

**Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Environmental Improvement Committee  
under the Yuen Long District Council in 2018**

Date : 17 September 2018 (Monday)

Time : 2:30 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Venue : Conference Room, Yuen Long District Council, 13/F., Yuen Long Government Offices,  
2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of Arrival</u>	<u>Time of Withdrawal</u>
Chairman: Mr LEUNG Fuk-yuen	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Vice-chairman: Mr Chow Wing-kan	(3:45 p.m.)	(End of the meeting)
Members: Mr CHAM Ka-hung, BBS, MH, JP	(3:40 p.m.)	(End of the meeting)
Mr CHEUNG Muk-lam	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:30 p.m.)
Ms LAU Kwai-yung	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:45 p.m.)
Mr LEE Yuet-man, MH	(3:05 p.m.)	(End of the meeting)
Mr MAK Ip-sing	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr MAN Kwong-ming	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr SHUM Ho-kit, JP	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr SIU Long-ming, MH	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr TANG Cheuk-yin	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr TANG Hing-ip, BBS	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr TANG Ho-nin	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr TANG Sui-man	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:50 p.m.)
Mr TSANG Shu-wo	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Ms WONG Wai-ling	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:45 p.m.)
Mr WONG Wai-shun, MH	(Beginning of the meeting)	(4:20 p.m.)
Mr YIU Kwok-wai	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:35 p.m.)
Mr YOUNG Ka-on	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Ms YUEN Man-yee	(Beginning of the meeting)	(End of the meeting)
Mr LAM Tim-fook	(Beginning of the meeting)	(3:20 p.m.)
Secretary: Mr MOK Kit-hoi, Winston	Executive Officer (District Council)5, District Office	

In attendance

Mr CHAN Hon-kwan, Senior Liaison Officer (Rural), Yuen Long District

Harris	Office
Mr SZETO Wing-kwok	Senior Environment Protection Officer (Regional North)2, Environmental Protection Department
Mr CHEUNG Pui-chung	District Environment Hygiene Superintendent (Yuen Long), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr NG Ping-tong, Gordon	Administrative Assistant/Lands, District Lands Office, Yuen Long
Ms MOK Ka-yan	Assistant District Leisure Manager (Yuen Long) 4, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr LI Yuk-tsz	Engineer/16, New Territories West Development Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department
Ms TSE Ching	Agricultural Officer (Livestock Farm Licensing), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
The Hon KWONG Chun-yu	

**Item 2**

Mr LEE Pak-ho	Senior Health Inspector (Administration & Development) SD, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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**Item 3**

Mr NG Chi-tat, Mac	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction & Recycling)1, Environmental Protection Department
Dr HUNG Chi-ho, Jack	Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction & Recycling)13, Environmental Protection Department

**Item 4**

Ms IP Yuen-yi	Engineer/Main River 3, Drainage Services Department
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**Item 5**

Mr FUNG Ka-wai	Senior Engineer/Project Management 4, Project Management Division, Drainage Services Department
Mr LIANG King-lok, Ben	Engineer/Project Management 13, Project Management Division, Drainage Services Department

Mr Jeffery CHAN Project Manager, Atkins China Ltd  
Mr TANG Wong-ching Project Engineer, Atkins China Ltd.

**Item 6**

**Question (1) raised by  
Members**

Mr MA Sen-ching Senior Engineer/Yuen Long, Mainland North  
Division, Drainage Services Department  
Mr SZE Chung-ming Engineer/Yuen Long 1, Mainland North Division,  
Drainage Services Department

**Question (2) raised by  
Members**

Dr LOH Lai-ting, Taron Senior Medical and Health Officer (Community  
Liaison)1, Community Liaison Division,  
Department of Health

**Questions (2) and (5)  
raised by Members**

Ms WONG Suk-fun, Housing Manager/YLG6, Housing Department  
Josephine

**Question (8) raised by  
Members**

Mr LEUNG Tai-loy, Senior Environmental Protection Officer  
Derek (Landfills & Development)5, Environmental  
Protection Department

**Absent**

Mr CHAN Sze-ching (Absent due to other commitments)  
Mr LAI Wai-hung (Absent due to other commitments)  
Mr LEUNG Ming-kin (Absent due to other commitments)  
Mr LUI Kin, MH (Absent due to other commitments)  
Ms MA Shuk-yin  
Mr MAN Ping-nam, MH (Absent due to other commitments)  
Mr TANG Ka-leung  
Mr TANG Yung-yiu,  
Ronnie  
Mr TO Ka-lun  
Mr NG Ming-ngok, (Absent due to other commitments)  
Joseph  
Mr TANG Chung-yee  
Mr WONG Chi-wan (Absent due to other commitments)

**Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Members and government department representatives to the fifth meeting of the Environmental Improvement Committee (“EIC”) under the Yuen Long District Council (“YLDC”) in 2018.

2. A new permanent representative of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (“AFCD”), Ms TSE Ching, Agricultural Officer (Livestock Farm Licensing), was welcomed to the meeting.

**Item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the fourth meeting of the EIC in 2018**

3. The above minutes were confirmed by Members unanimously.

**Item 2: Consultation Paper from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department: Introduction of Green Burial (EIC Paper No. 60/2018)**

4. The Chairman welcomed Mr. LEE Pak-ho, Senior Health Inspector (Administration & Development) SD of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”), to the meeting.

