

Minutes of the 1st Meeting in 2019
of the Environment, Housing and Works Committee
of Tai Po District Council
(Revised)

Date: 9 January 2019 (Wednesday)

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 6:38 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Tai Po District Council (“TPDC”)

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Time of Withdrawal</u>
<u>Chairman</u>		
Mr. CHAN Siu-kuen, MH, JP	Beginning of the meeting	3:35 p.m.
<u>Vice-chairman</u>		
Mr. LI Wah-kwong, Rex	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
<u>Members</u>		
Mr. AU Chun-wah	3:03 p.m.	End of the meeting
Mr. CHAN Cho-leung, MH	Beginning of the meeting	3:40 p.m.
Mr. CHOW Yuen-wai	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. KWAN Wing-yip	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Dr. LAU Chee-sing	Beginning of the meeting	5:47 p.m.
Mr. LAU Yung-wai	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. LI Kwok-ying, BBS, MH, JP	Beginning of the meeting	2:51 p.m.
Mr. LI Yiu-ban, BBS, MH, JP	Beginning of the meeting	6:00 p.m.
Mr. LO Hiu-fung	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. TAM Wing-fun, Eric, MH	2:46 p.m.	End of the meeting
Mr. TANG Ming-tai, Patrick	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. WOO Kin-man, Clement	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Ms. WONG Pik-kiu, BBS, MH, JP	Beginning of the meeting	5:38 p.m.
Mr. YAM Kai-bong, Francis	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. YAM Man-chuen	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. YU Chi-wing, Ken	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
<u>Co-opted Members</u>		
Mr. LEE Siu-man	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
Mr. LI Kam-chung	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting

Secretary

Mr. LEUNG Chung-wa, Alvin	Beginning of the meeting	End of the meeting
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Executive Officer (District Council) 1 /
Tai Po District Office (“TPDO”) /
Home Affairs Department (“HAD”)

In Attendance

Ms. LEE Kai-ying, Iris	Assistant District Officer (Tai Po) / TPDO / HAD
Mr. LEUNG Sui-hei, Feddy	Acting Senior Town Planner (Tai Po) / New Territories District Planning Division / Planning Department (“Plan D”)
Ms. LUK Wai-yun, Connie	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional North) 1 / Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”)
Mrs. CHIU TSE Shuk-yin	Senior Housing Manager / Tai Po, North & Sha Tin Region 2 / Housing Department
Mr. CHAN Kam-tong	Coordinator (Joint Office) / Joint Office Special Team / Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”)
Mr. MA Hon-chiu	Chief Health Inspector 1 / Tai Po District Environmental Hygiene Office / FEHD
Ms. LUK Pui-man	Senior Health Inspector (Cleansing / Pest Control) / Tai Po District / FEHD
Mr. CHUNG Wing-hong, John	Chief Engineer / North 3 / Civil Engineering and Development Department (“CEDD”)
Ms. HO Ka-man, Kaberlina	Senior Engineer / 10 (North) / CEDD
Ms. WONG Mung-sze, Jackie	Engineer / 17 (North) / CEDD
Mr. NGAN Wing-hong, Victor	Engineer / 20 (North) / CEDD
Mr. HUNG Ka-kui	Engineer / Maintenance 1A / CEDD
Mr. NG Wing-hung	Senior Engineer / Tai Po / Drainage Services Department (“DSD”)
Mr. WONG Wing-fai, Freddy	Senior Engineer / Consultants Management / DSD
Mr. CHAN Wing-kit, William	Engineer / Consultants Management 5 / DSD
Mr. KWOK Wing-cheong	Senior Engineer / Design 3 / Water Supplies Department (“WSD”)
Mr. LAU Chi-ming	Senior Engineer / Project Management 5 / WSD
Mr. LAM Kwok-chuen	Senior Engineer / New Territories East 2 / WSD
Ms. LO Pui-yee	Engineer / Design 18 / WSD
Ms. YIP On-yee, Annie	Engineer / Project Management 14 / WSD
Ms. WONG Dik-chi	Engineer / New Territories East (Distribution 4) / WSD
Mr. LEE Cho-yin, Jason	Engineer / Water Loss Management 2 / WSD
Mr. CHENG Wun-chee	District Engineer / Tai Po 1 / Highways Department (“HyD”)
Ms. YEUNG Yee-man, Ella	Senior Professional Officer / Joint Office 1 / Buildings Department (“BD”)

Mr. LIN Ka-hing, Steve	Professional Officer 1-1 / Joint Office 1 / BD
Mr. TSANG Chi-wai, Terence	Structural Engineer / C2-3 / BD
Dr. LEE On-on, Joanne	Acting Senior Fisheries Officer (Aquaculture Environment) / Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (“AFCD”)
Mr. LAU Ka-yip	Assistant Division Commander (Operations) (Tai Po) / Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”)
Mr. TAM Kai-hin	Patrol Sub-unit Commander 1 (Tai Po Division) / HKPF
Mr. CHAN Wing-yiu, Ronald	Administration Assistant / Lands / District Lands Office, Tai Po (“TPDLO”) / Lands Department (“Lands D”)
Mr. CHOW Kin-keung	Senior Lands Executive / Small House 2 / TPDLO / Lands D
Mr. CHAN Siu-hung	Senior Lands Executive / Control (Acting) / TPDLO / Lands D
Mr. WONG Yiu-ming, Brian	Deputy District Leisure Manager (Tai Po) 2 / Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”)
Mr. CHAN, Stanley	Director / Ozzo Technology (HK) Limited
Mr. MA Hok-chi	Chief Project Engineer / Black & Veatch Hong Kong Limited
Mr. TSE Tsz-kin	Project Engineer / Black & Veatch Hong Kong Limited
Mr. LEE Yu-sau, Terence	Senior Executive Officer (District Council) / TPDO / HAD
Ms. LEUNG Suk-mei, Rebecca	Senior Executive Officer (District Management) / TPDO / HAD
Mr. CHAN Lok-him, Dennis	Executive Officer (Development) / TPDO / HAD
Ms. WONG Sin-man, Mabel	Executive Officer (District-led Actions Scheme) / TPDO / HAD

Absent

Mr. CHEN Wai-lun
Mr. KWOK Wing-kin

Opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed Members and departmental representatives to the meeting of the Environment, Housing and Works Committee (“EHWC”).

2. Ms. CHAN Cheuk-ling, Kathy of the Plan D was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments, and Mr. LEUNG Sui-hei, Feddy attended the meeting on her behalf.

I. Confirmation of the minutes of the 6th meeting in 2018 of the EHWC on 7 November 2018 (TPDC Paper No. EHW 1/2019)

3. The Chairman said that the Secretariat did not receive any proposed amendment before the meeting, and Members did not propose any amendment at the meeting. The above minutes were confirmed without amendment.

II. Tolo Harbour sewerage of unsewered areas, stage 2 phase 2

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 2/2019)

4. The Chairman welcomed Mr. WONG Wing-fai, Freddy and Mr. CHAN Wing-kit, William, Senior Engineer and Engineer respectively of the DSD to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

5. Mr. William CHAN went through the captioned paper using PowerPoint presentation.

6. Dr. LAU Chee-sing was pleased to learn about and support the DSD's initiative to lay sewage pipes in unsewered rural areas progressively. In addition, he indicated that the department had been carrying out sewerage works in rural areas for over a decade. However, he noticed that the manhole covers placed on the pavements in rural areas in recent years were larger and heavier than those used in the past, and it would take three or four people in lift up some of them. As such, he enquired whether the department could switch to other manhole covers which were more suitable for sewer connection works in future.

7. Mr. LEE Siu-man supported the department's initiative to carry out sewage works in rural areas to improve their population problems. However, stage 2 of the captioned project covered only two of the villages in Tai Po District (namely Ha Wong Yi Au and Care Village) while some villages on Tai Po Road remained unsewered. For example, Tai Po Mei Village and Cheung Shue Tan Village had to wait until 2028 for sewage works to be carried out there. As such, he enquired whether the works could be carried out sooner. He indicated that the waterfront developments at Tolo Harbour had already been sewered, but the sewerage works in nearby villages had not begun yet. He hoped that the department would not only focus on the sewage of buildings but also consider the sewage of villages in a comprehensive manner. He added that he had earlier written to the department to demand for the installation of sewerage in the villages as soon as possible. He also urged the department's representatives attending the meeting to help report the problems and consider his views.

8. Mr. TANG Ming-tai, Patrick supported the captioned project. He indicated that the construction of sewerage systems would not only involve environmental considerations but affect housing development in the villages as well. He noted that stage 3 of the captioned project would involve 22 villages in Tai Po District. Therefore, he would like the department to provide a specific timetable for the construction of sewerage systems in the 22 villages for reference by the villagers concerned.

9. Mr. Freddy WONG responded as follows:

- (i) There were established standards in the design of sewers. To open a manhole cover, special skills or tools were generally required. The DSD would consider Members' views and explore the possibility of switching to manholes covers which were lighter or made of other materials.
- (ii) Both the DSD and the EPD would like to enhance the sewerage systems in rural areas as soon as possible, and understood that DC Members and villagers were willing to co-operate. Therefore, the captioned project would continue to be carried out and extended to other villages progressively.
- (iii) He understood that Members would like the department to build sewerage systems in all the villages in Tai Po District as soon as possible. However, there was a lot of preparatory work before the start of the construction, including initial design, consultation, drafting of pipe alignment, gazetting, funding application and so on. These procedures would take a considerable amount of time. Nevertheless, the department would still make every effort to speed up the process without delay. He hoped that Members could understand.

10. The Chairman's comments were as follows:

- (i) He asked the DSD to review the design of manhole covers and explore the possibility of speeding up the construction of sewerages in the villages along Tai Po Road (including Tai Po Mei Village and Cheung Shue Tan Village).
- (ii) To facilitate follow-up actions, he asked the department to provide the EHWC or Tai Po Rural Committee with a list of the 22 villages in Tai Po District covered in stage 3 of the captioned project after the meeting.
- (iii) As the representative of Wong Yi Au Village and the DC Member of the constituency in which Care Village was located, he supported the captioned project. He indicated that the village offices concerned did not oppose the captioned project. Moreover, as the construction of sewerages in these locations could also improve the water quality of Tolo Harbour effectively, he supported the captioned project.

11. The EHWC endorsed the captioned project.

(Post-meeting note: The DSD provided supplementary information for Members via the Secretariat on 20 February 2019.)

III. Public Works Project No. 7460CL
Tai Po development – the remaining land formation works at Area 39
(TPDC Paper No. EHW 3/2019)

12. The Chairman welcomed Mr. CHUNG Wing-hong, John, Chief Engineer; Ms. HO Ka-man, Kaberlina, Senior Engineer; and Ms. WONG Mung-sze, Jackie, Engineer, of the CEDD to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

13. Ms. Kaberlina HO went through the captioned paper using PowerPoint presentation.

14. Dr. LAU Chee-sing's comments were as follows:

- (i) In recent years, the Chairman had been striving to build a railway station in Pak Shek Kok. At the Traffic and Transport Committee meeting to be held a few days later, there would also be discussion about the proposal to build a slip road extending from the northbound Tolo Highway to Pak Shek Kok. He opined that all these initiatives were helpful in improving the traffic in the district for the convenience of residents. However, despite the views put forward by the TPDC on numerous occasions, the department concerned had yet to come up with a specific plan.
- (ii) In the past, the Government had designated some land for use by various organisations or for other purposes. In light of the diminishing space that DC Members could secure for the community, he hoped that the Government could consider the needs of the district and do more to help the community, rather than auctioning land all the time.

