that the EPD should adapt to changing circumstances and consider improving relevant noise regulations to reduce noise nuisance in communities.

17. A representative of the EPD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) street performances (busking) and related noise issues were primarily regulated under Section 5 of the Noise Control Ordinance. Any person who, in a public place, used a loudspeaker, played a musical instrument, or otherwise made a noise that was a source of annoyance to any person committed an offence. This Ordinance should be enforced by the police, while the EPD would provide technical support to the police as required; and
- (b) as in other countries or cities, when enforcing regulations concerning noise in public places, the police would consider various factors, including the description of the sound, the time and location of its occurrence, and other relevant aspects, making judgements from a reasonable perspective. Enforcement was carried out according to the actual circumstances at the time, applying the standard of a "reasonable person". Given the wide variety of noise generated by different street activities, each with its own characteristics, it was difficult to establish a uniform set of quantitative noise standards for enforcement purpose.

18. A representative of the LCSD noted members' views and would continue to strengthen monitoring of noise levels from the activities in parks.

19. Members added that the actual number of noise-related incidents was believed to exceed the number of complaints set out in the paper. It was hoped that the EPD would review the prevailing circumstances and reduce reliance on the police to handle noise complaints, thereby avoiding the waste of police resources. It was also hoped that the EPD would provide supplementary information regarding the questions after the meeting.

20. A representative of the EPD stated that they had noted members' suggestions, which would be relayed to the relevant sections of the Department, and would submit supplementary information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The EPD has submitted supplementary information for Paper No. FEHC 35/2025.)

21. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Question Raised by Miss MOK Hei-man on the Promotion of Green Burial in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. FEHC 36/2025)

22. Members added that acceptance of green burial varied across different cultural and ethnic groups, and Chinese communities might not fully embrace certain Western customs. Consequently, the promotion of sustainable green burial necessitated thorough research into local and multi-ethnic traditional burial practices.

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

- (a) the FEHD actively promoted green burial, encouraging members of the public to adopt environmentally friendly, simple and sustainable approaches to handling the cremated ashes of the deceased and conducting burial arrangements;
- (b) the FEHD provided green burial support services, such as the provision of a Ceremonial Room at Shek Mun Garden of Remembrance for relatives and friends to conduct simple farewell ceremonies according to different religious beliefs prior to scattering cremated ashes. Additionally, during the scattering of cremated ashes at sea, a funeral director would be on board the ferry to assist family members in the memorial ceremonies, with basic facilities provided to facilitate simple ceremonies of various religions; and
- (c) the FEHD had been monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of green burial practices in other jurisdictions and would explore the feasibility of introducing such methods in Hong Kong. Besides scattering cremated ashes at sea and in gardens of remembrance, the Government was open to adopting other green burial methods, and would conduct a comprehensive study, taking into account various factors including land use, stakeholder views and technical feasibility, to formulate appropriate measures to encourage more residents to adopt green burial practices.

24. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Question Raised by Ms LAM Yuk-wa on Breakdowns of Refuse Collection Vehicles
(Paper No. FEHC 37/2025)

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

- (a) members reported that after property management staff at King Tin Court discovered that the refuse collection vehicle had failed to arrive on schedule, they attempted to contact the FEHD staff but were unsuccessful. They wished to ascertain whether the Department's refuse collection vehicle drivers would proactively notify the estate of any breakdowns; and
- (b) members sought to ascertain whether the failure of refuse collection vehicles to arrive at the estate on schedule was attributable to mechanical breakdowns, or caused by the shortage of drivers or excessive workloads.

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

- (a) the FEHD was taking the refuse collection vehicle breakdowns seriously. Upon learning of a vehicle breakdown, the FEHD staff would promptly contact affected housing estates to inform them of possible adjustments or changes to the service route for the day. However, since the affected area might be quite extensive, it might not be always possible to contact the estates in a timely manner. The FEHD would explore more efficient communication methods to maintain close liaison with housing estates;
- (b) it was noted that between 5 and 21 October, the refuse collection vehicle on the King Tin Court route experienced two breakdowns. Furthermore, from late September through October, incidents of vehicle mechanical failure increased compared to previous months; and
- (c) the primary cause of refuse collection vehicle breakdowns was component damage. In response, the FEHD had deployed personnel and vehicles to work overtime in completing outstanding collection duties. Where necessary, commercial refuse collection vehicles would also be hired to minimise disruption to refuse collection services.

27. The Chairman announced the end of discussion on the agenda item.

Information Papers

Report on Current Situation and Progress of Resource Recovery in Sha Tin District
(Paper No. FEHC 38/2025)

28. Members noted the above paper.

Statistical Overview of Sha Tin District Environmental Hygiene Services (as at 30 September 2025)
(Paper No. FEHC 39/2025)

29. Members noted the above paper.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

30. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.
31. The meeting was closed at 3:34 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/70

January 2026