

(Translation)

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of
Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (1/24-25)

Date: 25 April 2024 (Thursday)

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Venue: Main Conference Room, Tsuen Wan District Office

Present:

Mr KOT Siu-yuen, MH (Chairman)

Mr TSANG Tai (Vice Chairman)

Mr KOO Yeung-pong, MH

Mr NG Chun-yu

Ms LAM Yuen-pun

Mr CHOW Sum-ming

Mr YAU Kam-ping, BBS, MH

Mr CHAN Chun-chung

Mr CHAN Sung-ip, BBS, MH

Mr MOK Yuen-kwan

Mr FUNG Cheuk-sum

Mr WONG Wai-kit, MH

Mr WONG Kai-chun

Mr CHENG Chit-pun

Mr LAU Chung-kong

Government Representatives

Mr LEE Soeng-him, Sean

Assistant District Officer (Tsuen Wan),
Tsuen Wan District Office

Mr SO Yeung-fung

Chief Health Inspector (Tsuen Wan)1,
Food and Environmental Hygiene
Department

Mr LAM Chun-ho

Chief Health Inspector (Tsuen Wan)2
(Acting), Food and Environmental
Hygiene Department

Ms WONG Fong, Fanny

Senior Environmental Protection
Officer (Regional West)2,
Environmental Protection Department

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat Representatives

Mr LIM Kuen	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Tsuen Wan District Office
Miss LEUNG Wai-ching, Clementine (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Tsuen Wan District Office
Mr LI Hongfeng, Ken	Assistant Executive Manager (District Council)2, Tsuen Wan District Office

Attendance by Invitation:

For discussion of item 2

Mr HO Yiu-wing	Chief Inspector of Police (Operations) (Tsuen Wan), Hong Kong Police Force
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For discussion of item 4

Mr CHAN Cheuk-leung, Marco	Professional Officer 2-1/Joint Office 2, Buildings Department
Mr NG Ngan-kwan	Senior Health Inspector (Regional Joint Office) New Territories West 3, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

I Opening Remarks and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives from government departments to the 2nd meeting of the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (FEHC).

2. The Chairman stated that no application for absence had been received from any Member before the meeting.

3. The Chairman stated that according to the requirements stipulated in the Tsuen Wan District Council Standing Orders, if a District Council (DC) Member found that he/she had any direct personal or pecuniary interests in a discussion item or relevant matters when attending a meeting of the Council or dealing with matters related to the Council, the DC Member should declare the interests. The Secretariat had not received any declaration of interests prior to this meeting. The Chairman enquired whether Members had to make declarations of interests immediately. No Member made a declaration of interests immediately.

II Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the 1st Meeting held on 22.2.2024

4. The Chairman stated that the Secretariat had not received any proposed amendment prior to this meeting. The Chairman enquired whether Members had to put forth proposed amendments immediately. No Member put forth a proposed amendment immediately. Members unanimously endorsed the captioned minutes.

III Item 2: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Paragraphs 4 to 10 of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22.2.2024: On-street Begging and Unlicensed Hawking Activities in Tsuen Wan District

5. The Chairman stated that the representatives from the departments responsible for giving responses were:

- (1) Mr SO Yeung-fung, Chief Health Inspector (Tsuen Wan)1 (CHI(TW)1), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD);
- (2) Mr LAM Chun-ho, Chief Health Inspector (Tsuen Wan)2 (CHI(TW)2) (Atg.), FEHD; and
- (3) Mr HO Yiu-wing, Chief Inspector of Police (Operations) (Tsuen Wan) (CIP(O)(TW)), Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF).

6. CHI(TW)2 (Atg.) of the FEHD responded that the FEHD's Hawker Control Team had stepped up patrols during weekends and holidays and taken enforcement actions against relevant offences. During the period from February to mid-April 2024, the FEHD had instituted one prosecution, issued four summonses and recorded 11 cases of seizure of articles abandoned by hawkers in total. The Hawker Control Team of the FEHD would continue to strengthen patrol operations.