15. Mr. WOO Kin-man, Clement's comments were as follows:

- (i) At present, motorists could use the flyover near Pak Shek Kok to travel from the southbound Tolo Highway to Area 39 in Tai Po, while those on the northbound Tolo Harbour had to go through two extremely congested roundabouts before reaching there.
- (ii) Traffic congestion had become a problem in Area 39 in Tai Po, and traffic queues had once extended from University Mass Transit Railway ("MTR") Station to the roundabouts and Tolo Highway. If other facilities were to be built, the TD and the HyD would encounter more difficulties in improving the traffic there in future. It would also be difficult to divert the traffic in the vicinity of the northbound Tolo Highway, Tai Po Kau and Pak Shek Kok.
- (iii) As the Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK") Medical Centre, the latest development in Science Park and the housing development with nearly 7 000 flats

in Pak Shek Kok would be completed one after another, the pedestrian flow in the area would increase substantially. However, no progress had been made in terms of transport facility development. Even if there would be proposals to improve the traffic in future, they would most likely be impeded by the shortage of space. The captioned project, for example, was situated on the edge of the northbound Tolo Highway. If a slip road leading to Pak Shek Kok had to be built in future, would there be enough space? By then, would the CUHK express its opposition for various reasons? Would the existing traffic problem ended up being unresolved by any means?

- (iv) He stressed that he supported the university's development. However, he opined that transport facility planning had to be carried out at the same time. Otherwise, it would become increasingly difficult to further improve traffic in future, and a balance would have to be struck between the views of different stakeholders.
- (v) As the Government had been advocating innovation and technology in recent years, many professionals worked in Science Park and lived in its vicinity. However, the insufficient transport network and infrastructure there made it difficult for the area to attract talents, not to mention stimulating Hong Kong's economy by technological advancements. As such, he urged the departments concerned to improve the traffic problem in the area as soon as possible.

16. Mr. LEE Siu-man supported the captioned project. He indicated that the CUHK had met with the village representatives concerned before the construction of Lo Kwee-Seong Integrated Biomedical Sciences Building. After the exchange of views between both parties, the university had revised the design of the project in accordance with the villagers' views. On the other hand, the design of Science Park Phase 4 had also been amended during the construction process in accordance with the villagers' views. He said that these were the results of communication with local residents, and he thanked all those who respected the views of the villagers concerned. As regards the captioned project, he asked the university to refer to past practices by proactively liaising with the local residents, the village representatives concerned and DC Members of the constituencies concerned to discuss the future design of the building. On traffic matters, he enquired why the department did not consider opening up a slip road extending from the roundabout on Yau King Lane to the CUHK for the purpose of traffic diversion. In addition, as there would be many construction vehicles, cars and bicycles on the road when the works were in progress, he found it necessary for the department to carefully assess how the project would affect traffic.

17. Mr. Patrick TANG said that as the department did not provide any information on traffic assessment in the paper, he could understand why other Members were worried about the traffic in the area concerned. He opined that it would be very difficult to rectify the traffic problem after the new facility had been constructed. Besides, he also considered that the traffic assessment report of the project could be used for reference on how to improve the planning in the area. In addition, he

was also concerned about how the transport and road facilities in future could meet the development needs of the area.

18. The Chairman indicated that the captioned project was the result of the discussion among the representatives of Tai Po Mei Village, Cheung Shue Tan Village, the CUHK and the TPDO a few DC terms ago, while the CEDD only offered assistance in land formation works to align with the development of the CUHK. On traffic matters, as construction vehicles would travel to the construction site mainly through the roads on the CUHK campus instead of Tolo Highway, the existing traffic would not be affected significantly. In addition, he said that given the frequent traffic congestion in Pak Shek Kok at present, Mr. Clement WOO and he would continue to follow up on the traffic problem in the area concerned, including striving proactively to build a railway station in the Pak Shek Kok area.

19. Ms. Kaberlina HO responded as follows:

- (i) The CEDD had earlier conducted traffic assessment for the project. Considering that the land after formation works had been completed would be used by the CUHK to build such facilities as a dormitory (with about 400 places), a general research laboratory complex and a medical professional training complex, she expected that there would not be a substantial increase in transport demand. Therefore, the project would not create an enormous impact on the nearby traffic.
- (ii) The department was proactively considering the transfer of public fill from Tai Po District or North District to the construction site of the project. If this practice was adopted, the construction vehicles for transferring fill could travel to the construction site via the flyover near the CUHK and the roads on the CUHK campus, instead of the northbound Tolo Highway and the roundabouts near University MTR Station.
- (iii) The department would pass the EHWC's requests to the CUHK and the government departments tasked with the project design for discussion. It would also remind them to enhance communication with the local residents so as to examine how the project could be designed to meet their needs.

20. The Chairman opined that the project was worth supporting as it could help the development of the CUHK. He asked the department to notify the DC Members of the constituencies concerned and the village representatives of the area concerned before the start of the project, and provide the villagers with more information about the project design to facilitate future discussion. As regards the traffic problem in Area 39 in Tai Po, he asked the department to give more weight to Members' views and relay them to the departments concerned.

21. The EHWC endorsed the captioned project.

IV. Public Works Project No. 9368WF

Improvement to Dongjiang water mains P4 at Sheung Shui and Fanling

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 4/2019)

22. The Chairman welcomed Mr. KWOK Wing-cheong and Ms. LO Pui-yee, Senior Engineer and Engineer respectively of the WSD; as well as Mr. CHAN, Stanley, Director of Ozzo Technology (HK) Limited to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

23. Ms. LO Pui-yee went through the captioned paper using PowerPoint presentation.

24. Mr. Patrick TANG said that although part of the pipe alignment in the project was situated on the government land near Tong Hang Tung Chuen, the WSD's staff had co-ordinated with the villagers of Tong Hang Tung Chuen and were willing to implement measures for the convenience of the residents while the works were in progress. Therefore, he expressed his gratitude to the WSD and supported the project.

25. Mr. CHAN Cho-leung supported the project and was willing to provide the necessary assistance for the department.

26. The EHWC endorsed the captioned project.

27. As the meeting was ahead of the original schedule, and the attendees for agenda items V to VII had not arrived at the meeting room yet, the EHWC agreed to discuss agenda item VIII first.

VIII. Recommendations and arrangements for Chong San Road Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 8/2019)

28. Mr. MA Hon-chiu went through the captioned paper.

29. Mr. Francis YAM opined that the refurbishment of public toilets was a good livelihood project. However, as Chong San Road Public Toilet was a relatively new public toilet, he would like to know the reasons for the refurbishment, such as whether it had been dilapidated or damaged. He continued that the utilisation rate of the public toilet concerned was not high. Moreover, as the vicinity of Chong San Road was a new community developed in recent years, he doubted whether it was really necessary for the Government to spend millions of dollars on refurbishing this public toilet. He enquired whether the FEHD could provide reference pictures to show how much the public toilet and its internal facilities had been dilapidated or damaged. If the department could not provide further information, he would not support refurbishing this public

toilet.

30. Dr. LAU Chee-sing said that although the department would provide temporary toilet facilities while the works were in progress, he noticed that these temporary toilets were quite far away from the existing public toilet on Chong San Road, making it inconvenient for members of the public. In this connection, he enquired whether temporary toilets could be set up near the existing public toilet mentioned above.

31. Ms. WONG Pik-kiu said that she would not object to the department's initiative to refurbish Chong San Road Public Toilet, but would like to learn about its usage rate. She said that if the usage rate of this public toilet was not high, and if the owners' corporations of the nearby housing estates were against the initiative as well, the department could consider using the funding of the project to build a public toilet near the bus stop at Kwong Fuk Estate (i.e., near "glasses" bridge). She added that many bus routes stopped at the bus stop at Kwong Fuk Estate every day, which contributed to a high public demand for a public toilet to be set up there. On the other hand, as the FEHD could not build a permanent public toilet near the bus stop at Kwong Fuk Estate, the department had set up two mobile toilets there before. However, the desludgers often emitted foul odour when cleaning these mobile toilets, drawing complaints from the nearby residents and passengers waiting at the bus stop. Eventually, the toilets had to be removed after two months. She indicated that the department was currently planning to set up eight mobile toilets on Fo Yin Road. As the toilets would also be close to private housing, she was worried that the residents would complain about them as well.

32. Mr. LAU Yung-wai enquired whether the FEHD had a list of public toilets to be refurbished, and on what criteria the department would determine the order in which the public toilets would be refurbished. He indicated that Tai Po Old Market Public Toilet was more dilapidated than Chong San Road Public Toilet. It broke down multiple times in 2018 and could not be fixed immediately. Shortly after repair works were carried out by the Architectural Services Department, it broke down again. Therefore, he opined that Tai Po Old Market Public Toilet deserved a higher priority as regards refurbishment. He said that he had no idea how long Chong San Road Public Toilet had been built. However, he opined that it would be more desirable to review the situations of all the public toilets in Tai Po District and accord priority to the more dilapidated ones, rather than spending millions of dollars on refurbishing a public toilet that still looked good and did not have a lot of problems.

33. Mr. MA Hon-chiu responded as follows:

- (i) During the refurbishment of Chong San Road Public Toilet, the FEHD would set up mobile toilets near the original location of the public toilet for use by members of the public.
- (ii) On the map in Annex I of the captioned paper, the department had set out the

locations of the mobile toilets on Fo Yin Road. The purpose was to show all the public toilet facilities near the project site so that the public could make a choice.

- (iii) Chong San Road Public Toilet mainly served the cyclists along Tolo Harbour. The average number of users was as many as 600 per day, and the number would be even higher on weekends.
- (iv) Chong San Road Public Toilet had been built for over 10 years. The department was progressively refurbishing the public toilets which had been in use for over 10 years. The order in which public toilets would be refurbished was determined by the Planning Section of the FEHD. Generally speaking, district offices would usually brief the EHWC about the programme based on the recommendations of the Planning Section for Members' notice. The department had also received complaints that the facilities in Chong San Road Public Toilet were dilapidated.
- (v) As regards Members' proposal to build a public toilet at the bus stop at Kwong Fuk Estate, the department could further discuss the issue with the Members concerned after the meeting. Meanwhile, Chong San Road Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme would continue to be implemented.

34. The Chairman's comments were as follows:

- (i) Chong San Road Public Toilet had a high usage rate due to its proximity to the cycle track along Tolo Harbour. He hoped that Members could understand the need for refurbishment.
- (ii) The FEHD would progressively follow up on the refurbishment programme for the public toilets which had been in use for over 10 years. Meanwhile, he had also inspected the public toilet at Tai Po Centre with Members to follow up on the refurbishment works there. As the public toilet at Tai Po Centre had a high usage rate, he also supported its refurbishment.
- (iii) To his knowledge, there were established application procedures for building new public toilets, and the resources for refurbishing public toilets could not be used for building new public toilets.
- (iv) If old public toilets or public toilets in the rural areas had to be refurbished, he suggested Members take the initiative to inform the FEHD to take follow-up actions.
- (v) He asked the FEHD to provide Mr. Francis YAM with the photographs of Chong San Road Public Toilet for reference after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The FEHD had provided all Members with the photographs of Chong San Road Public Toilet after the meeting.)

35. Mr. CHOW Yuen-wai indicated that Chong San Road Public Toilet should be a relatively

old public toilet. However, there might easily be a mix-up as there were other public toilets between the cycle track along Tolo Harbour and the Providence Bay area. To enable Members to clearly understand which public toilet the FEHD was planning to refurbish at present, he asked the FEHD to provide photographs showing the exterior of Chong San Road Public Toilet for Members' reference. In addition, he also suggested the department provide photographs showing the interior of Chong San Road Public Toilet with captions added. By doing so, Members would have a general understanding of how dilapidated the public toilet facilities were and why they had to be refurbished.

36. Dr. LAU Chee-sing supported the captioned programme. In addition, he indicated that he had been striving to refurbish the aqua privy at the entrance of Wai Ha Village in Tung Tsz for the past six to seven years, but refurbishment had yet to be carried out so far. He noted that the FEHD had been following up on the matter proactively. Although other departments held different views on the refurbishment of the aqua privy concerned, he, as the DC Member of that constituency concerned, was greatly concerned about the matter. On the day before this meeting, he had conducted on-site inspection with the FEHD's staff and set the direction as regards the refurbishment of the aqua privy. He hoped that the department would start the refurbishment as soon as possible.