5. The FEHD representatives briefed Members on the Paper.

6. Members’ opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) Green burials were growing in popularity, especially among the younger generation, for various reasons, such as insufficient provision and exorbitant prices of columbarium niches, although traditional funerals remained prevalent;
- (2) Members supported green burials, saying it was the trend but relevant memorial gardens and ceremonies should feature different religions to cater for people of different religions;
- (3) Members enquired about how many green burials had been held so far. They feared traditional cemeteries in rural areas might disappear because of the popularity of green burials, saying many Yuen Long residents still preferred traditional burial customs; and
- (4) Mixture of the deceased’s cremated remains scattered in small-sized memorial gardens was against traditional burial concepts.

7. The FEHD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The government introduced green burials as another burial option for the public, with no plans to get rid of traditional burial customs and cemeteries;
- (2) All memorial gardens were located at government-run columbarium facilities; and
- (3) The service of scattering cremains at sea was provided in different religious rituals to cater for people of different religions or beliefs.

8. The Chairman concluded green burials could serve as another burial option for the public. He hoped relevant departments, when necessary, would conduct consultations about green burials at different villages in Yuen Long District, where traditional funeral customs and beliefs remained prevalent.

**Item 3: Item referred from YLDC meeting: Mr MAK Ip-sing, Ms CHAN Mei-lin, Mr WONG Wai-yin, Zachary, the Hon KWONG Chun-yu and Mr TO Ka-lun requested enhancing the promotional efforts of district-based education on environmental protection  
(EIC Paper No. 55/2018)**

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9. The Chairman welcomed Mr NG Chi-tat, Mac, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction & Recycling)<sup>1</sup> of the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) and Dr HUNG Chi-ho, Jack, Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction & Recycling)<sup>13</sup> of the EPD, to the meeting.

10. Members’ opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) Large numbers of recyclable items had been discarded and current relevant policies failed to boost reuse and recycling rates, enhance environmental awareness about the importance of waste reduction or assist environmental protection groups in increasing recyclable materials, although the EPD had actively promoted and piloted a waste-charging scheme, which would be fully implemented in 2019;
- (2) Recyclable materials could not be recovered for recycling effectively because of the limited types of items covered under the existing recycling policy, which was called “Recovery of three types of paper and priority recovery of plastic bottles”;
- (3) Members requested the application requirements of the Environment and Conservation Fund be relaxed to provide funding for more non-profit-making green projects;
- (4) Members suggested encouraging exchange of old things in communities to reduce wastage;
- (5) Members of the public were generally supportive of environmental

protection. The EPD should give priority to the education of waste reduction at source, which was the mainstay of the environmental protection policy;

- (6) It was suggested that the EPD should allocate more space and resources to community groups and environmental protection organisations for undertaking environmental protection activities in local communities;
- (7) More refuse would be illegally discarded in rural areas if the EPD set up on-street collection points there;
- (8) The EPD did not actively encourage local groups or people to take part in greening activities for promoting environment protection in the district;
- (9) The public was less enthusiastic about waste recycling and reduction as the EPD had no clear and defined policy in this regard;
- (10) Members suggested that the EPD should enhance environmental awareness in early childhood education as the existing publicity and education programmes had not enhanced the public's environmental awareness effectively;
- (11) Other environmental protection and waste recovery policies would be more effective if the public's environmental awareness was enhanced and waste was effectively reduced at source;
- (12) Residents were not aware of the need to sort their waste because there was only one waste disposal option in Hong Kong, i.e. landfilling;
- (13) It was suggested that the EPD promote the use of carton packs to carry food instead of styrofoam food containers, which could not break down naturally;
- (14) The EPD did not promote environmental protection effectively with no collection outlets for recyclables or promotion points set up in Yuen Long District, except at Kenswood Court of Kingswood Villas in Tin Shui Wai;
- (15) Members asked whether any application had been made to the District Lands Office ("DLO") for the land use of collection outlets for recyclables;
- (16) Most local recyclables could not be handled effectively because of Hong Kong's immature recycling industry, which was vulnerable to changes in the Mainland's recycling policy; and
- (17) Members said the Government should enforce relevant environmental protection policies and require manufacturers and capable consumers to bear the costs incurred by recycling.

11. The EPD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:
- (1) The Mainland government had been taking steps to implement stringent import standards for recycled materials since January 2018, after the promulgation in July 2017 of the Implementation Plan on Advancing Reform of the Administration System on Import of Solid Wastes through Prohibiting Import of Foreign Rubbish (“the Plan”), under which the import of materials such as household waste plastics and unsorted waste paper was prohibited;
  - (2) With most recyclables in Hong Kong exported to the Mainland because of the undeveloped recycling industry, adjustments had to be made in accordance with the Plan, such as adjusting the practice of sorting and recovering waste at source to ensure compliance with the new Mainland requirements. It was hoped that measures, such as reducing the proportion of impurities in waste plastics and converting them into useful materials, could facilitate recycling;
  - (3) The EPD sought to build a network of Community Green Stations (“CGSs”) in the 18 districts of Hong Kong. CGSs of five districts were already in operation, and those of two other districts would be commissioned at the end of the year. For example, about 180 collection outlets for recyclables had been set up at the Yuen Long CGS alone, with recyclables collected to be sent there for subsequent processing. The public could sort out other types of waste plastics based on the principle of “priority recovery of plastic bottles,” and send them to CGSs for recycling according to instructions;
  - (4) CGSs had regularly hosted activities to enhance the public’s awareness of waste recovery. For example, the programme for exchanging waste for gifts was designed for participants to obtain recycled items and to transfer reusable items to groups or people in need;
  - (5) The EPD had been implementing clean recycling publicity and public education campaigns through various channels, including TV commercials, posters, leaflets and mobile applications;
  - (6) Voluntary green groups in the district could contact the Environment and Conservation Fund (“ECF”) for details if they wished to apply for ECF funding for organisation of educational projects or activities to enhance the public’s awareness and knowledge of environmental protection;
  - (7) The EPD Community Recycling Centre in Yuen Long District was responsible for collecting plastics, glass bottles and electrical appliances while hosting promotional and educational campaigns;