7. CIP(O)(TW) of the HKPF responded that the HKPF had all along been closely monitoring the situation of on-street begging in the district. After discussion at the last meeting, the HKPF had arranged uniformed and plainclothes police officers to carry out high-profile patrols irregularly at various black spots of begging activities in the district to combat such activities. The operations had been very effective and the number of on-street begging activities in the district had been reduced significantly in the past two months. Besides, the HKPF had recently conducted joint operations with the Immigration Department to crack down on begging activities collectively. The HKPF would continue to closely monitor the situation and take necessary actions. The HKPF called on Members to assist in reminding the public not to casually give alms to beggars in the streets so as to combat on-street begging activities.

8. Members found that although on-street begging activities in the district had decreased somewhat in overall terms recently, the problem of unlicensed hawking activities at the section

of the footbridge outside the main entrance of the Tsuen Wan District Council remained rampant. Pointing out that users of the footbridge network would increase with the approach of the rainy season, Members hoped that the departments concerned would pay attention to the above problem and take stringent enforcement actions, especially against illegal activities occurred within the area of the footbridge network.

9. The Chairman thanked the departments concerned for law enforcement, opining that the situation of on-street begging in the district had been improved at present. He also hoped that the relevant departments would continue to follow up the situation of illegal hawking of cooked food by foreign domestic helpers. The Chairman stated that the FEHC would not further discuss the captioned agenda item under the Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

IV Item 3: Concern about the Ancillary Facilities for Food Waste Recycling in Tsuen Wan District

(TWDC FEHC Paper No. 1/24-25)

10. The Chairman stated that the paper was submitted by Mr CHENG Chit-pun. The representatives from the departments responsible for giving responses were:

- (1) Ms WONG Fong, Fanny, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Regional West)2 (SEPO(RW)2), Environmental Protection Department (EPD);
- (2) Mr SO Yeung-fung, CHI(TW)1, FEHD; and
- (3) Mr LAM Chun-ho, CHI(TW)2 (Atg.), FEHD.

Besides, the written reply of the EPD was tabled at the meeting.

11. Mr CHENG Chit-pun introduced the paper.

12. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) a Member opined that the number of food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) was insufficient at present since there were only 21 FWSRBs provided for use by residents in the eight public rental housing (PRH) estates in the district, and hoped that the EPD would increase the number and capacity of FWSRBs;
- (2) a Member noted that some private residential buildings had applied funding from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) for installation of FWSRBs, but the number of FWSRBs installed was quite small in the end. The Member wished to know the EPD's method to calculate the number of FWSRBs to be installed in a private residential building. Besides, the Member enquired whether the EPD would take the initiative to promote the installation of FWSRBs in private residential buildings which had not submitted application to the ECF for funding yet;

- (3) pointing out that the existing FWSRBs were often out of order, a Member enquired whether it was because the public had used the FWSRBs in a wrong way or the models of the FWSRBs were too old. Besides, the Member held that the progress in repairing the malfunctioned FWSRBs was slow. People would dispose of their food waste beside the FWSRBs directly when they were full or unavailable for use, adversely affecting the environmental hygiene. The Member enquired whether the EPD would educate the public on the proper ways of using FWSRBs;
- (4) a Member wished to know the EPD's handling procedures after collecting food waste from the FWSRBs and opined that the environmental hygiene would be adversely affected if food waste was left unattended for a long period of time before collection;
- (5) a Member pointed out that as there were inadequate roadside recycling bins (commonly known as three-colour bins) placed at certain places in the district (such as Ma Wan). It was difficult to encourage members of the public to carry out waste separation and recovery;
- (6) the operation of the newly implemented food waste recycling spots was smooth at the initial stage and staff were deployed to assist in recycling onsite. However, a Member considered that some locations were not suitable for designating as food waste recycling spots in the long run, such as the food waste recycling spot provided at a location adjacent to Castle Peak Road in Sham Tseng, which was in an outdoor setting with no lighting facilities;
- (7) a Member enquired whether FWSRBs could be provided at the refuse collection points (RCPs) managed by the FEHD; and
- (8) a Member pointed out that the public did not have much knowledge of Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1 (O-PARK1) on Lantau Island, thereby requesting the EPD to arrange a site visit for Members who could then deepen their understanding of the facility and relay such information to the community.