37. The Chairman said that aqua privies had become out of date and, therefore, supported Dr. LAU Chee-sing's continuous effort to strive for the refurbishment of the aqua privy concerned.

38. Mr. LAU Yung-wai enquired whether the order in which public toilets would be refurbished was set by the FEHD or the Plan D. In addition, he would like the FEHD to provide a list of public toilets in Tai Po District, setting out the number of years they had been in use and their usage rate and specifying the particularly serious damage (if any) for Members' reference. He reiterated that Tai Po Old Market Public Toilet was seriously dilapidated. Its internal facilities broke down a number of times last year, and flushing water had been suspended for about four months in total causing inconvenience. If the department had a list of public toilets that had to be refurbished, he would like the department to incorporate Tai Po Old Market Public Toilet into it.

39. The Chairman said that if Members considered it necessary to refurbish certain public toilets in the district, they could conduct on-site inspection with the FEHD. The EHWC was also willing to participate in the inspection and support the proposal.

40. Mr. YU Chi-wing, Ken supported the captioned programme. However, as the odour emitted from the toilet was particularly strong in summer, he suggested the department improve the ventilation system of the public toilet altogether. In addition, citing the public toilet in Phase 3 of Tai Po Centre as an example, he indicated that while the exterior of the public toilet looked nice and tidy, there were actually many problems in its internal facilities. For example, the toilet water pump often malfunctioned, thus affecting drainage. Therefore, he hoped that the department could

pay more attention to the problems.

41. Mr. LEE Siu-man supported the captioned programme. He said that the aqua privy at Tai Po Mei Village was refurbished several years ago and the results were satisfactory. However, the project would not have been implemented without proactive requests. He hoped that the department could speed up the refurbishment of public toilets in the rural areas and some of the dilapidated ones in Tai Po District so as not to affect the environmental hygiene.

42. Mr. LO Hiu-fung said that he had also informed the FEHD of the problems as regards the facilities in various types of public toilets in the district, such as water seepage from the slabs, lack of hand wash, as well as damaged toilet seats and flushing handles. However, the department had never taken any follow-up actions. Therefore, he hoped that the Chairman could help urge the department to rectify the problems as soon as possible. In addition, he indicated that Chong San Road Public Toilet had a certain number of users as it was close to the cycle track along Tolo Harbour. Moreover, as the other public toilet down the road already had a considerable number of users, its facilities were damaged rather quickly. Believing that Chong San Road Public Toilet could divert some of the users, he supported the captioned programme. He hoped that the FEHD would pay extra attention to the condition of public toilet facilities in the rural areas while constructing or refurbishing the toilets.

43. Mr. Clement WOO supported the captioned programme. He said that further down the road from the Chong San Road Public Toilet, there was another public toilet near Yuen Chau Tsai in Tai Po frequented by many members of the public (especially cyclists) on weekdays and holidays. He also understood that a high usage rate of public toilets would expedite the wear and tear of the facilities, making the public toilets dilapidated. As regards the Chong San Road Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, he hoped that the department could do whatever it could to complete the works in a matter of months and maintain environmental hygiene while the works were in progress.

44. Dr. LAU Chee-sing enquired whether the department only planned to refurbish the interior facilities or layout of Chong San Road Public Toilet without changing its building structure.

45. Mr. CHAN Cho-leung opined that at the meeting, Members should call on the department concerned to take forward the works projects that had not been confirmed. If the department had promised to take forward a project and provided a works schedule, there was no need to bring it up on purpose at the meeting.

46. The Chairman indicated that Members generally supported the programme, except that some had asked the FEHD to provide supplementary information. In addition, it was reasonable for Members to inform the department of the problems relating to the public toilet facilities in the district. He also supported Members to express their views as regards the matters of their own

constituencies. He asked the department to pay attention to the issues put forward by Members.

47. Mr. MA Hon-chiu responded that the captioned programme was about refurbishing the interior facilities and renovating the interior and exterior of Chong San Road Public Toilet, without changing its building structure. Otherwise, the project cost would be higher than the current estimate.

48. The EHWC endorsed the captioned programme.

49. The Chairman said that he had to withdraw from the meeting due to other commitments. As such, Mr. LI Wah-kwong, Rex, the Vice-chairman (hereunder referred to as “the Acting Chairman”), would take over to continue to hold the meeting.

V. Implementation of the Water Intelligent Network – remaining works (Tai Po District)
(TPDC Paper No. EHW 5/2019)

50. The Acting Chairman welcomed Mr. LAU Chi-ming and Mr. LAM Kwok-chuen, Senior Engineers of the WSD; Ms. YIP On-yee, Annie, Ms. WONG Dik-chi and Mr. LEE Cho-yin, Jason, Engineers of the WSD; as well as Mr. MA Hok-chi and Mr. TSE Tsz-kin, Chief Project Engineer and Project Engineer respectively of Black & Veatch Hong Kong Limited to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

51. Mr. LAU Chi-ming and Mr. MA Hok-chi introduced the captioned paper to the EHWC and went through the captioned works using PowerPoint presentation.

52. Dr. LAU Chee-sing's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) The establishment of the Water Intelligent Network (“WIN”) aimed to enhance the monitoring of the water supply network and reduce the inconvenience to and impact on members of the public due to the burst or leakage of old water pipes. The first phase of the WIN was launched not long ago in December 2016, and the second phase in October 2018. However, he pointed out that the WSD neither detailed the outcome of the first phase of works for the WIN, nor mentioned how the WIN could reduce the likelihood of mains bursts and leakage.
- (ii) Although the WSD had completed the first phase of works for the WIN, mains burst still occurred from time to time in such places as Tai Po Market and Tai Po Centre, causing enormous impact on the community and traffic. Therefore, he would like to know the actual effectiveness of the WIN, such as whether it could indeed identify leakage and ageing in the pipes early enough and prevent mains bursts effectively.
- (iii) If the WIN could only monitor the water supply network but failed to prevent mains

bursts effectively, he opined that the establishment of the WIN would not be useful from a practical point of view.

- (iv) The WSD planned to set up a total of 400 District Metering Areas (“DMAs”) in all districts in Hong Kong between 2019 and 2023. How many of them would be located in Tai Po District? In 2023, how many DMAs would there be in Tai Po District? Which parts of the district did the WSD consider it necessary to set up a DMA?

53. Mr. LAU Yung-wai’s comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He would like to learn about the principle behind the operation of the WIN. For example, could the WSD use the WIN monitoring system to predict mains bursts? Or could the department detect pressure in the pipeline and make proper adjustments through the valves so as to lower the water pressure and reduce the risk of mains burst?
- (ii) Although the first phase of works for the WIN had not been completed and the effectiveness of the system remained to be seen, the department had already launched the second phase of works for the WIN. Therefore, he was worried that the WIN system would achieve none of the expected outcomes, and all the time and effort devoted would be in vain as the benefits would not outweigh the losses.
- (iii) Mains bursts often occurred in the vicinity of Chui Lok Street. In serious cases, there would be pot holes on the road surface. As such, he was pleased to see the department incorporate the area concerned into the DMA under the WIN. However, he indicated that there were still other places in the district where mains bursts occurred frequently. For example, a serious mains burst took place near Ting Kok Road outside Tai Po Government Offices in 2015, leaving a giant pot hole on the road surface. In addition, although mains bursts often occurred on Kwong Fuk Road and Ting Kok Road off Tai Ping Industrial Park, the department had not set up any DMA in these locations. Therefore, he would like to learn about the standards and criteria for setting up DMAs.
- (iv) Given that closing off busy road sections for pipeline maintenance works would seriously affect the traffic, it would be extremely inconvenient if mains bursts occurred at busy road sections. As such, he would like to know what criteria the department would adopt to determine whether to set up a DMA at certain locations.
- (v) He noticed that the department had stated in the paper that water supply would be suspended when the works were in progress. Although the suspension would not exceed eight hours on each occasion, he was worried that it would affect the residents. Therefore, he enquired about the number of days the above-mentioned works would take, as well as the detailed arrangements for water suspension.

54. Mr. Patrick TANG's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He understood that the WIN system mainly made use of the central system to collect data for monitoring the water pressure of the water supply network. In the event of high water pressure in the water supply network, could the department adjust it through the central system? Or did the department have to send staff to the site to reduce the pipeline pressure?
- (ii) Could the WIN system also monitor the ageing of pipelines at the same time?
- (iii) If the WIN system was effective, he opined that the department should set up DMAs in more parts of the district progressively. He suggested the department consider carrying out the works in the same DMA at the same time, which he believed could reduce the nuisance caused to the residents nearby.

55. Mr. Ken YU welcomed the captioned programme. However, he was concerned about how the department would set the priority for setting up DMAs in different areas, and how it would resolve the traffic congestion caused by the works in progress. He also hoped that the department could monitor the situation closely.

56. Ms. WONG Pik-kiu's comments were as follows:

- (i) She welcomed the establishment of the WIN by the WSD in Tai Po District.
- (ii) When the department carried out water pipe replacement works in Tai Po District not long ago, the consultancy concerned maintained close liaison with DC members. She would like the department to provide Members with information such as the works locations of and the schedule for setting up the WIN system.
- (iii) If the connection of old and new pipes were not carried out properly, the joint would be broken easily, leading to mains bursts and causing inconvenience to the community. To her knowledge, the WIN monitoring system could help locate stopcocks so that it would not be necessary to locate them manually during mains burst. She would like the department to report on this issue in detail when providing Members with the information about works locations.
- (iv) When arranging for traffic diversion, the department's consultancy sometimes discussed with DC members, and at other times contacted the bus company directly for discussion. However, relocating bus stops would cause inconvenience to the passengers and lead to complaints. In this connection, she opined that even if the department did not discuss with DC members about the arrangements for traffic diversion, it should discuss with the housing estates concerned as soon as possible.
- (v) The department had listened to her opinions by suspending water supply between

11 p.m. and 5 a.m. the next morning. Sometimes water supply could even resume at 4 a.m. which had helped reduce the impact on residents. She commended the department for its efforts. As regards the captioned works, she hoped that the department could reduce the nuisance caused to the residents as far as possible while the water supply was suspended.

- (vi) She hoped that the department could provide DC members with the contact details of the relevant staff before the works began.

57. Mr. MA Hok-chi responded as follows:

- (i) The principle behind the WIN was to break down a large and complicated water distribution network into independent areas. By installing flow meters and pressure reducing devices (through which decompression was conducted in these independent areas based on factors like terrain) in the network, data of the WIN was collected and analysed by the WIN management computer system. This could reduce the likelihood of leakage and burst of water pipes caused by water pressure, thus prolonging the life span of the water pipes.
- (ii) The department would connect all the established or proposed DMAs and Pressure Management Areas (“PMAs”) to the WIN management computer system, so as to keep monitoring the situation of the DMAs and assess the leakage and illegal taking of water. By doing so, the department could promptly decide on and prioritise the most effective network management measures for the DMAs and PMAs. Through the WIN system, the department’s staff could locate leakage areas more quickly and find out potential leakage areas more easily.
- (iii) The first phase of works for the WIN was launched in late 2016, and some of the works were completed just half a year ago. As the review of the system’s effectiveness required a long period of data collection for analysis, the information on the effectiveness of the system could not be provided for the time being. However, as the WIN system could manage the water pressure in the water supply network, it had positive effects on the condition of water pipes. On the other hand, having drawn on the experience in the establishment of WINs in other countries, the consultancy opined that the implementation of the WIN system would be effective to a certain extent.
- (iv) The construction of each manhole would take about two to three months. The consultancy would strive to construct manholes on pedestrian ways.
- (v) As always, the consultancy would maintain close liaison with DC members. It would also provide them with the contact numbers of the resident engineers and technical staffs concerned so that they could answer questions about engineering and technical issues.