- (8) The EPD became aware of the importance of educating the public and enhancing their environmental awareness, and thus would continue to encourage members of the public to make a few alterations to their daily routines, such as taking environmental considerations into account while shopping, opting for minimal packaging, and using products made from recyclable materials;
- (9) The EPD had launched education and promotional activities on clean recycling at about 210 housing estates, while giving relevant guidance to the public and estate management companies in conjunction with different environmental groups; and
- (10) Opinions about the use of tableware at restaurants would be passed to colleagues responsible for the relevant policies for consideration and follow-up.

12. The Chairman concluded the EIC was supportive of environmental protection, while expressing hope that relevant departments could take into account different needs and opinions of local people. He also hoped the EPD would not set up large numbers of collection outlets for recyclables in rural areas, which could cause pollution to the rural environment.

**Item 4: Matters arising: Mr WONG Wai-shun, MH urged the Drainage Services Department to give an account of the present situation and future arrangements for the pilot greening scheme for Yau Tin Nullah (EIC Paper Nos. 41 and 59/2018)**

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13. The Chairman welcomed Ms IP Yuen-yi, Engineer/Main River 3 of the Drainage Services Department (“DSD”) to the meeting.

14. Members’ opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) The pilot greening scheme for Yau Tin Nullah could be affected by the construction of a hotel near the nullah and the decking of part of it for provision of a pedestrian link, although there had been no specific timetables for the two projects;
- (2) It was imperative to improve the hygiene conditions of the nullah;
- (3) It was hoped that relevant Government departments would undertake regular and effective maintenance of the nullah to ensure its hygiene conditions;
- (4) Vermin were seen climbing out of the nullah along the greening facilities, causing nuisances to nearby residents;
- (5) Members said plants used for greening in different nullahs had not been managed effectively, and requested the DSD to step up their

management;

- (6) It was pointed out that nullahs in Yuen Long District were unfit for growing too many plants as the sewage systems did not function well with no clean water flowing in for a long time. Otherwise, refuse would be piled high there, inviting vermin and giving off foul smell;
- (7) Members hoped that the DSD could set out a timetable for fading out the pilot greening scheme given its unsatisfactory results;
- (8) Members requested the EPD to crack down on pig farms near Sheung Che Tsuen and Ha Che Tsuen, where wastewater discharged had caused Kam Tin River to emit odours;
- (9) It was pointed out that water in rivers near Fung Kat Heung had become murky for a long time because of the suspected illegal discharge of wastewater from nearby pig farms; and
- (10) Stench emitted from the suspected illegal discharge of pig farms in Lau Fau Shan blew towards Tin Shui Wai when wind direction changed, especially in the evening and on rainy days.

15. The DSD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The DSD expressed grave concern about the cleanliness of Yau Tin Nullah and had allocated more resources for regular inspections, cleaning, monitoring, pruning of plants and removal of weeds at the nullah, which would be cleaned more frequently if necessary;
- (2) The DSD would clean the nullah more intensively if necessary, although no complaints had been received so far about the nuisances caused by pest problems in the vicinity of the nullah, which was believed to stem from the illegal discharge of restaurants in the upstream section of the nullah. The pest problems had been referred to the EPD for follow-up;
- (3) The pilot greening scheme proved to be a success after more than four years of implementation; the plants concerned did not affect the drainage capacity, operations and maintenance of the nullah;
- (4) The DSD would act in due course correspondingly when the pilot greening scheme was scrapped to make way for future development plans;
- (5) On 24 August this year, the DSD conducted an inspection with Mr WONG Wai-shun, MH on the greening facilities at Yau Tin Nullah, where plants had been pruned more frequently at his request to make them look nice and clean and to prevent mosquito breeding;
- (6) DSD staff had been deployed to Yau Tin Nullah on a daily basis to clear rubbish; and

- (7) The number of bags of mud for environmental protection would be appropriately increased at the Yau Tin Nullah greening facilities in October this year to cover the concrete surface of the middle part of the facilities, with a view to improving the visual appearance.

16. The Chairman concluded the DSD should also commit appropriate resources for preventing withering of plants, breeding of mosquitoes and accumulation of refuse, in order to reduce the nuisances caused to neighbouring residents.