13. SEPO(RW)2 of the EPD responded as follows:

- (1) a total of around 40 FWSRBs had already been installed in PRH estates and private residential buildings in the district. The Recycling Fund and the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) had received 14 eligible applications for the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Smart Recycling Bins in Private Housing Estates (the "Pilot Scheme") from Tsuen Wan District in total, among which six applications were approved and 15 FWSRBs had already been installed. Moreover, the EPD had set up five food waste recycling spots in the district. The EPD had also designated food waste recycling points at two RCPs under the management of the FEHD (i.e. Heung Che Street RCP and Luen Yan Street RCP) in the district. Residents and restaurants in the vicinity could bring their food waste to these fixed or mobile food waste

- collection points. The EPD would continue to explore the provision of additional public food waste recycling points at suitable sites (e.g. public markets);
- (2) there were two schemes (i.e. the solicitation theme launched by the Recycling Fund and the Pilot Scheme funded by the ECF) under which private residential buildings could apply for installation of FWSRBs. The maximum amount of funding for each application submitted to the Recycling Fund was \$2.5 million. The scope of funding covered rental, maintenance and repair costs of the FWSRB and its associated system, expenses for providing households with small containers for storage of food waste, remuneration of additional cleaners, expenses for promotional and educational work as well as auditing fee. The maximum duration of a project was 48 months. Applicants were required to provide evidence of support from at least 200 participating households prior to the commencement of the project;
 - (3) the ECC was in support of the Pilot Scheme launched by the EPD through the funding of the ECF. Private housing estates having a total number of more than 1 000 households were eligible for application. Individual housing estates with less than 1 000 households could also submit joint application with neighbouring housing estates. The funding items under the Pilot Scheme included direct supply of FWSRBs to concerned housing estates and regular collection of food waste from FWSRBs by contractors engaged by the EPD. The arrangements would involve neither subsidy nor costs incurred for administration, promotion and auditing. Applicants were not required to provide evidence of support from households. The duration of a project under the Pilot Scheme was 24 months;
 - (4) contractors engaged by the EPD would conduct inspection to FWSRBs on a regular basis. Although there might be mechanical wear and tear for individual FWSRBs due to frequent use, they could usually resume normal operation within 48 hours after inspection by the contractors. The EPD would also remind the contractors to regularly upgrade the software and hardware of the FWSRBs for optimisation. The contractors had also reserved extra FWSRBs for prompt replacement when necessary. If FWSRBs were fully loaded due to malfunctioning or high volume of food waste recycled, cleaners would place traditional food waste bins in purple colour next to the FWSRBs to ensure an uninterrupted service of food waste recycling and maintain environmental hygiene. If property management companies found that FWSRBs were malfunctioned, they might contact with the EPD and its commissioned contractors would then carry out repairs as soon as possible;
 - (5) the FWSRBs with sealed design were equipped with the functions of disinfection and sterilisation, hence the process of collecting food waste was relatively hygienic. FWSRBs were also installed with sensors, which would notify the management of the housing estates concerned through a message when the FWSRBs reached 70% of

the capacity, facilitating the management's arrangement of cleaners to remove the food waste collected therein and place such food waste in sealed containers as soon as possible. This arrangement ensured that the FWSRBs would not cause any negative impact on environmental hygiene and could continue to provide service; and

- (6) to promote food waste recycling in rural areas, the EPD would provide traditional food waste bins with lid in purple colour to villages through the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection. Simultaneously, the ECF would also provide funding for the installation of FWSRBs in villages. The EPD had briefed the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk on the details of relevant food waste collection services and invited various rural committees and village representatives to actively assist in promoting food waste recycling.