- (vi) The sizes of DMAs varied according to the configurations of the water supply networks. As regards Members' enquiry about why some road sections with frequent mains bursts were not fitted with the WIN monitoring system, he indicated that the construction sites shown in the DMA location map attached to the captioned paper referred to the smaller DMAs divided from a larger DMA. Therefore, the system had already covered the water pipes in the periphery. When water flowed into the DMA concerned, the monitoring system could reduce the pressure as necessary.

58. Mr. LAU Chi-ming responded as follows:

- (i) The WSD would contact the DC Members concerned some four to five months before the works began, introducing to them the transport arrangements, construction period, pipe connection arrangements and potential impact in relation to the works.
- (ii) The department would make every effort to arrange for the construction of manholes on pedestrian ways so as to reduce the impact on vehicular traffic.
- (iii) The department would provide DC Members with the contact information of the staff concerned in due course so that DC Members could find out the progress and details of the works.
- (iv) The WIN system was mainly for monitoring the water flow and pressure in the water pipes rather than helping to locate the stopcocks. Nevertheless, the department had another system to help frontline staff locate them.
- (v) The department had incorporated the water pipes on Ting Kok Road near Tai Ping Industrial Park into the risk-based pipe replacement contract. The works had begun in December 2018.
- (vi) Through the remaining works of the WIN, the department would establish a total of 400 DMAs in all the districts throughout the territory, and 16 would be in Tai Po District.

59. Dr. LAU Chee-sing's questions were as follows:

- (i) In the second phase of works for the WIN and the remaining works, 41 and 16 DMAs would be established respectively in Tai Po District. He enquired whether the DMAs of these two would overlap and whether the total number of DMAs in the district would be 57.
- (ii) What were the approximate construction costs involved in the second phase of works for the WIN and the remaining works?
- (iii) He noted that the WSD would use the "dual water supply" system to supply water wherever possible. How could the WIN work with it?

60. Mr. LAU Yung-wai noticed that many water pipes in the district had been laid for decades, and sometimes the cause of mains bursts was also related to the ageing of pipe fittings (such as those for connecting water pipes). Therefore, he enquired whether the WIN system could help reduce the risk of mains bursts caused by the ageing of water pipes or fittings. In addition, the WSD had initially planned to establish a DMA on Ting Kok Road in the fourth quarter of 2018. However, as the department and the HKPF had failed to reach a consensus as regards the road closure arrangements on Ting Kok Road, the works had not commenced yet. This was a perfect example showing that when there was no mains burst, the other departments concerned would not readily agree to allow the WSD to close off some busy road sections to carry out works. As such, he found it necessary for the department to consider how to resolve these problems.

61. Mr. MA Hok-chi responded as follows:

- (i) There were a total of 60 DMAs in Tai Po District. The main objective of the remaining works was to divide the originally larger DMA into smaller ones so as to improve the efficiency of leakage detection.
- (ii) To tie in with the “dual water supply” system, the department would construct a manhole at the inlet of each water pipe, so as to monitor all the water supplies into the smaller DMAs and decompress the water pipes where necessary.
- (iii) In the DMAs where decompression was possible, the WIN system could help reduce the risk of mains bursts. In the long run, the WSD could also collect and analyse data from the flow meters of the WIN system to detect leakage in water pipes.

62. Mr. LAU Chi-ming said that the remaining works of the WIN included the establishment of 400 DMAs in the territory, of which the total construction cost was about \$700 million. With 16 of the DMAs located in Tai Po District, the construction cost for the district was somewhere over \$20 million. Regarding Members’ concerns about the ageing of water pipes, he indicated that the WSD had carried out the replacement and rehabilitation of water pipes between 2000 and 2015, and the condition of the water pipes had improved. As large-scale replacement of water pipes would affect the traffic, and in light of the technological advances in recent years, the department hoped to monitor the water supply networks in different areas through the establishment of DMAs, and focus its resources on some of the water supply networks in bad condition. He said that the ageing of water pipes would not necessarily worsen the condition of water supply networks. As such, water pipes should not be replaced solely because of ageing, or it would be a waste of resources. By comparison, the WIN could monitor the condition of water supply networks more effectively so that the water pipes that had to be replaced could be identified and replaced in a more cost-effective manner.

63. In response to Members’ concerns about water pipe connection, water suspension notices,

traffic diversion and relocation of bus stops, the Acting Chairman asked the WSD to pay extra attention to the arrangements concerned while the works were in progress, and notify DC Members of the respective constituencies and the relevant owners' corporations as appropriate. In addition, if the WSD consulted the EHWC on the WIN system again in future, he would ask the department to provide information on the data collected by the system.

64. The EHWC endorsed the captioned works.

65. Mr. LAU Chi-ming thanked the EHWC for supporting the captioned works.

VI. Demand for reforming the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints
(TPDC Paper No. EHW 6/2019)

66. The Acting Chairman welcomed Mr. CHAN Kam-tong, Coordinator; Ms. YEUNG Yee-man, Ella, Senior Professional Officer; and Mr. LIN Ka-hing, Steve, Professional Officer of the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

67. Mr. Clement WOO went through the captioned paper.

68. Mr. CHAN Kam-tong responded as follows:

- (i) He agreed that there was room for improvement in the investigation work of the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints ("Joint Offices"), which had set out the direction to shorten the time required for investigation.
- (ii) In recent years, the Joint Offices were presented with many challenges during investigation. The biggest one was the substantial increase in the number of complaints each year from about 17 000 in 2007 to about 36 000 in 2017. Another challenge was the unwillingness to co-operate by the owners or occupiers of flats suspected of water seepage and their refusal to allow investigators to enter their flats for investigation. All these factors would increase the time required for the entire investigation process.
- (iii) The Joint Offices had been investigating water seepage using non-damaging methods (such as colour water tests). However, these methods had certain limitations, such as a lower success rate of identifying the source of water seepage (the success rate in 2017 was about 39%). Nevertheless, as some owners or occupiers would take the initiative to deal with water seepage while the Joint Offices were carrying out the investigation, the overall percentage of cases in which water seepage had discontinued eventually was over 70%.

- (iv) To cope with the current challenges, the Joint Offices were proactively examining various improvement measures, including the introduction of advanced technologies such as microwave tomography and infrared thermography so as to increase the success rate of identifying the source of water seepage.
- (v) Established by the FEHD and the BD, the Joint Offices were located in 19 districts throughout the territory. In four of the districts, staff members of the two departments were stationed in the same office. In the other 15, staff members worked in separate offices, which made it difficult for the staff of the two departments to communicate with each other. In this connection, the Joint Offices were identifying suitable offices to set up four regional joint offices (located in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West respectively) so that the two departments' staff stationed in the Joint Offices could work in the same place to facilitate communication and collaboration, thus increasing the efficiency of investigation. The Administration hoped that the joint offices in the above four regions could be completed by the end of 2019, and would also continue to review various work flows and details.

69. Ms. Ella YEUNG responded as follows:

- (i) The BD had earlier commissioned a consultancy to conduct detailed studies, which included looking at what methods had been adopted by the neighbouring countries to deal with water seepage, and examining whether the new technologies for identifying the source of water seepage could be used in Hong Kong, so as to give the investigators a better chance to identify the source of water seepage. The department had identified a number of methods to confirm the source of water seepage, including infrared thermography and microwave tomography, which had been used in pilot locations. The department would review the effectiveness of these methods later to see if they could help the Joint Offices increase the efficiency of collecting evidence in criminal cases.
- (ii) Apart from increasing the success rate of finding the source of water seepage, new technologies could also help the Joint Offices handle cases in which they could not enter the flats suspected of water seepage. By using these new technologies, investigators could conduct tests without entering the flats. However, as there were still limitations to these non-damaging methods, investigators still had to decide whether these new technologies could be used according to the actual circumstances of each case.
- (iii) Investigators would use these new technologies for investigation at the pilot locations wherever possible. As regards the non-pilot locations such as Tai Po District, the Joint Offices would also consider using these new technologies to help investigate complicated, serious and recurring water seepage cases wherever

possible.

70. Mr. TAM Wing-fun, Eric's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) Many members of the public had complained about the water seepage investigation conducted by the Joint Offices. One of the problems was that the staff members of the Joint Offices were frequently transferred, and handover was not carried out satisfactorily. As a result, the successor might have no clue about the cases handled by the predecessor. Even worse, the staff did not know the existence of certain cases until he took the initiative to contact the Joint Offices to enquire about their progress. He was very annoyed that he had to keep asking the Joint Offices about the progress of the cases as if he were a "ghost".
- (ii) The new technologies, in spite of their limitations, were non-damaging testing methods like the existing colour water test. Therefore, investigators could conduct the tests without obtaining the consent of the owners or occupiers of the flats suspected of water seepage, thus saving the time spent on waiting for the colour water test report. As such, he could not understand why the investigators did not use these new technologies for investigation at the outset.
- (iii) A household plagued by water seepage had to wait for the water seepage investigation report by the Joint Offices. However, in a matter of just six weeks, water seepage in the flat had spread from a small area on the bathroom wall to the hallway near the main door, and two deep cracks had appeared as a result. It could be seen that water seepage was indeed a great nuisance to members of the public.
- (iv) He enquired what the Joint Offices could do to enhance their water seepage investigation and how they could improve in areas such as manpower deployment and investigation efficiency. So far, he did not see how the introduction of advanced technologies could improve the efficiency of case handling by the Joint Offices. Otherwise, the number of cases would not have increased substantially.
- (v) He stressed that he was not blaming the Joint Offices. Instead, he opined that the tasks performed by their staff were extremely difficult. However, had the Joint Offices deployed their manpower and made use of technology in an appropriate manner, Members would not have to submit the paper to the EHWC to express their grievance on behalf of the affected owners. He hoped that the Joint Offices could explain the challenges they were faced with, such as whether there was a shortage of manpower, so that Members could render appropriate support. Otherwise, they could do nothing but to blame the management of the Joint Offices for their inefficiency.

71. Citing the cases in his constituency, Mr. Patrick TANG illustrated that the situation of each water seepage case was different from one another. In particular, water seepage in residential units

was not limited to water seeping from an upper floor to a lower floor, and it was difficult for engineers to handle all cases. He was pleased to see that the Joint Offices had introduced new technologies for water seepage investigation. However, he found it necessary for the Administration to look at ways to deal with uncooperative owners or occupiers from a policy standpoint. For example, it could incorporate terms in the Deed of Mutual Covenant of various subsidised housing, stipulating that the manager or responsible person of the estate office could enter a flat for investigation purposes without having to apply for a search warrant, so as to facilitate the work of the Joint Offices. In addition, he opined that the shortage of manpower in the Joint Offices was also a key reason for the backlog of cases. He explained that there were complicated reasons for water seepage, and he believed that deploying more manpower was the only solution. Therefore, he hoped that the Joint Offices could increase manpower proactively.

72. Mr. AU Chun-wah's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He enquired about the position of Mr. CHAN who had just responded. Was he under the FEHD or the BD, or was he the head of the Joint Offices?
- (ii) He criticised that the Joint Offices for conducting investigation very slowly, and that the contact arrangements with the counterpart units were confusing as well. In addition, the FEHD's and the BD's staff stationed at the Joint Offices worked in different offices without communication and co-ordination. When dealing with the cases, they often lacked collaboration and passed the buck to each other, and no one had the decision-making authority to deal with the problem cases that had long remained unresolved. He found it unacceptable and opined that the Joint Offices were literally non-existent.
- (iii) He opined that when dealing with the cases, the only thing that the Joint Offices knew was to put pressure on the owners, and they never tried to help them resolve the problems. For example, the department neither proactively identified the source of water seepage nor helped rectify the problems. He was not happy with the Joint Offices' approach of relying on the owners to resolve the problems on their own. Citing the cases he had handled, he explained that the Joint Offices was in fact unable to resolve the water seepage problems encountered by the residents, and he questioned the purpose of the Joint Offices.
- (iv) Given that some private companies could use advanced technological devices to detect the source of water seepage, he did not believe that the Government had no resources to purchase these devices. If the existing resources were insufficient, he believed that LegCo members, regardless of which party they belonged to, would not prevent the Joint Offices from applying for the resources to purchase these advanced testing devices. He also asked the Joint Offices to explain their difficulties, if any, at the meeting so that Members would be able to express their concerns when they met with the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene and

the Director of Buildings in future.