**Item 5: Consultation Paper from the DSD:  
The First Phase of the Drainage Improvement Works in Yuen Long District (Remaining Works) under Public Works Programme Item No. 166CD  
(EIC Paper No. 54/2018)**

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17. The Chairman welcomed the following persons to the meeting:

Senior Engineer/Project Management 4, Project Management Division, DSD	Mr FUNG Ka-wai
Engineer/Project Management 13, Project Management Division, DSD	Mr LIANG King-lok, Ben
Project Manager, Atkins China Ltd	Mr Jeffery CHAN
Project Engineer, Atkins China Ltd.	Mr TANG Wong-ching

18. The representatives of the DSD and the consultancy firm briefed Members on the Paper.

19. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) The aforesaid works programme for the rural drainage system had been discussed for many years; the backwardness of the system had been exposed during the heavy rains in recent months when flooding occurred in many rural areas because of the overloaded system;
- (2) With the proposed works for improving the rural drainage system to commence in 2021 and to end in 2024 according to the schedule, the progress was considered too slow. The works should be carried out as soon as possible to improve the system and to combat extreme weather events, which were increasing in frequency;
- (3) Members held that the drainage improvement works for the Sung Shan New Village section, which involved only a 600-metre drain, could not improve the drainage system significantly because of the narrow upstream waters of the river. However, they still supported

the existing proposal as they wanted no more delays of the works, after the relevant Government departments turned down their requests to extend the works to the upstream waters of the river, citing a lack of necessity;

- (4) Members requested expeditious implementation of the drainage improvement works, while enquiring whether the existing works involved land resumption; and
- (5) The DSD should take into account the factor of seawater backflows when designing the drainage improvement works, because rivers in the vicinity of Tai Tseng Wai, such as Shan Pui River, were prone to flooding because of geographical factors.

20. The representatives of the DSD and the consultancy firm gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) Land resumption would take place at some villages where drainage improvement works were carried out, but efforts would be made in designs for the works to ensure compliance with drainage design requirements, so as to avoid land resumption;
- (2) The whole works project 4166CD would be carried out in stages to expedite the progress. YLDC's support had been obtained for the first part of the first phase some years ago, with the works to be launched as early as 2020 upon successful acquisition of resources. Design was already underway for the rest of the first phase, but consultation had to be completed first to facilitate the procedures, such as bidding for resources and funding application. Works for the rest of the first phase were expected to commence in 2021 at the earliest; and
- (3) The stormwater drainage system would be designed according to factors related to the works project, such as geographical factors and drainage requirements.

21. The Chairman summed up that the EIC supported the drainage improvement works, and requested the DSD to commence the works as soon as possible in order to prevent flooding in Yuen Long. He also asked the DSD to look at the drainage problem in the upstream section of a river in Sung Shan New Village.

**Item 6: Question (1) raised by Members: Mr SHUM Ho-kit, JP, accorded great attention to the serious flooding in Yuen Long villages (EIC Paper No. 58/2018)**

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22. The Chairman welcomed Mr MA Sen-ching, Senior Engineer/Yuen Long, Mainland North Division of the DSD, and Mr SZE Chung-ming, Engineer/Yuen Long 1, Mainland North Division of the DSD, to the meeting.

23. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) The flooding problem in rural areas was very serious, as reflected by the serious flooding in Pat Heung and the closure of Fan Kam Road for some time in August, when the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal was in force. Pat Heung recorded rainfall of more than 100 mm per hour, compared with rainfall of 70 mm per hour required for the issue of the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal;
- (2) The serious floods in rural areas were attributed to the failure of drains outside villages to tie in with the development of villages, while the drains fixed many years ago by the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") failed to attenuate surging water flows resulting from the dwindling area of agricultural land and weather conditions;
- (3) Drainage improvement works in Yuen Long District would take time to complete after many years of discussion, and did not cover all villages plagued by flooding problems, such as Ping Shan Ha Tsuen and Shan Pui Tsuen, which were hit by massive flooding during the strike of Typhoon Mangkhut. Members asked how the DSD would address the problems;
- (4) Members suggested Hong Kong Observatory ("HKO") consider upgrading its alert system to cope with possible severe rainstorms in some individual areas;
- (5) The way of thinking and the approaches used by the DSD in managing rural drains did not cope with rural development;
- (6) It was difficult to get connected with DSD staff through its 24-hour hotline, and they would probably decline requests for clearing of blocked drains on the grounds of raining even if they were reached through the hotline on rainy days. Members asked how the DSD would prevent flooding;
- (7) An enquiry was made about how flooding in rural areas in August had been caused by flood water that flew back to Deep Bay after being discharged by Shenzhen, and about why fabric dam used by Hong Kong had been ineffective in releasing flood water;
- (8) It was suggested that underground pumps be installed at villages in low-lying areas to pump water up to drains placed at a height; and
- (9) Water could not be drained effectively from many rural areas where

land was filled up and fitted with no standard drainage systems.

24. The DSD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) Surface runoff moving into the drainage system increased when soil permeability reached the limit during the downpour from 26 to 29 August, 2018;
- (2) An unusual rainfall event happened in Pat Heung on 29 August, where rainfall in excess of 200 mm was recorded in a two-hour period. Soil and rubbish washed into drains during the downpour caused a blockage and aggravated flooding;
- (3) Members pointed out that the flood relief channels built in Pat Heung by the DSD some years ago still functioned normally during the downpour and could drain flood water in most areas swiftly. Flooding occurred mainly in Lin Fa Tei and Ho Lek Pui of Wang Toi Shan. Flooding there was more serious because of low-lying locations and defective drainage systems;
- (4) Members said that sea water flew back to coastal areas such as Deep Bay during the strike of Typhoon Hato in 2017, and the methods for dealing with seawater backflows were different from drainage methods;
- (5) The DSD piloted an alert system for storm surge during the attack of Typhoon Mangkhut this year, which was developed in collaboration with HKO and HAD in the wake of Typhoon Hato in 2017. The HKO would notify the relevant departments, such as DSD and YLDO, whenever it found a major storm surge was coming. The YLDO would in turn notify relevant village representatives;
- (6) The YLDO notified village representatives and relevant YLDC Members that a storm surge was arriving during the strike of Typhoon Mangkhut, with large numbers of buildings near Deep Bay located in low-lying areas. Preventive measures were stepped up at the same time with about 3 000 sandbags distributed to villagers in Yuen Long West because of unique circumstances there;
- (7) Main drains in the improvement works for the stormwater drainage system could boost the floodwater discharge capacity and tackle flooding in Lin Fa Tei and Ho Lek Pui of Wang Toi Shan upon their completion;
- (8) The DSD would work closely with other Government departments, including the YLDO and the Highways Department (“HyD”), to prevent flooding;
- (9) The DSD would work closely with HyD while providing it with