14. CHI(TW)1 of the FEHD responded that the FEHD had been in close liaison with the EPD and actively supported the promotion of food waste recycling programmes in the community. Some RCPs under the management of the FEHD could provide space for setting up food waste recycling points for use by nearby residents and restaurants. The FEHD had provided space at Heung Che Street RCP and Luen Yan Street RCP for setting up of food waste recycling points by the EPD, which would be handed over to the contractors engaged by the EPD for operation. The FEHD would continue to review the situations of other RCPs in the district, so as to provide suitable venues to the EPD for setting up more food waste recycling points.

15. The further views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) a Member pointed out that as the total number of households in many small housing estates in the district was less than 200, it would be difficult for these housing estates to obtain evidence of support from at least 200 participating households. Hence, they were unable to apply to the Recycling Fund for funding support for the installation of FWSRBs. The Member enquired whether the EPD would make adjustment to the requirement concerned in the light of actual circumstances;
- (2) as stipulated in the application guidelines for the Pilot Scheme, one FWSRB would be allocated for every 500 households. However, since the capacity of each FWSRB was only 120 litres, the amount of food waste that could be disposed of by each household was very limited. A Member enquired whether the EPD would increase the number of FWSRBs to be allocated;
- (3) a Member was aware that the Pilot Scheme implemented in rural areas could not be applied by village representatives on their own. Instead, applications could only be made upon the invitation from the EPD. The Member hoped that the EPD could provide information on the application for such scheme. Besides, some rural

residential dwellings were scattered over a large area (such as the squatter areas), the Member hoped that the EPD would also accommodate the recycling needs of these residents. The Member also hoped that the EPD would take the initiative to install FWSRBs in rural areas;

- (4) a Member noted that the processing of eight applications for the Pilot Scheme was underway. The households of these housing estates were concerned about whether the FWSRBs under application could be installed smoothly before the implementation of the municipal solid waste charging (MSW charging) in August 2024. The Member enquired how long it would take from submitting an application to installing the FWSRBs;
- (5) a Member pointed out that households of some housing estates wished to have more traditional food waste bins in purple colour placed for back-up purpose, which could be used when FWSRBs were out of order;
- (6) a Member enquired of the EPD whether it would collaborate with the Education Bureau for promoting food waste recycling to schools in the district;
- (7) a Member enquired about how the traditional food waste bins in purple colour were operated;
- (8) a Member enquired whether the households of housing estates could purchase FWSRBs on their own. Besides, there was rumour that it would cost \$3,000,000 to install a FWSRB in a housing estate. However, according to his/her understanding, the rental of a FWSRB from the EPD costed \$2,000 per month only, therefore the Member urged the EPD to clarify to the public and prevent the rumour from spreading in the community; and
- (9) according to a Member's observation, no cleaners would empty the fully loaded FWSRBs during public holidays. The Member enquired whether the arrangement for emptying FWSRBs during public holidays was mentioned in the terms of the contract signed between the EPD and the contractors engaged.

16. SEPO(RW)2 of the EPD further responded as follows:

- (1) currently under the Pilot Scheme, the ECF would allocate an appropriate number of FWSRBs to a housing estate according to the number of its households. The EPD was in consideration of extending the Pilot Scheme to private housing estates with less than 1 000 households and the details would be announced in due course;
- (2) there were two projects under the EPD for promoting food waste recycling in rural areas at present. They included the EPD-led pilot scheme in which the EPD would identify suitable sites for setting up FWSRBs and the funding scheme of the ECF which welcomed applications submitted by village representatives. The EPD would reflect Members' concerns over and individual views on food waste recycling

in rural areas to the relevant sections;

- (3) the funding of the Recycling Fund would cover the remuneration of additional cleaners, while the Pilot Scheme of the ECF would provide FWSRBs and collection service without subsidy to any expenses;
- (4) when the amount of food waste collected reached 70% of the capacity of a FWSRB, the cleaning service contractor of the respective housing estate would receive a notification. The cleaning service contractor would then empty the FWSRB concerned and place the food waste at a proper place for collection by the contractor engaged by the EPD. Timely emptying of fully loaded FWSRBs by cleaners would facilitate the collection of a greater amount of food waste by FWSRBs; and
- (5) as for the provision of FWSRBs, it would not only require the installation of hardware but also the support of complementary services (e.g. the route arrangement for collection of food waste) to facilitate smooth operation of food waste recycling. In this connection, food waste recycling was at present carried out mainly through the schemes mentioned above.