- (v) DC Members had been helping the residents deal with water seepage cases for years, and it was indeed difficult for them to put up with the performance of the Joint Offices any longer. He hoped that the representatives of the Joint Offices would reflect Members' views to their own departments and even the policy bureaux concerned.

73. Mr. YAM Man-chuen recalled his experience in dealing with water seepage cases and summed up the reasons for the Joint Offices' failure to perform its duties as follows:

- (i) The first one was about technology. He was pleased to see that the Joint Offices had finally introduced the more widely-used "high-technology" devices for water seepage investigation. He indicated that the detection methods of these devices were all non-intrusive but more widely-recognised and more accurate. He asked why the Joint Offices did not make use of these new technologies instead of the old detection methods, and why they did not apply these technologies in all the districts rather than in pilot locations only.
- (ii) The second one was about manpower and resources. He understood that there might be no more than 10 staff members in the Joint Office in Tai Po District. Such manpower was obviously insufficient to cope with the cases in the entire Tai Po District. Therefore, he considered it necessary to increase manpower.
- (iii) The third one was that the prevailing legislation could not meet the operation needs of the Joint Offices. According to the current practice of the Joint Offices, it might take several months to complete the procedures from carrying out the colour water test to issuing a warning letter that required the owner to rectify the problem. It was a really long period of time for those troubled by water seepage. Therefore, the procedures had to be streamlined by reviewing the legislation or regulations so as to speed up the processing of cases. As regards Mr. Patrick TANG's proposal that designated officers could exercise their authority to enter a flat for seepage investigation, he considered it inappropriate as the owner's title had to be respected.

In addition, he indicated that many articles out there had pointed out that a humidity reading of over 20 degrees for a certain seepage area would suggest damage in the wall surfaces. However, the benchmark set by the Joint Offices for processing a complaint was 35 degrees. In this connection, he enquired whether the department would lower the benchmark so as to benefit more people after it had switched to the new technologies.

74. Mr. LAU Yung-wai's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He asked whether the Joint Offices could provide the success rate of investigation in which infrared thermography and microwave tomography were used. He opined

that if the success rate of water seepage investigation with these new technologies was higher, the department should replace the existing detection methods with these new technologies.

- (ii) If the public generally believed that these non-intrusive and non-damaging new technologies could identify the source of water seepage more effectively, why did the Joint Offices try using these devices in some districts only (Tai Po District was not one of the pilot locations at present)? Was there any problem involving resources? If yes, he was not pleased with the Government as it did not deploy resources to provide these devices for the Joint Offices in all districts, but spent a lot of money on other less important projects.
- (iii) The possible reason why the Joint Offices failed to identify the source of water seepage when dealing with the cases in the past was that the owners or occupiers on the upper floor were not co-operative. Regarding the cases in which the source of water seepage could not be identified previously, he enquired whether the Joint Offices would follow up on them again after introducing these new testing devices, so as to ease the frustration caused by water seepage to the owners or occupiers concerned.
- (iv) In addition to infrared thermography and microwave tomography, were there any other more advanced and non-damaging testing devices in the market? If yes, he opined that the Joint Offices should use these more advanced devices for water seepage investigation.
- (v) He said that while he had not been a DC Member for long, he had already come across a substantial number of cases involving water seepage in buildings. Moreover, it took at least a year for the Joint Offices to deal with each case, and the exchange of correspondences alone had already taken up a lot of the time. This definitely would not help resolve water seepage problems but instead make the owners or occupiers utterly frustrated.
- (vi) Regarding the humidity reading at seepage areas, the benchmark set by the Joint Offices for processing a complaint was 35 degrees. This benchmark, which he considered too high, had long been subject to criticism. He did not know whether the Joint Offices had to set a higher benchmark because of technical reasons. However, a humidity level of 20 degrees was enough to promote mould growth on the wall. As such, he would like the Joint Offices to review it.

75. Mr. Ken YU's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) As the housing estates in his constituency were relatively old, he often contacted the Joint Offices because of water seepage cases.
- (ii) As only a handful of cases had been successfully dealt with by the Joint Offices,

there was a backlog of a substantial number of unresolved cases. In addition, the staff members of the Joint Offices changed so frequently that even DC Members found it difficult to find the contact person concerned. Therefore, he considered the manpower arrangement in the Joint Offices below par.

- (iii) He said that he had never seen the investigators of the Joint Offices using new technological devices to deal with water seepage cases. Therefore, he enquired when the Joint Offices planned to apply these new technological devices in Tai Po District, and how effective these devices were. He hoped that the Joint Offices could switch to the new technological devices for all districts throughout the territory as soon as possible.
- (iv) With the intervention of loss adjusters, the result of a water seepage case would be available within three months. However, it took at least a year for the Joint Offices to close a case, and he found it unacceptable.
- (v) He suggested the Joint Offices computerise the work flow and build a database to record case information and work progress, which could make it easier for the successors to follow up on and view the details of the cases.
- (vi) He suggested the Joint Offices refer to the practices of loss adjusters in the market and explore ways to enhance their work efficiency.

76. Mr. CHOW Yuen-wai said that he had helped the residents deal with a lot of water seepage cases, but had never seen the investigators of the Joint Offices use infrared thermography. After enquiry, he was told that the contract signed between the Joint Offices and the consultancy did not include any services other than carrying out colour water tests. Therefore, the investigators could only conduct colour water tests. He indicated that colour water tests was outdated technology-wise. Moreover, water seepage was not only a nuisance to the residents, but might also lead to the spalling of external walls that would injure the passers-by. Therefore, he urged the Government to address the problem.

77. Mr. Francis YAM's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He opined that the problems being faced by the Joint Offices were heavy workload and improper manpower deployment. He wondered why the Joint Offices had set a higher benchmark for processing a complaint was to eliminate the water seepage cases with a humidity reading slightly below 35 degrees. In addition, he had followed the investigators of the Joint Offices to investigate water seepage cases. He noted that even if the ceiling of the flat was damaged with obvious water marks or dripping, the reading on the testing device would still be low. Consequently, the complaints were not followed up because the reading did not reach the benchmark. He found it necessary to address this problem.
- (ii) After the Joint Offices had received a complaint, it would take a long time for them

to issue a “Nuisance Notice”. He would like to learn about how the Joint Offices executed the “Nuisance Notice”, and how many prosecutions were initiated successfully in 2018 against the owners whose flats had seepage problems. He said that it would not be satisfactory if the Joint Offices failed to take effective law enforcement actions after issuing a “Nuisance Notice” according to the law. He was worried that some members of the public might delay rectifying the water seepage problem as a result of it.

- (iii) A member of the public who had been continuously plagued by water seepage could no longer tolerate it, and therefore commissioned a private company to conduct water seepage tests before instituting civil proceedings against the owner or occupier on the upper floor. Eventually, the bailiffs put up notices outside the door of the flat concerned, warning that they would exercise their authority to break into the flat for investigation and repair if they still refused to co-operate. He enquired whether the Government could go one step further to help the households plagued by water seepage. He indicated that some members of the public might not understand the legal procedures for dealing with water seepage. Therefore, he suggested the Government at least provide information for the public so that they would understand the ways to deal with water seepage.

78. Mr. LEE Siu-man agreed with Members’ views and noted the inefficiency of the Joint Offices in resolving water seepage problem. He indicated that both DC Members and government departments were committed to serving the public. Therefore, he hoped that the Government could be more compassionate towards the public and expedite the processing of these cases in a proactive manner.

79. Mr. CHAN Kam-tong responded as follows:

- (i) He was Coordinator of the Joint Offices, and Ms. YEUNG was Senior Professional Officer. They were the staff members under the FEHD and the BD respectively.
- (ii) In 2004, the FEHD and the BD set up the inter-departmental Joint Offices. Since then, the two departments had been maintaining close liaison and some of their staff members were working in the same office.
- (iii) The staff establishment of the Joint Offices had been increased. For the FEHD, 228 staff members were currently assigned to the Joint Offices. Four of them were Coordinators and the remaining 224 were frontline staff. The main duties of the Coordinators were to co-ordinate the two departments and conduct comprehensive review of the work flow and guidelines for dealing with water seepage, so as to streamline the procedures and expedite the handling of the cases as far as possible, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency.
- (iv) When the Joint Offices were first established, the FEHD deployed Environmental

Nuisance Investigators to carry out investigation. However, as they were employed on non-civil service contracts, the wastage rate was relatively high. In view of this, the department had been phasing out this position gradually since 2006. So far, among the 224 frontline staff members working at the Joint Offices, only 36 were Environmental Nuisance Investigators, and the remaining 100 plus were Health Inspectors. Therefore, he believed that the manpower would be more and more stable.

- (v) If members of the public commissioned loss adjusters or hired professionals to detect water seepage, the investigation would be conducted by way of civil proceedings. For the Joint Offices, if it was confirmed that the water seepage was causing nuisance, they would issue a “Nuisance Notice” to the persons concerned in accordance with the relevant legislation, ordering them to reduce the nuisance within a specific period. In addition, they would also prosecute those who failed to comply with the “Nuisance Notice”. As the Joint Offices would institute prosecutions by way of criminal proceedings, their standard of proof was higher than that for civil proceedings. This also explained why the cases handled by loss adjusters had a higher success rate.
- (vi) If members of the public opted to hire lawyers or commission loss adjusters to deal with water seepage problems, they could contact the Joint Offices to obtain investigation reports of different stages, and the Joint Offices were also willing to provide the necessary assistance.
- (vii) If nobody lived in the flat suspected of water seepage, or the owner or occupier refused to allow investigators to enter the flat for investigation, the Joint Offices could apply to the court for a warrant to enter the flat, provided that they had proven to the court that sufficient time had been given to the owner concerned for making the arrangement. However, the Joint Offices were currently exploring ways to streamline the procedures, such as minimising the time for delivering the appointment notices or entry notices, which would in turn shorten the time required for the application for warrants.
- (viii) In 2017, the Joint Offices issued 5 006 “Nuisance Notices” and initiated 114 prosecutions, of which 49 had resulted in conviction by the court. He explained that after the Joint Offices had issued the 5 006 “Nuisance Notices”, more than 4 000 cases were willing to follow the instructions to rectify the water seepage problem. Therefore, the Joint Offices did not prosecute them in the end.

(Post-meeting note: The Joint Offices made a correction by stating that there should be 227 staff members currently working at the Joint Offices, of which 223 were frontline staff members.)