technical advice in conducting surveys, investigations and consultancy studies on the possibility of widening Kam Tin Road, where the stormwater drainage system had room for improvement; and

- (10) It was pointed out that the main cause of flooding problems in Shui Tau Tsuen and Shui Mei Tsuen was their low-lying locations, where river water pushed up by storm surges flew in during torrential rain or typhoon. The DSD said it would closely monitor the situation and study the possibility of installing check valves at drainage outlets to prevent river water from flowing back.

25. The Chairman concluded flooding problems in rural areas were very serious and aging drains there could not tie in with rural development. He urged the DSD to upgrade drains in flooding black spots, which did not function well in the absence of any drainage improvement or strengthening works in the past decade.

26. **Questions (2) to (5) raised by Members:**

**Mr CHAM Ka-hung, Daniel, BBS, MH, JP requested the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to step up anti-mosquito efforts, while requesting the Department of Health to enhance measures to prevent and control dengue fever (EIC Paper No. 49/2018)**

**Mr MAK Ip-sing requested strengthening anti-mosquito work in the district to prevent the spread of dengue fever (EIC Paper No. 50/2018)**

**Mr SHUM Ho-kit, JP requested strengthening mosquito prevention and control measures in the district (EIC Paper No. 52/2018)**

**Mr WONG Wai-shun, MH urged for stepping up anti-mosquito efforts in Yuen Long District to prevent the transmission of dengue fever (EIC Paper No. 57/2018)**

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27. The Chairman suggested combining discussions of Questions (2) to (5), saying all the four items were concerned with mosquito prevention and control measures and the prevention of dengue fever transmission.

28. The Chairman welcomed Dr. LOH Lai-ting, Taron, Senior Medical and Health Officer (Community Liaison)<sup>1</sup>, Community Liaison Division of the DH, and Ms. WONG Suk-fun, Josephine, Housing Manager/YLG6 of the Housing Department (“HD”), to the meeting.

29. Members’ opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) was commended for stepping up anti-mosquito efforts, and advised to install more mosquito dispellers in parks under its purview;
- (2) Members opined both FEHD and LCSD should continue to step up their anti-mosquito work in the winter, and that FEHD could request Members to discuss with managers of private land or premises the chances of launching joint anti-mosquito operations with the FEHD to prevent mosquitoes from being driven to private land or premises;
- (3) The DLO was requested to carry out anti-mosquito operations and cut grass (although the DLO said they had done so) more frequently on enclosed government land, where mosquitoes were found breeding in large areas of weeds, upsetting neighbouring dwellers;
- (4) The HyD was requested to strengthen the management of slopes under its purview and step up grass-cutting and anti-mosquito work, while assisting other Government departments in their grass-cutting and anti-mosquito work;
- (5) Members suggested the Government should designate a department, such as FEHD, to coordinate grass-cutting and anti-mosquito operations, saying that any operational delays caused by the different terms of reference of land might create a conducive environment for mosquito breeding;
- (6) Members requested the FEHD to step up mosquito control as mosquito populations tended to surge following typhoon;
- (7) The HyD was requested to step up clearance of blocked drains as their great numbers in Yuen Long Town were prone to mosquito breeding;
- (8) Members enquired about the DH’s role in preventing mosquito breeding and the proliferation of dengue fever;
- (9) Members suggested relevant Government departments resort to tougher measures to require the holders of the private property rights on a large open space near housing estate Residence 88 to eliminate large pockets of stagnant water and weeds and to prevent mosquitoes breeding there, because the space involved the land use rights of both the Government and the private sector;
- (10) Members requested relevant Government departments to apply for a Court permission by invoking the relevant legislation to enter large numbers of ill-managed private land sites in rural areas for mosquito control, where pools of stagnant water and vast amount of weeds served as breeding sites for mosquitoes;
- (11) Anti-mosquito operations in Yuen Long District, backed by the

District-led Actions Scheme led by the District Officer, were considered to be more efficient than those of other districts; and

- (12) A leading Government department was needed to coordinate various departments in carrying out anti-mosquito operations.