17. Assistant District Officer (Tsuen Wan) of the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO) responded that the TWDO thanked all Members for reflecting their opinions on MSW charging and other environmental protection policies, as well as actively promoting the relevant policies and canvassing public opinions in the community. The TWDO encouraged Members to continue to exchange views with the EPD, and to wait for the EPD's reply with patience while continuing to reflect the public views.

18. The Chairman hoped the EPD would arrange a visit of O·PARK1 for Members. SEPO(RW)2 of the EPD responded that the EPD would follow up the request.

V Item 4: Enhancing the Efficiency in Handling the Water Seepage Cases in Buildings in Tsuen Wan District

(TWDC FEHC Paper No. 2/24-25)

19. The Chairman stated that the paper was submitted by Mr WONG Wai-kit and Mr WONG Kai-chun. The representatives from the departments responsible for giving responses were:

- (1) Mr CHAN Cheuk-leung, Marco, Professional Officer 2-1/Joint Office 2 (PO2-1/JO2), Buildings Department (BD); and
- (2) Mr NG Ngan-kwan, Senior Health Inspector (Regional Joint Office) New Territories West 3 (SHI(RJO)NTW3), FEHD.

Besides, the written reply of the New Territories West Regional Joint Office of the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints (JO) was tabled at the meeting.

20. Mr WONG Wai-kit and Mr WONG Kai-chun introduced the paper.

21. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) the number of water seepage cases in buildings in Tsuen Wan district was quite large, especially for older buildings. A Member was aware that the JO, which was set up by the FEHD and the BD, was responsible for handling water seepage cases in buildings and would conduct investigations in mainly three stages. The JO adopted traditional testing technologies for investigations in general, yet the Member opined that the results were not satisfactory. According to the statistical data submitted by the JO, over 1 000 cases had been screened out among the 2 000-plus water seepage cases received. The proportion of cases in which the source of water seepage could not be identified was higher than that in which the source of water seepage could be identified successfully. For cases in which the JO could not identify the source of water seepage, the Member enquired whether further follow-up actions would be taken for them or such cases would be closed;
- (2) a Member pointed out that the public did not have the relevant professional knowledge in general and had no idea of how to handle water seepage problem. In particular, occupants of older buildings, who were mostly elderly persons, were much troubled by such problem;
- (3) the traditional colour water test used in Stage I of water seepage investigations was not so effective and it often required further assessment by professional consultants before the source of water seepage could be identified, increasing the time required for investigating a case. A Member enquired for water seepage cases in Tsuen Wan district, whether reference could be made to the practice of other districts in terms of using new testing technologies (e.g. infrared thermography and microwave tomography) to identify the source of water seepage. In addition, the Member enquired whether the progress and outcomes of investigations conducted in other districts had improved after using the new technologies for testing;
- (4) a Member was aware that the turnover rate of the JO staff was high and opined that the progress of cases being followed up might be adversely affected if some staff quitted their jobs;
- (5) a Member enquired whether the JO would specify in the contracts signed with contractors the testing methods to be used for investigations. The Member worried that if the traditional colour water test had been specified for use in the contract, contractors might not take the initiative to use the new testing technologies in view of cost implications;
- (6) since the JO would not investigate water seepage reports with moisture content below 35%, a Member enquired whether the abovementioned criterion for launching an

investigation would be changed due to the impact of weather conditions;

- (7) as understood by a Member, the JO might commission a loss adjuster or contractor to follow up a case if the source of water seepage could not be identified after investigation. The Member enquired about the circumstances under which such arrangement would be made;
- (8) a Member enquired about the time required for the JO to carry out investigation at the premises concerned upon the receipt of a water seepage report in Tsuen Wan district and other districts; and
- (9) some members of the public said that after their water seepage cases had been resolved, the problem was later recurred at other locations in the premises. A Member hoped that the JO could continue to follow up such cases.