80. Ms. Ella YEUNG responded as follows:

- (i) Although the consultancy hired by the BD not long ago had developed new testing technologies, such as microwave tomography complemented with infrared thermography and radar scanning (the source of water seepage would still be identified mainly by microwave tomography), they could not completely replace colour water test, which was widely adopted by the sector and the court as it could provide direct evidence proving the source of seepage and the affected area.
- (ii) If a water seepage case involved environmental constraints and might not be related to the flat on the upper floor (for example, the seepage area was close to the external walls or public sewers), the microwave tomography scanners could only detect unusual moisture on the floor slab but could not ascertain the source of water seepage. Therefore, these new technologies had their own limitations as they could only provide circumstantial evidence.
- (iii) These technologies also had certain limitations in the technical aspect. For example, microwave tomography could not be applied on rough surfaces (such as areas with concrete spalling) or tiled surfaces, areas fitted with pipelines or obstructed by furniture, etc. In addition, the Joint Offices were also exploring the possibility of using the test results produced by these new technologies as evidential proof.
- (iv) Although the consultancy recommended the new technologies that were being used in the market, the Joint Offices currently adduced evidence according to criminal standards. Therefore, it would take time to explore whether the testing standards of these new technologies could meet the standard of proof for criminal prosecution, and it was also necessary to determine whether there were sufficient service providers in the market. Therefore, the Joint Offices were using these new technologies in some pilot locations only, and could not replace the existing colour water test with these technologies once and for all immediately.
- (v) The Joint Offices did not begin using these new technologies at the pilot locations until early July 2018. Therefore, not much data had been collected so far, and the department was also evaluating their effectiveness. The Joint Offices expected that the new technologies were more effective than the traditional testing methods. Even if the source of water seepage could not be identified by the traditional testing methods, these new technologies could be used as alternatives to increase the likelihood of identifying the source of water seepage.
- (vi) As regards why the new technologies were not used for testing immediately after complaints had been received, she said that it was necessary to have a clear understanding of the interior layout of the flat on the upper floor before using these new technologies. In the event that there were no water installations above the water seepage area, even if the new technologies had detected moisture in the floor slab, it was not possible to ascertain the source of water seepage, and thus could not prove in full compliance with the criminal standards that the seepage was causing

nuisance. Therefore, these new technologies could not be used immediately unless there was a clear idea about the layout of the flat on the upper floor.

- (vii) Currently, microwave tomography was widely used by the loss adjusters in the market. However, as they were using the civil proceedings standards, it was not necessary to completely rule out all other factors that might lead to water seepage. Therefore, their methods of dealing with water seepage were different from that of the Joint Offices.
- (viii) When the Joint Offices were first set up, they had already set the humidity benchmark for processing a complaint at 35 degrees. She explained that under normal circumstances, a certain level of humidity would be maintained on the concrete surface due to the moisture in the surrounding environment and in the air. It was more likely for concrete with a humidity reading below 35 degrees not having been affected by water seepage. Based on the experience of the Joint Offices, it was less likely to identify the source of water seepage when the humidity reading was low. Therefore, setting the benchmark for processing a complaint at the current level could use the resources for investigation effectively.
- (ix) Further to point (viii) above, the Joint Offices would not necessarily refuse to deal with cases in which the humidity reading was below 35 degrees. For example, water droplets or dripping water that appeared on the surface of floor slabs were obvious signs of water seepage, and the Joint Offices would also take follow-up actions. Therefore, when there was no obvious water seepage, the humidity reading was only an objective value and a threshold for investigators' reference. She said that if every case had to be judged by frontline investigators as to whether they should be accepted, the outcome might not be satisfactory.

81. Mr. CHAN Cho-leung understood that there were so many things for the professionals of the Joint Offices to consider. However, the crux of the problem was that the Joint Offices had failed to deal with various water seepage cases effectively. Therefore, he suggested the EHWC write to the departments concerned to ask for additional resources and service improvement.

82. The Acting Chairman asked the Joint Offices to note and consider Members' views and suggestions.

83. The EHWC agreed to write to the Chief Secretary for Administration, with copies delivered to the policy bureaux of the FEHD and the BD respectively, so as to relay Members' suggestions.

(Post-meeting note: The above letter was sent on 27 February 2019.)

VII. Concerns over the massive fish deaths in Lam Tsuen River

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 7/2019)

84. The Acting Chairman welcomed Dr. LEE On-on, Joanne, Acting Senior Fisheries Officer of the AFCD, to the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

85. Mr. LAU Yung-wai went through the captioned paper.

86. Dr. Joanne LEE responded as follows:

- (i) Regarding the massive fish deaths in Lam Tsuen River in recent months, the AFCD mainly provided red tide and toxic algae analysis as well as technical support for fish species identification.
- (ii) On 19 November and 10 December 2018, the department received notifications from the 1823 Call Centre and the EPD, which indicated that massive fish deaths appeared in the river channel of Lam Tsuen River near Po Heung Bridge. The department visited the site on 19 November and 11 December to take water samples for examination. Neither red tide nor toxic algae was found in the river channel. Therefore, she believed that they were not related to the incident.
- (iii) Based on the photographs provided by the EPD, the AFCD believed that the dead fish in the incident did not belong to a single species, but included tilapia and grey mullet commonly found between sea waters and fresh waters.

87. Ms. LUK Wai-yun, Connie responded as follows:

- (i) After receiving the report of the above incident on 21 November 2018, the EPD kept sending officers to Lam Tsuen River to conduct on-site investigation. They also took water samples for tests and checked whether there were any sources of pollution and illegal sewage disposal in the river channel.
- (ii) The department noticed that the dead fishes were mainly located in the river channel between Po Heung Bridge and Nam Wan Road, and the FEHD had also arranged for contractors to clear the area on several occasions.
- (iii) According to the test results of water sample, the water quality parameters such as oxygen content, biological oxygen demand and pH values were all normal and no different from the general monitoring data, indicating that the water quality of the river channel had not deteriorated. In addition, the above incident occurred between mid-November and early December 2018, during which the department did not discover any river pollution incident.
- (iv) Having summarised various information, the EPD had ruled out the link between the above incident and water pollution. As regards the cause of the incident, the

department believed that it might be the result of a number of factors (such as natural factors and weather changes, etc.).

- (v) Regarding the massive fish deaths in Shing Mun River in Sha Tin in 2015, both the investigation results and water quality reports revealed that the incident was not related to water pollution, but probably related to a number of factors (such as weather changes, as well as an increase in algae population resulting in a lower level of dissolved oxygen).
- (vi) The dead fish found by the department in Shing Mun River earlier was mainly herring, which was different from the dead fish species found in Lam Tsuen River this time. As herring was a marine fish species, it was speculated that the cause of their massive deaths might be their inability to adapt to river water when they swam towards the intersection between fresh water and sea water in Shing Mun River.
- (vii) Although the causes of the massive fish deaths in Shing Mun River and Lam Tsuen River might be different, the EPD had ruled out the possibility that the causes were related to water pollution.
- (viii) The department understood that Members and the public were concerned about the hygiene condition of river channels. As such, the departments concerned would continue to work closely together and step up the cleaning efforts at the river channels when they found dead fish, so as to prevent the dead fish from emitting foul odour and being eaten by other animals (such as egrets). In addition, the departments concerned would also enhance their exchange of information. For instance, if an unusually high number of dead fishes was found, they would immediately take water samples for tests and inspect the situation of Lam Tsuen River. If pollution was found in river channels, the EPD would also take law enforcement actions.

88. Mr. MA Hon-chiu responded as follows:

- (i) The FEHD cleared the rubbish floating on Lam Tsuen River and Tai Po River on a regular basis. As dead fishes were treated in the same way as other rubbish, the department would transport the dead fishes it had collected to the landfills in North East New Territories.
- (ii) Regarding the massive fish deaths in Lam Tsuen River on this occasion, the department had cleared all dead fishes by 24 December 2018.
- (iii) The department had cleared 0.55 tonnes and 0.199 tonnes of dead fishes in Lam Tsuen River and Tai Po River in November and December 2018 respectively. The relevant information had been set out in TPDC Paper No. EHW 11/2019.

89. Ms. WONG Pik-kiu said that the issue of fish deaths had been discussed at the Agriculture,

Fisheries, Commerce, Industries, Tourism and Recreation Affairs Committee (“ATRC”) and the EHWC, showing that river channel management fell under the scope of work of a number of departments. Sharing her own experience, she indicated that various departments such as the FEHD, the EPD and the Marine Department had helped deal with and follow up on the fish deaths in Lam Tsuen River. Although the departments cleared the dead fishes in different ways, she opined that the general direction of the issue was to address the problem of fish deaths in Lam Tsuen River. However, the number of dead fishes on this occasion was so large that Members specifically requested to discuss it at this meeting. If the FEHD was responsible for clearing the dead fishes, she suggested the department incorporate the work into its work report and continue to report on the issue mainly at the EHWC meetings. Otherwise, the issue should be handed over to the ATRC. She opined that while it did not matter which committee should discuss the issue, there should be a platform for the government departments concerned to regularly report on the clearing of dead fishes in river channels. Otherwise, no government department would monitor the fish deaths in river channels.

90. Mr. LAU Yung-wai enquired whether the response from the department concerned suggested that the reasons for the massive fish deaths in Shing Mun River years earlier and the ones in Lam Tsuen River on this occasion were still unknown. In addition, regarding massive fish deaths, he enquired whether the failure to identify the source and cause of the incident was common and normal.

91. Mr. Francis YAM's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) If there were massive fish deaths in a fish culture zone or fish raft, the AFCD would dissect the dead fishes for tests. He enquired whether the department would also carry out tests if massive fish deaths occurred in river channels or man-made waterways.
- (ii) He was concerned whether the incident was caused by shops connecting sewers to stormwater drains illegally, resulting in sewage flowing directly into Lam Tsuen River. He enquired how many times the EPD had inspected the shops on both sides of Lam Tsuen River and conducted the tests concerned, and whether there had been any situation that required law enforcement actions.
- (iii) In the event of massive fish deaths in river channels, Members would not only inform the departments concerned to clear them, but also like to find out the reasons. If the incident was caused by human factors, such as illegal discharge of sewage into river channels, thus affecting the environmental hygiene and leading to massive fish deaths, the departments concerned should take law enforcement actions.

92. Dr. Joanne LEE responded as follows:

- (i) Factors such as water quality, diseases, red tide, pollution, oxygen depletion and temperature changes could all lead to fish deaths. As fish deaths were not necessarily caused by a single factor, elimination was generally applied during the investigation into fish deaths so as to eliminate certain factors that were clearly unrelated. For example, the department and the EPD had ruled out red tide or water pollution as the causes of this incident.
- (ii) As there were many reasons for fish deaths, and it was difficult to obtain all the information such as the time and location of fish deaths, it was not always possible to ascertain the causes of an incident, and it was also not uncommon that the source or causes of an incident could not be identified.
- (iii) Fishes that had died in river channels would decompose rapidly. Even if they were dissected and tested, there would not be any indicative or conclusive results either. Therefore, the department normally would not collect fish carcasses for tests. As for fish rafts or fish culture zones, the situation was different as the fishermen would inform the department immediately after they had discovered dead fishes. As such, the department would have a general idea about the time and location of the fish deaths, which would help understand the cause of deaths.

93. Ms. Connie LUK responded as follows:

- (i) The EPD had been closely monitoring the mis-connection of sewers and illegal discharge of sewage. In the past six months, it had inspected about 30 premises in the district and found eight cases of mis-connection of sewers (as at the end of 2018). Most of the cases had been rectified. Understanding that the mis-connection of sewers would affect the water quality of Lam Tsuen River, the department would continue to monitor the situation.
- (ii) Upon discovering any illegal discharge of sewage, the department would take follow-up actions as appropriate. However, the department was currently sorting out the cases and could not provide further information at this stage.

94. Mr. MA Hon-chiu said that as the FEHD treated dead fishes as rubbish, the number of sporadic dead fishes cleared had not been counted separately in the past, and the relevant information had not been incorporated into the departmental work reports either. Given the exceptional circumstances as regards the massive fish deaths in November and December 2018, the number of dead fishes cleared had been set out in the paper concerned for Members' reference. If there were no massive fish deaths, he did not recommend incorporating the number of dead fishes cleared into the report.

95. The Acting Chairman said that the FEHD had also stated the number of dead fishes cleared in Lam Tsuen River and Tai Po River in the past two months in TPDC Paper No. EHW 11/2019.

Therefore, he suggested the department follow this practice and continue to report the number of dead fishes cleared every month in the paper. Meanwhile, the EHWC would continue to follow up on the clearing of dead fishes.