30. The DH representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The DH Centre for Health Protection (“CHP”) carried out epidemiological investigations upon notification of a confirmed case of local dengue fever, while informing the FEHD to launch vector investigations and anti-mosquito measures;
- (2) CHP staff would inspect the patient’s home, conduct questionnaire surveys, set up a hotline for identifying any undiagnosed cases and arrange blood tests. Anyone who had visited the patient’s home and related areas and showed symptoms of dengue fever could call the hotline for laboratory investigation or referral for appropriate follow-up actions. The CHP would also put all household contacts of the patient under medical surveillance;
- (3) The CHP conducted seminars on prevention of dengue fever on 30 August this year at Long Ping Estate of Yuen Long and Tin Yiu Estate of Tin Shui Wai respectively, in collaboration with the FEHD and with the assistance of the YLDO;
- (4) The CHP had always given priority to the work related to the prevention of dengue fever, and had carried out a series of prevention and control measures following the outbreak of the disease in Hong Kong this year, in order to heighten surveillance of the situation, upgrade the reporting mechanism, and enhance publicity work for raising the public’s awareness of the risk of dengue fever;
- (5) The CHP would meet with the media to report the latest situation of the outbreak and answer their questions, while at the same time issuing press releases to provide information on the latest development;
- (6) The CHP provided information and locations of the residences and local movements of the local dengue fever cases on a designated webpage for dengue fever to facilitate handy access to information for the public;
- (7) The CHP would also issue letters to doctors, hospitals, institutions and schools to alert them to the latest situation of local dengue fever and remind them to enhance surveillance;

- (8) CHP staff attended a number of inter-departmental meetings and a special meeting of the Pest Control Steering Committee to give details of local dengue cases and risk assessments by the CHP, so that relevant bureaux and departments could keep abreast of the latest developments of local dengue cases and carry out prompt, continuous, intensive and effective anti-mosquito operations to prevent further spread of dengue fever and it from becoming an endemic disease;
- (9) The CHP Port Health Office had been conducting body temperature checks on inbound travellers at any of border control points (“BCPs”) in Hong Kong, with suspected cases referred to medical institutions for follow-up. The Office had also carried out regular inspections at various BCPs to maintain strict standards for environmental hygiene and ensure the adequacy of anti-mosquito measures;
- (10) On the front of public education, the DH had disseminated information and publicity materials on prevention of dengue fever through various channels, including webpages, television and radio announcements of public interest, the Facebook page and YouTube channel of DH, and the GovHK Notifications; and
- (11) The DH had also maintained close liaison with stakeholders, including the HAD, the Transport Department (“TD”), the HD and other government bureaux/departments, as well as district councils, operators of “Healthy City” projects of different districts, NGOs, etc. With their support and cooperation, the DH reported the latest developments and preventive measures against mosquito-borne diseases and strengthened the dissemination of relevant health information.

31. The HD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The HD had strengthened collaboration with various departments through the Pest Control Steering Committee and task forces formed at central and district levels, in order to implement preventive and control measures in public housing estates swiftly;
- (2) The ad hoc working group formed to address the problem had inspected the public areas of housing estates on a weekly basis with special attention paid to manholes, surface channels, ditches, rooftops, podiums, slopes, planters and other places. Workers would be deployed as soon as possible to handle blocked drains and stagnant water whenever they were found. Mosquito larvicidal oil had been sprayed on surface drains and planters in housing estates to

prevent mosquito breeding;

- (3) HD staff would attend ad hoc inter-departmental meetings regularly held by the FEHD and would share cases with departments and stakeholders through the FEHD. To step up its anti-mosquito efforts, the HD would also invite FEHD staff to hold talks at public housing estates and carry out inspections there to update HD staff, property management company staff and cleaners on information about the environmental hygiene of housing estates and on ways to prevent mosquito breeding; and
- (4) In respect of publicity and education, housing estate offices had encouraged members of local communities to take part in anti-mosquito campaigns held at public housing estates, so as to disseminate mosquito prevention and control messages. To prevent mosquito breeding, the HD had been enhancing community education through various channels, such as posters, notices, leaflets, housing estate newsletters, meetings of the Estate Management Advisory Committees, the “Housing Channel”, and the websites of the Housing Authority and the HD;

32. The FEHD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The FEHD adjusted its mosquito control strategies in mid-August after the outbreak of local dengue fever, while at the same time carrying out a wide array of measures according to different situations to demonstrate its concern about mosquito control and the prevention of dengue fever;
- (2) The monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* dropped in August from a high level in July through the collaboration between Government departments and members of the public (e.g., the index dropped from 12.7 to 3.2 in Tin Shui Wai, from 24 to 10 in Yuen Kong, Pat Heung, and from 10.9 to 4.4 in Yuen Long Town); and
- (3) The ovitrap index would be uploaded to the FEHD website at a later time to update the public on the latest developments.

33. The DLO representatives said Members’ views would be relayed to the Land & Vegetation Contract Management Section of the Lands Department (“LandsD”), which was tasked with undertaking weeding and anti-mosquito operations on enclosed Government sites.

34. The LCS D representatives said the department would keep on removing stagnant water and purchasing ovitraps for installation at suitable locations.

35. The Chairman concluded he requested all Government departments to team up to combat dengue fever and prevent its proliferation, and hoped they would work together more closely.