22. SHI(RJO)NTW3 of the JO/FEHD responded as follows:

- (1) according to the statistical data, there were 1 317 cases screened out amongst water seepage reports received due to various reasons, including the nature of the report was not a water seepage problem, the water seepage problem originated from within the informant's own premises, the informant had withdrawn the report, the moisture content at the location affected by water seepage was less than 35% and the part of the premises affected by water seepage was unauthorised building works;
- (2) water seepage in buildings was generally caused by defective building fabric or installations and their lack of proper maintenance. It was the responsibility of building owners and occupants to properly manage and maintain their buildings, including resolving water seepage problem. In general, if water seepage occurred in private buildings, owners should first arrange their own investigation into the cause of seepage and, as appropriate, co-ordinate with the occupants and other owners concerned for repair works. The cause for water seepage in buildings was complicated. However, in the event that the water seepage condition concerned posed a health nuisance, the JO would follow up the case in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (PHMSO). Water seepage caused by other conditions, such as the penetration of rainwater or leaking water pipes, would not have any public health implications and was not nuisance actionable under the PHMSO. Nevertheless, to expeditiously follow up on cases of continuous water dripping suspected to be caused by leakage from water supply pipes, the JO would, upon receipt of a report of water seepage, refer the case to the Water Supplies Department for follow up and investigation if it was identified that such case involved continuous water dripping (i.e. 20 drops or more per minute) or there was visible leakage of water supply pipes;

- (3) it would take time to complete an investigation due to various reasons including: (i) there were many older buildings and industrial buildings in the district with complicated flat designs, such as alteration of partition, thereby increasing the potential sources of water seepage; (ii) it was necessary for the JO to conduct investigations at numerous flats on the upper floors/adjacent to the informant's flat; (iii) the JO needed to make repeated visits to the flats involved for investigation due to irregularities in water seepage, such as intermittent seepage; (iv) under certain circumstances, the JO had to take a longer time to contact owners of the flats concerned, such as owners having overseas trips and owners of flats in industrial buildings which were used as warehouses; and (v) if the occupant of the flat suspected to be causing seepage did not cooperate and refused the entry of investigating officers into the flat, the JO had to apply to the Court for a warrant authorising the JO staff to enter the premises for investigation;
- (4) the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) was conducting a review of legislative amendments to environmental hygiene-related legislation, including proposals to extend the hours to enter the premises concerned to investigate nuisance and to outlaw non-compliance with the Notice of Intended Entry issued by government officers, so as to enable government officers to enter premises suspected of causing public health nuisance (including water seepage in buildings) as soon as possible to conduct investigation. The proposed legislative amendments, if enacted, would help enhance the efficiency of the JO in handling water seepage cases. The JO would conduct timely review of its resources and manpower for flexible deployment to meet the actual investigation needs;
- (5) upon receipt of a report of water seepage in buildings, the JO staff would measure the moisture content at locations of suspected water seepage to determine whether the situation of seepage required an investigation to identify the source of seepage. Under normal circumstances, the surfaces of concrete and plaster were susceptible to the relative humidity of the surrounding environment. As the ambient relative humidity at rooms installed with water borne facilities (such as bathrooms and kitchens) would generally be higher, the humidity at the surfaces of concrete and plaster would be maintained at a certain level. According to the basic humidity of concrete and plaster as well as the experience of the JO in handling seepage cases, it would be difficult to identify the source of water seepage if the moisture content at the surface of concrete and plaster was below 35%. In this connection, the JO had set "the moisture content of the seepage area at or above 35%" as the criterion of launching an investigation to ensure effective use of resources; and
- (6) although the JO would not follow up cases with moisture content below 35%, it would keep the inspection findings of the cases for future reference. If an informant

found any changes in the situation of water seepage, such as changes in the areas of water seepage or recurrence of water seepage, he/she might contact the JO for launching investigation again.