96. The EHWC agreed with the suggestions put forward by the Acting Chairman.

IX. First phase of Anti-rodent Campaign 2019 in Tai Po District

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 9/2019)

97. Mr. MA Hon-chiu went through the captioned paper.

98. Members did not raise any comments or questions.

X. Reports by various departments concerned regarding the street management and environmental hygiene issues in Tai Po District

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 10/2019)

99. The Acting Chairman welcomed all departmental representatives to attend the meeting.

100. Mr. MA Hon-chiu went through the captioned paper.

101. In addition to the regular reports by the FEHD, the Acting Chairman also asked the departments concerned to report on the law enforcement efforts or follow-up actions taken in Lane Square in Tai Po in the past two months.

102. The reports of the government departments were summarised as follows:

- (i) The TPDO co-ordinated a total of two inter-departmental joint operations on 22 November and 20 December 2018 in the vicinity of Lane Square in Tai Po, Heung Sze Wui Square and Kwong Fuk Road, with the participation of the TPDO, the FEHD, the HKPF, the TPDLO, the HyD, the Fire Services Department (“FSD”), the BD and the EPD. During the operation on 22 November, the FSD dispatched fire engines to the scene and confirmed that the fire escape was free of obstruction and allowed the access of fire engines. Meanwhile, the FSD was unable to participate in the joint operation on 20 December due to an emergency rescue operation.
- (ii) The HKPF continued to participate in the inter-departmental joint operations proactively and help various departments deal with street obstruction problem caused by the shops in Lane Square in Tai Po. The HKPF would implement traffic

control measures in Lane Square in Tai Po and step up its efforts to issue fixed penalty tickets to the illegally parked vehicles. It would also issue penalty tickets to the vehicles parked at the same spot for over 24 hours. As regards the number of prosecutions, the HKPF issued 36 and 104 fixed penalty tickets in Lane Square in Tai Po in November and December 2018 respectively for illegal parking and traffic offences.

- (iii) During the two afore-mentioned inter-departmental joint operations, the TPDLO had issued a total of nine statutory notices and warning letters to the shops in Lane Square in Tai Po for setting up immovable decking in public area.
- (iv) The HyD had removed two immovable decking on Kwong Fuk Road near Wan Tau Kok Lane.
- (v) During the two afore-mentioned inter-departmental joint operations, the BD did not find any retractable canopies that required immediate action.
- (vi) Since July 2018, the EPD had been participating in the inter-departmental joint operations, mainly to deal with the noise coming from the loudspeakers at the shops in Lane Square in Tai Po. From July 2018 to the day before the meeting, there were a total of five convicted cases involving loudspeaker noise coming from the shops. Four of them involved shops in Lane Square in Tai Po. During the two afore-mentioned inter-departmental joint operations, the EPD had found several shops suspected of violating the Noise Control Ordinance. The department would continue to follow up on the situation.

103. Mr. LAU Yung-wai said that the FEHD did not issue any penalty tickets as regards illegal shopfront extensions by shops in the vicinity of Greenery Plaza, Chui Wo Lane, Kau Hui Chik Street and Chui Lok Street. He indicated that a few eateries near Beautiful Garden often expanded their business area illegally. One of them even did so every single night and made so much noise that had caused nuisance to the residents. He said that many members of the public had come to him for assistance. He asked the departments concerned to deal with the situation.

104. Mr. AU Chun-wah asked whether the TD could report on the change of the parking spaces in Heung Sze Wui Square.

105. Mr. CHENG Wun-chee said that as regards turning the two goods vehicle parking spaces in Heung Sze Wui Square into private car parking spaces, the HyD had earlier received the works order from the TD. It was expected that the works would commence after the Lunar New Year in 2019 and be completed by the end of March.

106. Mr. AU Chun-wah's comments were as follows:

- (i) Before the meeting, he had walked past the passing bay at the back entrance of

PARKnSHOP in Lane Square in Tai Po, and found about 10 platform trolleys loaded with goods there. While he had no idea whether the shops nearby just happened to be loading and unloading the goods at that time, the goods had been left unattended and had caused serious street obstruction. Therefore, he asked the HKPF to take follow-up actions.

- (ii) Regarding the situation in point (i) above, as the goods were surrounded by refuse handcarts and discarded foam boxes, coupled with a lot of rubbish nearby, he asked the FEHD to take follow-up actions. He opined that the FEHD could institute prosecutions under the relevant legislation, and unclaimed items could also be confiscated or disposed of immediately. In addition, he also saw shopkeepers dumping ice cubes together with other waste such as vegetable scraps into the sewers near the passing bay. Although he was not sure whether they were under the purview of the EPD, he asked the departments concerned to take prosecution actions and deter such misconduct until they no longer took place.
- (iii) He opined that if the FEHD had prosecuted the non-compliant shops involved in the situation mentioned in point (ii) but the situation had not improved yet, it suggested that its enforcement effort was inadequate. He explained that as the amount of penalty was less than the rent for additional shop areas, these shops would rather continue to put the goods on the street. He believed that the deterrent effect would be stronger if the departments concerned issued one or even two penalty tickets every day to increase the operating costs of the shops. To this end, he urged the FEHD to step up its effort.
- (iv) He noticed that the number of penalty tickets issued by the FEHD in respect of illegal shopfront extension in November and December 2018 was greater than ever. However, there had been no significant improvement in the actual situation. Therefore, he hoped that the department would take law enforcement actions more proactively. He indicated that the number of prosecutions remained at less than one per day at present. Although some shops in Lane Square in Tai Po had become more disciplined than in the past, several still refused to make any changes and had turned a blind eye to the relevant regulations. This showed that the law enforcement efforts by the department were not strong enough and improvement was necessary.

107. Mr. LAU Ka-yip noted the information provided by Mr. AU Chun-wah, and the HKPF would step up its law enforcement efforts in the vicinity of Heung Sze Wui Square. In addition, the HKPF issued 35 and 102 fixed penalty tickets in November and December 2018 respectively for the illegally parked vehicles in Lane Square in Tai Po, which showed that the number of prosecutions in December had increased substantially. Nevertheless, the HKPF would continue to step up its law enforcement efforts to improve the situation.

108. Mr. MA Hon-chiu said that the FEHD was responsible for dealing with the goods on pedestrian ways, whereas the HKPF assisted in dealing with the goods on carriageways.

109. Mr. AU Chun-wah said that what was happening now was that platform trolleys with goods had been placed at the passing bay. That was why he asked the HKPF to take follow-up action, and they might even have to discuss with the representatives of PARKnSHOP to find a solution. He understood that the shops had to load and unload their goods. However, they also had the responsibility to put away their items shortly afterwards.

110. The Acting Chairman asked the HKPF to pay extra attention to the above situation.

111. Mr. AU Chun-wah's comments were as follows:

- (i) He circulated several photos at the meeting to show the marketing items of telecommunications companies hanging on some railings in the district. He indicated that the situation at both Tai Po Centre and Tai Po Market was getting more and more serious, and the items were even getting in the way of pedestrians.
- (ii) Given that these marketing items were used by the salespeople every day, he opined that if law enforcement departments put up notices before removing the items, the problem would remain unresolved. Therefore, he urged the departments concerned to come up with a solution.
- (iii) Some telecommunications companies often put their marketing items at the bridge pier opposite Optical 88 at Tai Po Centre. He indicated that the area concerned was one of the blackspots in the district, where marketing items had occupied most of the pedestrian way, and the situation would become even more chaotic on rainy days. Considering that the situation could not be tolerated anymore, he asked the departments concerned to take law enforcement actions.
- (iv) Some telecommunications companies had hung their marketing items on top of the banners of DC Members. Some of them were even hung on the railings designated for DC Members, who therefore were unable to put up their own banners. As such, he asked the departments concerned to come up with a solution.
- (v) A marketing item of a telecommunications company hanging on the fire gate on Kwong Fuk Road had fallen down, occupying part of the carriageway. However, he did not see anyone taking care of these items. Therefore, follow-up actions were necessary.
- (vi) He reported that there were hawkers selling goods on "Yata Bridge". They operated as a syndicate where someone acted as lookouts and exchanged intelligence with walkie-talkies so that the hawkers could pack up and leave before the law enforcement officers arrived. He asked the departments concerned to follow up on these unlicensed hawkers who were involved in illegal hawking.

112. Mr. MA Hon-chiu responded as follows:

- (i) He would forward the photographs provided by Mr. AU Chun-wah to the departmental staff for follow-up actions.
- (ii) The FEHD would try to put notices on the illegally displayed marketing items in the evening and remove them before the salespeople went to work.

113. The Acting Chairman asked the FEHD to pay extra attention to the situation pointed out by Mr. AU Chun-wah, as well as the illegal extension of business area by the shops at Beautiful Garden.

XI. Reports by various departments concerned regarding the clearing of rubbish and sludge in Lam Tsuen River and Tai Po River in Tai Po

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 11/2019)

114. The Acting Chairman welcomed all departmental representatives to attend the meeting for the discussion of this agenda item.

115. At the meeting, representatives of the CEDD, the FEHD, the EPD and the DSD went through the clearing of rubbish and sludge in Lam Tsuen River and Tai Po River. In addition, the Acting Chairman indicated that the MD was unable to send representatives to the meeting. The MD could contact Members after the meeting to follow up on any enquiries.

116. Mr. LEE Siu-man suggested the departments concerned regulate the water flow in Lam Tsuen River in phases so as to clear the rubbish on the river bed thoroughly.

117. Mr. NG Wing-hung indicated that Lam Tsuen River was linked to Tolo Harbour. It was no different from any river channel in general and not equipped with any facilities like fabric dams. Therefore, the works involving draining the river for clearing the river bed would be enormous. Meanwhile, the CEDD also had to consider how to intercept the sea water flowing back from Tolo Harbour to Lam Tsuen River.

118. Mr. CHAN Cho-leung said that the DSD had earlier grown plants spanning 50 metres along the river bed at the midstream and downstream of Lam Tsuen River near Parc Versailles. It was immensely helpful in improving the ecosystem and water quality of Tolo Harbour.

119. Ms. Connie LUK indicated that the EPD would review the situation, and the departments concerned would consider the feasibility of introducing similar arrangements to other river channels.

120. Mr. LEE Siu-man supported the suggestions put forward by Mr. CHAN Cho-leung. He said that the departments concerned had carried out improvement and beautification works for Kai Tak River. The outcome was very good and the river channel truly beautiful. He hoped that the Government would continue to beautify the river channels so as to improve the living environment of members of the public.

XII. Progress report of the Working Group on Tai Po District Environmental Controls

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 12/2019)

121. Mr. CHAN Wing-yiu, Ronald asked Members to take note of the captioned paper.

122. Mr. CHAN Lok-him, Dennis reported as follows:

- (i) Details of the Inter-Departmental Bicycle Clearance Joint Operations (“joint operations”) were as follows:
 - The TPDO carried out four joint operations with the TD, the TPDLO, the FEHD and the HKPF on 15 November, 30 November, 13 December and 21 December 2018 respectively, during which the departments concerned had put up 238, 427, 137 and 194 notices respectively, with 59, 120, 32 and 56 bicycles confiscated respectively.
 - In the above four operations, a total of 111 shared bicycles had been confiscated.
 - The next joint operation was tentatively scheduled to be carried out a few days after the meeting.
- (ii) Details of the trial scheme to strengthen the crackdown on the illegally parked bicycles (“trial scheme”) were as follows:
 - The TPDO worked together with the TD, the FEHD and the HKPF to conduct an operation on 6 December 2018 to crack down on the illegally parked bicycles in the vicinity of pedestrian subways No. NS153 and No. NS154 near Serenity Park and Tai Wo Neighbourhood Community Centre. During the operation, three bicycles had been confiscated, two of which were shared bicycles.
 - The departments concerned expected that the next operation would be carried out in January 2019.
 - Starting from January 2019, the departments concerned would increase the frequency of operations under the trial scheme to about once a month. As regards the locations of the operations, the TD was currently exploring the possibility of extending the trial scheme to the blackspots of illegally parked bicycles near Tai Po Market MTR Station.