**Question (6) raised by Members: Mr SHUM Ho-kit, JP, Ms YUEN Man-yea and Mr LEUNG Ming-ki requested handling of massive pile-ups of trash at the roundabout of Tong Tau Po Tsuen in Shap Pat Heung (EIC Paper No. 51/2018)**

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36. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) Massive amounts of refuse, mostly large-sized furniture and commercial waste, were piled up at the roundabout of Tong Tau Po Tsuen, Shap Pat Heung, instead of being put inside the refuse collection bins placed there by the FEHD;
- (2) Vehicles could not use the roundabout because of huge amounts of refuse left scattered there;
- (3) The roundabout at Tong Tau Po Tsuen became a popular fly-tipping location after Internet Protocol ("IP") cameras were installed at a former refuse dumping black spot in Yau Cha Po;
- (4) Members suggested that the FEHD install IP cameras at the roundabout of Tong Tau Po Tsuen, Shap Pat Heung and remove the refuse collection bins there to discourage disposal of large amounts of waste there, which posed nuisances to residents nearby; and
- (5) Members enquired how many IP cameras had been installed in Yuen Long South.

37. The FEHD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The FEHD was seriously considering the possibility of installing IP cameras at Tong Tau Po Tsuen lest it would become another illegal dumping black spot, with less refuse dumped at former illegal dumping black spots after IP cameras were installed there;
- (2) The FEHD had installed IP cameras in June 2018 at three dumping black spots including Yau Cha Po, Ma Fung Ling and Fung Kong Tsuen. As fly-tipping at Ma Fung Ling became less serious, the FEHD was considering moving IP cameras there to the refuse collection outlet at Man Ka Yuen, where an average of two tonnes of refuse was dumped every day;
- (3) The FEHD would select three new locations for the second phase of the pilot scheme to install IP cameras, one of which was Pak Sha Tsuen. Despite the effectiveness of the pilot scheme, Pak Sha Tsuen

became a dumping black spot again, where an average of six tonnes of refuse had been dumped every day, after it was known that IP cameras had been removed from there;

- (4) Two other locations for installation of IP cameras were San Wai Tsuen and Ha Yau Tin Tsuen, which were also illegal dumping black spots. While IP cameras would be installed at the three black spots in October, the FEHD would closely monitor the situations of the refuse collection outlets at Yau Cha Po, Ma Fung Ling, and Fung Kong Tsuen;
- (5) Surveillance circuits of the IP camera network would be moved to new dumping black spots where IP cameras would be installed, but it did not mean the IP cameras at former black spots would be removed. Surveillance circuits of former black spots would be reconnected if necessary;
- (6) The FEHD was currently operating six network surveillance circuits in Yuen Long District. It was expected that IP cameras would be installed at about 40 illegal dumping black spots within a year; and
- (7) The FEHD had stepped up education and publicity efforts and posted large numbers of warnings and banners at refuse collection outlets equipped with IP cameras.

38. The Chairman concluded by requesting the FEHD to install IP cameras at refuse dumping black spots in six Heungs in Yuen Long to combat the illegal practice and to prevent other refuse collection outlets and locations from becoming new refuse dumping black spots.

**Question (7) raised by Members: Mr CHOW Wing-kan expressed concern about refuse bins near courier companies often crammed with cardboard and packaging foam**

**(EIC Paper No. 53/2018)**

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39. Members' opinions and enquiries on the issue were summarised as follows:
- (1) The public could not use refuse bins near some popular courier companies as they were always crammed with cardboard and packaging foam and caused sanitation and hygiene problems; and
  - (2) Members suggested that the FEHD request courier companies to provide their own refuse bins for cardboard and foam materials generated from delivery services.

40. The FEHD representatives suggested two ways to cope with the waste generated from courier companies. One was to dissuade and guide the courier companies;

the other was to take rigorous enforcement actions against relevant individuals.

41. The Chairman concluded Members could strengthen cooperation with the FEHD to stop the courier companies from aggravating their nearby hygienic conditions.

**Question (8) raised by Members: Mr SHUM Ho-kit, JP expressed concern that wastewater discharged from the West New Territories Landfill might be illegally seeping into Ha Pak Nai Tsuen areas  
(EIC Paper No. 61/2018)**

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42. The Chairman requested Mr LEUNG Tai-loy, Derek, Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Landfills & Development)<sup>5</sup> of the EPD to the meeting.

43. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) A media report uncovered the incident, saying the Government still used the contractor involved in the aforesaid incident to manage the landfill after it had made blunders in other management facilities;
- (2) Members were of the view that any wastewater flowing into marine reserves and aqua produce farms in Ha Pak Nai, Ping Shan and Ha Tsuen from the adjoining West New Territories ("WENT") Landfill would have undesirable effects on the environment and seafood consumed by the public;
- (3) An enquiry was made about whether the EPD had sufficient evidence to prosecute the contractor for its serious negligence in the wastewater leakage, which stemmed from two sources: the valve for a rainwater collection facility at the landfill, which was not closed properly, and an abandoned gas pipe from the landfill;
- (4) Residents in Ha Pak Nai had been plagued by stench emitted from the landfill;
- (5) Members enquired whether wastewater generated by landfill had been handled, and whether the EPD had regularly checked if nearby rivers and seawater had been contaminated;
- (6) The EPD should have set penalties for the negligence on the part of the contractor;
- (7) An enquiry was made about how the EPD would make compensation for the losses of the aqua produce farms and avoid similar incidents in the future; and
- (8) It was suggested that the EPD conduct regular water sample tests near the landfill.