23. PO2-1/JO2 of the JO/BD responded as follows:

- (1) as Tsuen Wan district was not a pilot district, the JO would adopt traditional testing methods in general when conducting professional investigations on water seepage cases. As regards more complicated water seepage cases, such as those involving water seepage persisted for a long time with high humidity indicated by humidity monitoring, those having signs of deterioration at prolonged seepage locations and those suffering recurrence of water seepage even after the completion of multiple investigations, the JO would also make use of new testing technologies including infrared thermography and microwave tomography to aid the investigation of water seepage in these cases where the sources of water seepage could not be identified by traditional testing methods all along. The JO would continue to make effective use of the new testing technologies for identifying the source of water seepage. It would also promote the use of these new technologies to more districts subject to the availability of the relevant service providers in the market;
- (2) it was more effective in identifying the source of water seepage by using new testing technologies. However, in the case of special circumstances where effective application of these testing technologies was prevented, such as cases involving small water seepage area, concrete spalling at the ceiling affected by seepage and obstruction to testing caused by tile finishes or other facilities (including false ceilings or pipes, etc.) on the ceiling, the outsourced consultants had to resort to conventional testing methods;
- (3) the contract consultants commissioned by the JO would conduct Stage III - Professional Investigation for water seepage cases, and the JO would not refer the cases to loss adjusters for follow up;
- (4) for simple and straightforward cases with the co-operation of the owners and occupants concerned, the JO normally would complete the investigation and testing work and inform the informant of the outcome within 90 working days. If the investigation could not be completed within 90 working days, the JO would inform the informant of the investigation progress in writing;
- (5) there was a time limit for contracts signed between the JO and its engaged consultants. If some consultants failed to complete the investigation of certain water seepage cases within the time limit, the JO would consider commissioning other consultants to continue to follow up these cases which would be accorded priority for handling;

- (6) the JO would use a variety of testing methods for different cases, such as moisture content monitoring of seepage location, colour water test for drainage pipes, ponding test for floor slabs and spray test for walls (using colour water), as well as reversible pressure test for water supply pipes. Infrared thermography and microwave tomography were mainly used to detect the extent of areas affected by seepage and obtain data which reflected the amount of moisture in concrete floor slabs. The JO would also conduct radar scanning survey to locate the position and distribution of water supply/drainage pipes or related facilities installed in floor slabs or walls, as well as make use of static pressure test to measure changes in water pressure inside water supply pipes; and
- (7) water seepage investigation would be conducted in three stages in general. Stage I was Confirmation of Water Seepage Condition, that is, to confirm if the moisture content of the seepage location was found equal to or exceeding 35%. Stage II was Initial Investigation which included colour water test for drainage pipes, reversible pressure test for water supply pipes, and moisture content monitoring of seepage location, etc. Stage III was Professional Investigation which included ponding test for floors, spray test for walls, reversible pressure test for water supply pipes, moisture content monitoring of seepage location, etc. Since September 2023, the JO had implemented a new set of investigation procedures in some districts (namely Wong Tai Sin, Yuen Long, North and Islands) on trial basis. Upon completion of Stage I investigation, Stage II initial investigation and Stage III professional investigation originally to be conducted sequentially would be carried out in parallel to shorten the time for investigation. The JO would review the effectiveness of the new investigation procedures in the second quarter of 2024 and discuss with concerned consultants on matters, such as contractual arrangement and manpower allocation, as well as the capacity of service providers in the market. It would then consider the feasibility of extending the new investigation procedures to more districts after assessment.

24. The further views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) a Member enquired how long it would take to issue a Notice of Intended Entry or to apply to the Court for a warrant for entry under the PHMSO;
- (2) a Member hoped that the JO would strengthen the communication with Members, so that they could have an in-depth understanding of the new testing technologies and be more ready to provide advice to residents seeking assistance;
- (3) for cases in which new testing technologies were only applied to the affected flat without involving the flat suspected to be causing water seepage during the testing process, a Member enquired whether a Nuisance Notice could still be issued to the

suspected flat after the source of seepage had been identified; and

- (4) a Member hoped that the JO would allocate additional budget for services provided by contractors with a view to increasing the manpower and consequently expediting the progress of investigation.

