

Summary of Minutes of the 4th Special Meeting of
Tuen Mun District Council (2012-2015)

Meeting

The Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) held its 4th special meeting on 20 January 2014.

Comprehensive Waste Management Blueprint 2013-2022

2. The Secretary for the Environment (“SEN”) and representatives of the Environment Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department attended the meeting to brief Members on the contents of the paper. SEN pointed out that the Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022 (“the Blueprint”) released in May 2013 aimed at reducing the municipal solid waste (“MSW”) disposal rate by 40% on a per capita basis in ten years. Apart from waste reduction, the end-of-pipe disposal infrastructure also played a unique and essential role in reaching the target. In this regard, the Bureau had worked out a clear roadmap and adopted a five-pronged approach which included: (a) reducing waste at source; (b) food waste recycling; (c) clean recycling; (d) turning waste into energy; and (e) clean landfilling.

3. SEN further said that to reach the target, the Bureau hoped that at least half of the end-of-pipe waste could be treated by modern incineration. By doing that, power supply could be increased while amount of waste to be disposed in landfills could be reduced. He also pointed out that since his and the Chief Secretary for Administration’s visit to Tuen Mun about six months ago, the departments concerned had taken a number of follow-up actions which included: (a) construction of the Tuen Mun River pedestrian bridge; (b) rezoning the crematoria site located at Tuen Mun Area 46; (c) lowering the refuse transfer station fees and the provision of fully enclosed refuse collection vehicles (“RCV”); (d) the follow-up on the progress of the construction of the sludge treatment facility; (e) release of the Air Quality Health Index; and (f) provision of additional sports stadium. On the other hand, the Policy Address had announced a number of waste treatment policies which included: (a) waste management; (b) “pay-as-you-throw”; (c) reduction of food waste; (d) support for waste recycling; (e) extension of the Community Green Station Network; (f) alleviating the pressure on landfills; (g) improvement to the management and operation of waste treatment facilities; and (h) revitalisation of restored landfills.

4. A number of Members put forward their views on the paper which included: (a) reasonable compensation should be made to Tuen Mun residents; (b) a district-based approach should be adopted in waste treatment; (c) enhancement should be made to the Blueprint; (d) efforts should be stepped up to improve the work in respect of waste recycling; (e) the Community Green Station Network should be extended; (f) improvement should be made to the ancillary transport facilities of the district; (g) concerns over the pollution in Tuen Mun and the nearby districts; (h) the Administration should not bulldoze the funding application through the Legislative Council (“LegCo”); (i) the work of communication and consultation should be strengthened; (j) the plasma gasification technology should be used in waste treatment; (k) a management committee should be established; (l) the legislative work concerned should be speeded up; (m) financial assistance should be provided by the Government for retrofitting RCVs in the territory; and (n) additional waste compaction facilities should be provided.

5. SEN thanked Members for their views and said that it was the Bureau’s hope that the waste problem of Hong Kong could be resolved in a pragmatic way. In response to Members’ views, he put forward eight initiatives which included: (a) setting up a management committee; (b) enhancing district facilities in the vicinity; (c) easing the reliance on landfills; (d) alleviating the impacts of refuse transportation on nearby communities; (e) better addressing the community development needs of Tuen Mun; (f) optimising the use of restored landfills; (g) reducing the area of landfills; and (h) considering the suggestions on fees reduction and compensation.

6. To avoid the deepening of conflicts, the Chairman requested the Government not to submit funding application to the Finance Committee of the LegCo until consensus was reached between TMDC and the Government.

7. SEN thanked the Chairman for his advice and remarked that the Bureau would follow-up on the views concerned.

Secretariat, Tuen Mun District Council
5 March 2014