44. The EPD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:

- (1) The wastewater leakage involved two sources. The first source was the valve for a rainwater collection facility at the landfill, which was not closed properly, while the second came from an abandoned gas pipe from the landfill. Wastewater from the two sources was discharged into the Tai Shui Hang River via a tributary;
- (2) According to the results of a wastewater sample test based on the samples collected in early August (prior to the media coverage) by the EPD Environmental Compliance Division, the contractor might have breached the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (“WPCO”). The EPD was collecting evidence on the case and would prosecute the contractor if there was sufficient evidence;
- (3) It was pointed out that the contractor involved in the incident and the EPD had entered into a number of different and independent service contracts. Other management facilities where mistakes had been made according to the media had nothing to do with the operations of WENT Landfill. The EPD had found no other seepages from the landfill since it was commissioned more than 20 years ago;
- (4) If there was a case alleged of not satisfying contract terms, the EPD would require the relevant contractor to conduct thorough investigations and study solutions. Independent consultants and the EPD would assess the findings of the investigations to decide whether the contractor had breached any contract terms. If there was a breach, it would be reflected in a semi-annual assessment report, and would affect the score the contractor would receive when it bid for Government projects again in the future, and thus the chances of re-appointment;
- (5) The contractor concerned rectified the leakage problem promptly, while the EPD and independent consultants would continue to advise the contractor to cooperate in investigations and supplement relevant information. The EPD would closely monitor the performance of the contractor to ensure compliance with all contract provisions. If violation of any contract term was found, it would be dealt with according to the contract;
- (6) It was pointed out that the EPD staff stationed at the landfill would conduct site inspections on a daily basis and monitor the operations of the environmental mitigation facilities provided by the contractors, such as the dust-controlling sprinkler system, the odour neutraliser, and the vehicle bodies/wheels washing facilities, etc., in order to monitor the contractor performance in operating the landfill;
- (7) The EPD staff stationed at the landfill would check the number of

flies flying at the landfill and conduct site inspections in the vicinity. They would also regularly collect water samples of Tai Shui Hang River and Deep Bay for laboratory tests. The analysis results showed the quality of water in the areas surrounding WENT Landfill had remained stable in the past years;

- (8) There were two water management systems at WENT Landfill, including the rainwater and ground water management system and the leachate management system. The EPD required the contractor concerned to build an impermeable liner system throughout the base of the landfill to prevent the discharge of leachate from the landfill, which would only be discharged into the foul sewers of DSD after treatment and proving to meet WPCO standards; and
- (9) The EPD took water samples from Tai Shui Hang River on two occasions at the end of August for testing. The results of the tests showed that water quality in the vicinity was not apparently tainted. At the same time, the EPD had increased the frequency of regularly monitoring water quality during rainy season from once every three months to twice every month.

45. The Chairman concluded the EPD should make compensation for the residents and aqua produce farms affected by the incident, while requesting the department to ensure no similar incidents in the future or it would lose community support when consulting about the possibility of landfill extension.

**Item 7: Consultation Paper from the FEHD: Briefing Note of the 2019 Lunar New Year Fair in Yuen Long  
(EIC Paper No. 56/2018)**

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46. The FEHD representatives briefed Members on the Paper.

47. Members noted the Paper.

**Item 8: Enforcement activities and prosecution statistics of livestock waste control by the EPD (as at August 2018)  
(EIC Paper No. 62/2018)**

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48. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:

- (1) The AFCD had yet to take deterrent actions against illegal waste discharge from farms, although the EPD had done so; and
- (2) The EPD was requested to take strong enforcement actions against the illegal discharge from a number of farms and pig farms near Tai Kong Po Tsuen, Sheung Che Tsuen, Ha Che Tsuen, and Fung Kat

Heung.

49. The EPD representatives gave a consolidated reply as follows:
- (1) The EPD had been conducting prosecutions against illegal discharges from farms in Tai Kong Po, while actively following up on such cases in Sheung Che Tsuen, Ha Che Tsuen, Fung Kat Heung and Lau Fau Shan; and
  - (2) The EPD would join forces with the AFCD to combat the illegal discharges of farms.

50. The Chairman concluded he hoped relevant departments would keep watch on pig farms near Tai Tong Sha Tsui and Pak Sha Wong Nai Tun, as they gave off bad smell at about midnight.

**Item 9: Yuen Long District Air Quality Health Index for July and August 2018  
(EIC Paper No. 63/2018)**

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51. Members noted the Paper.

**Item 10: Statistics regarding inspections on and warning letters issued to farms in Yuen Long by the AFCD (July and August 2018)  
(EIC Paper No. 64/2018)**

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52. Members' opinions and enquiries were summarised as follows:
- (1) The AFCD gave people an impression that it had given preference to farms which had discharged wastewater illegally as a set of fixed penalties had not been imposed on them.
53. The AFCD representatives said the existing penalties against farms for illegally discharging livestock waste could have a sufficient deterrent effect because their licences could be revoked if the EPD had successfully prosecuted them three times within 18 months.
54. The EPD representatives said the actions taken by the department against farms involved in the illegal discharge of livestock waste could have a certain deterrent effect because the AFCD could determine penalties for the licence of a farm based on relevant information provided by the EPD on successful prosecutions.
55. The Chairman concluded that operating pig farms was a lucrative business and many people were jumping on the bandwagon, but this would have adverse impacts on the environment and residents nearby if the EPD did not step up enforcement action against the illegal discharge of waste from pig farms.

**Item 11: Progress report on environmental hygiene issues by the FEHD (July and August 2018)**  
**(EIC Paper No. 65/2018)**

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56. Members noted the Paper.

**Item 12: Any other business**

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57. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Yuen Long District Council Secretariat  
October 2018