25. SHI(RJO)NTW3 of the JO/FEHD further responded that the JO would conduct Stage II investigation at the flat suspected to be causing seepage on the same day of visiting the affected flat for investigation. If there was no response given from the suspected flat, the JO would issue an Appointment Notice, Notice of Intended Entry and Notice of Intention to Apply for Warrant of Entry one after another, and would try its best to liaise with the occupant/owner of the suspected flat for arranging a date to visit such flat for investigation. The whole process would normally take about one to two months, but it would take more time to process cases involving uncooperative occupants. Once the source of seepage causing nuisance had been identified after investigation, the JO would issue a Nuisance Notice to the person concerned, requiring the abatement of nuisance within a specified period, and would instigate prosecution against non-compliance with the Nuisance Notice.

26. PO2-1/JO2 of the JO/BD further responded that, among the new testing technologies, microwave tomography could obtain data which reflected the amount of moisture in concrete floor slabs and the source of water seepage could thus be deduced. For cases where no water borne facilities were installed above the location affected by seepage or cases which involved multiple suspected flats causing the problem, the new testing technologies could not be applied effectively and the outsourced consultants had to resort to the conventional testing methods for investigation.

27. The Chairman urged the JO to continue to expedite the handling of water seepage cases as well as conduct a trial run of the new investigation procedures and advanced testing technologies in Tsuen Wan district. He also hoped that the EEB would complete the review of amendments to environmental hygiene-related legislation as soon as possible.

VI Item 5: Information Paper

Work Report on Environmental Pollution Control in Tsuen Wan District (1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024)

(TWDC FEHC Paper No. 3/24-25)

28. Members noted the content of the captioned paper.

VII Item 6: Information Paper

Work Report on Environmental Hygiene in Tsuen Wan District

(TWDC FEHC Paper No. 4/24-25)

29. A Member pointed out that, as shown in the paper, there was an increase in the number of complaints about the problem of water dripping from air-conditioners (dripping air-conditioners) received by the FEHD from February to March 2024. However, the number of Nuisance Notice issued was zero. The Members enquired whether it was because of improvement to the situation of dripping air-conditioners or other reasons, and wished to know whether the recipients of Nuisance Notices issued were the owners or occupants of the flats concerned.

30. CHI(TW)1 of the FEHD responded that, as anticipated by the FEHD, the number of complaints about dripping air-conditioners received would start to rise when summer came. As the number of complaint cases about dripping air-conditioners was somewhat small in February and March, the number of prosecutions recorded would also be small relatively. The increase in the number of complaints about dripping air-conditioners from February to March 2024 was not significant. As revealed in the data of 2023, there had been a total of about 1 800 complaints received and about 200 Nuisance Notices issued in the entire summer of that year. Upon identification of nuisance caused by dripping air-conditioners, the FEHD would issue a Nuisance Notice to the occupant (i.e. user of the air-conditioner concerned) or owner of the flat concerned which was the source of water dripping, requiring the person concerned to abate the nuisance within a specified period. Such person might be prosecuted for failing to comply with the Nuisance Notice concerned. According to past experience, most of the occupants concerned would solve the problem of dripping air-conditioners properly. According to the records of the FEHD, a total of 24 cases in the district had already entered legal proceedings in 2023. In addition, the FEHD had invited Members to participate in the publicity activities on regular inspection of air-conditioners cum anti-mosquito campaigns held in areas around Tsuen Wan Market on 30 April, aiming to call on the public to inspect their air-conditioners regularly for early detection and handling of the problem of dripping air-conditioners.

31. The Chairman encouraged Members to jointly participate in the publicity activities on regular inspection of air-conditioners cum anti-mosquito campaigns.

VIII Item 7: Any Other Business

32. The Chairman thanked the FEHD for its efforts in cleansing and pest control. Understanding that Mr LEE King-chau, Senior Health Inspector (Cleansing & Pest Control) Tsuen Wan 1, would soon be transferred to another post, the Chairman commended him for his contribution to Tsuen Wan district over the years.

IX Adjournment of Meeting

33. The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting was scheduled for 20 June 2024 (Thursday) and the deadline for submission of papers was 4 June 2024 (Tuesday).

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat

16 May 2024