123. Mr. KWAN Wing-yip's comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) At the previous meeting, the TPDLO reported that there were 29 abandoned vehicles in the district. Together with another eight found in the past two months and the four that had been dealt with, there were currently 33 abandoned vehicles to be dealt with. He opined that the department's progress in this regard was unsatisfactory.
- (ii) Did the abandoned vehicles refer to private vehicles or goods vehicles in general? Did they include motorcycles?
- (iii) In September 2018, he found five to six motorcycles that had obviously been abandoned on Ting Kok Road near Yee Nga Court and on On Po Lane near Tai Po Police Station. He had written to the HKPF to enquire about the situation. In its reply in October 2018, the HKPF confirmed that all of them were abandoned vehicles, and stated that it would refer the case to the TPDLO for follow-up actions. After receiving the referral, the TPDLO replied that it would arrange for staff to put up notices on the abandoned vehicles within two to three weeks. On the day before the meeting, however, these abandoned vehicles had not been removed yet.
- (iv) Regarding the situation in points (i) and (iii) above, he wondered there were problems with the TPDLO's work flow and progress when dealing with the vehicles that had obviously been abandoned. He would like to know the latest progress made by the TPDLO in dealing with the several abandoned motorcycles mentioned above. He would also like to conduct an on-site inspection with the TPDLO's staff to learn about the situation.

124. Mr. AU Chun-wah indicated that another shared bicycle company had closed down in recent months. He was worried that the shared bicycles of the company would be abandoned on the streets. He said that when he walked past the corner of PARKnSHOP in Lane Square in Tai Po before the meeting, he found several wheel-less yellow shared bicycles on the streets. He opined that one or two inter-departmental joint operations per month alone were not enough. If the situation persisted, the number of abandoned bicycles on the streets would only keep increasing. Therefore, he enquired whether the departments concerned could take the initiative to implement effective and feasible measures to address the problem.

125. Mr. CHAN Cho-leung said that a dozen or so shared bicycles near the crossroad in Tai Wo outside Shui Wai Village Extension Area had tipped over. He urged the departments concerned to take follow-up actions.

126. Mr. Ronald CHAN said that the department had been proactively following up on all matters relating to land control in the district, including following up on the cases that required attention

after Typhoon “Mangkhut” had hit Hong Kong. As such, he hoped that Members could understand the situation. Regarding the handling of abandoned vehicles, motorcycles and other vehicles were treated the same way. The TPDLO would first identify the land status and, if necessary, hand over the case to the departments concerned for follow-up actions. If the case was under the purview of the TPDLO, it would first put a statutory notice on the abandoned vehicle and ask the departments concerned about the registration details of the vehicle. If the occupant did not remove the abandoned vehicle before the deadline set out on the notice, the TPDLO would arrange for its removal. As regards the several abandoned motorcycles mentioned by Mr. KWAN Wing-yip earlier, the TPDLO would take the initiative to contact him after the meeting for follow-up actions.

127. Mr. LO Hiu-fung’s comments and questions were as follows:

- (i) He enquired whether the departments concerned had taken the initiative to send officers to check regularly whether there were any abandoned vehicles, construction waste, illegally parked bicycles and the like on the streets, or whether they would take follow-up actions only after being informed of the problems by DC Members.
- (ii) As the TPDO had reported earlier that more than 100 shared bicycles had been cleared during the joint operations in the past two months, he enquired whether the department had recovered the costs incurred in removing the bicycles from the shared bicycle companies concerned. He pointed out that the FEHD had been putting in a lot of efforts in removing non-commercial publicity materials and recovering the costs from the offenders. Given that shared bicycle companies were business operations, he enquired whether the Administration would recover the costs.

128. Mr. Ken YU said that he had called the 1823 hotline to complain about the illegally abandoned shared bicycles and construction waste, but had to wait for two months before receiving a reply from the departments concerned. He asked whether the departments concerned could provide DC Members with a dedicated complaint hotline so that the processing time of such complaints could be reduced.

129. Mr. Patrick TANG asked the TPDLO whether notices had to be put up for at least 14 days before items that had been illegally abandoned on government land could be removed, and whether the department could send officers to remove these abandoned items after 14 days. In addition, he said that he had earlier written to the TPDLO to call for follow-up actions on the cases. He hoped that the department could deal with the matters as soon as possible.

130. Mr. Ronald CHAN responded as follows:

- (i) The TPDLO dealt with the illegally parked shared bicycles mainly through the joint

operations.

- (ii) The department would put a statutory notice on the illegally parked shared bicycle, requiring the occupant / owner of the bicycle to stop occupying the government land before the specified date (for a period of no less than one full day). Otherwise, the bicycle would be removed in the joint operation.
- (iii) Members could call him if they had to contact the TPDLO on matters relating to land control.

131. Mr. Dennis CHAN noted the various shared bicycle blackspots mentioned above and would take appropriate follow-up actions after the meeting. Where necessary, a joint operation would be arranged at the above locations to remove the illegally parked bicycles.

132. Mr. LO Hiu-fung stressed that it was absolutely normal for DC Members to inform the department of the complaints from members of the public. However, he would be happier if the department could take the initiative to conduct inspections to find out the illegally parked shared bicycles and abandoned vehicles that had to be cleared were located in which part of the district, rather than taking follow-up actions only after receiving complaints from DC Members and members of the public.

133. Mr. Ronald CHAN indicated the TPDLO currently focused on following up on the complaints from members of the public. However, it would also co-ordinate with the TPDO in an attempt to incorporate some of the known blackspots into the joint operations so as to remove the illegally parked bicycles.

134. Mr. MA Hon-chiu responded that he would instruct the frontline staff to report any illegally parked bicycles and abandoned vehicles they had found in the district when performing their duties, so that the FEHD could maintain close liaison with other departments.

XIII. Vetting of district minor works project proposals to be recommended to the District Facilities Management Committee

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 13/2019)

135. The Acting Chairman said that district works proposals had to secure the support of the committees concerned before being submitted to the District Facilities Management Committee (“DFMC”) for consideration. He continued that the Secretariat had received from Members one works proposal which the EHWC had to consider whether to recommend. The proposal had been set out in TPDC Paper No. EHW 13/2019.

136. Members had no questions or comments. The EHWC agreed to recommend the works set out in the captioned paper to the DFMC.

XIV. Reports of working groups

(i) Working Group on Environmental Protection and Optimisation

137. The Acting Chairman, on behalf of the Chairman of the Working Group, reported that the Working Group held the third meeting in 2018 on 20 December 2018. At the meeting, the Working Group agreed to co-organise the “Green promotional stalls” at the Hong Kong Flower Show 2019 with Lok Kwan Volunteer Group, and endorsed the application for DC Funds of \$36,510 by Lok Kwan Volunteer Group for organising activity. He asked Members to support the funding application concerned. If the funding application was endorsed by the EHWC, the Working Group would report on the progress of the activity to the EHWC on a regular basis.

(ii) Working Group on Monitoring of Public Housing Development in Tai Po

138. The Secretary, on behalf of Mr. LI Kwok-ying, Chairman of the Working Group, reported that the Working Group had not held any meetings recently. The Secretariat would inform Members to attend the next meeting after its date had been confirmed.

XV. Applications for DC Funds

(TPDC Paper No. EHW 14/2019)

139. The Acting Chairman invited Members to declare their interests regarding the DC Funds application submitted to this EHWC meeting for vetting as necessary.

140. The Secretary reported as follows:

- (i) Pursuant to Orders 48(9) and 48(10) of the TPDC Standing Orders (“Standing Orders”), a Member had to declare interests if he found that he had direct personal interests, pecuniary interests or other interests in an application for DC Funds under consideration, or had links with the benefitted party or the potential benefitted party.
- (ii) Based on the information collected before the meeting, the Secretariat did not find any Members having links with the applicant organisation. However, in addition to any links with the hosting / partnering / co-hosting organisation, a Member also had to declare interests if he had any direct personal interests, pecuniary interests or other interests in an application for DC Funds under consideration.

141. No Members declared any interests at the meeting.

142. The Acting Chairman said that as the EHWC had agreed at the meeting in September 2018 that it would participate in the “Green promotional stalls” at the Hong Kong Flower Show 2019, the Secretariat had earlier sent invitation letters to about 30 environmental groups and non-government organisations in the district. An open invitation letter had also been uploaded onto the TPDC website to invite organisations and groups to submit project proposals. Subsequently, the Secretariat received a proposal submitted by Lok Kwan Volunteer Group, which applied for DC Funds of \$36,510 for co-organising the above activity with the Working Group on Environmental Protection and Optimisation. For details, please refer to TPDC Paper No. EHW 14/2019. For the purpose of this activity, the LCSD would also provide financial assistance for the applicant organisation on a reimbursement basis, subject to a ceiling of \$2,000. He continued that if Members were satisfied that the DC Funds application set out in the captioned paper was covered under the scope of the DC Funds while benefitting people living, working or attending schools in the district, they could consider endorsing the application.

143. Mr. LAU Yung-wai said that he had seldom seen DC Funds applications submitted by Lok Kwan Volunteer Group. As such, he would like to learn about the background information of the group. As he had noticed on the website of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong that Mr. Clement WOO and Ms. WONG Pik-kiu had participated in the volunteer activities organised by the group, he hoped that they could explain the background information of the group.

144. The Secretary responded as follows:

- (i) According to the information provided by Lok Kwan Volunteer Group, it registered with the HKPF on 10 July 2002 under the Societies Ordinance.
- (ii) Lok Kwan Volunteer Group had previously applied for TPDC Funds for organising activities, including “Lok Kwan Blessing Songs to Parents – Cantonese Opera Appreciation” in 2016 and 2017, as well as “Cantonese Opera Summer Show” in 2013.

145. Mr. LAU Yung-wai enquired whether Lok Kwan Volunteer Group had been the hosting organisation of an activity.

146. The Secretariat responded that Lok Kwan Volunteer Group had applied for DC Funds to organise activities as a hosting organisation. In addition, according to the organisation chart and list of committee members provided by the group, the Secretariat did not find any Members having links with the group.

147. The EHWC resolved to allocate \$36,510 to Lok Kwan Volunteer Group for co-organising

the “Green promotional stalls” at the Hong Kong Flower Show 2019 with the Working Group on Environmental Protection and Optimisation under the EHWC.

XVI. Any other business

(i) Updating Members’ Personal Interest Registration Forms and Curriculum Vitae

148. The Acting Chairman said that according to the Standing Orders, Members were required to register their personal interests once every year. He asked Members to submit their completed Registration Form on Members’ Interests to the Secretariat on or before 18 January 2019 for record purposes and for the public’s reference. In addition, he asked Members to submit their updated resume to the Secretariat by the above due date should there be any changes.

(ii) Installation of Internet Protocol cameras at illegal refuse dumping blackspots

149. Mr. MA Hon-chiu said that the issue had been discussed at the previous meeting. The FEHD had also taken follow-up actions after the previous meeting and relayed Members’ views to the headquarters. In addition, the department would install Internet Protocol (“IP”) cameras at the refuse depots in San Wai Tsai Village, Tai Po Tau Drive and Nai Chung in February 2019 so as to further implement the scheme and reduce illegal refuse dumping.

150. The Acting Chairman said that all of the above refuse depots were blackspots of illegal disposal of construction waste. He believed that Members would support the department’s proposal to install IP cameras at these refuse depots.

151. Mr. LEE Siu-man supported the department’s proposal. Other Members did not raise any comments or questions.

XVII. Date of next meeting

152. The Acting Chairman announced that the next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 13 March 2019 (Wednesday).

153. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m.