

**Confirmed Minutes of the 45<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Waste Management Subcommittee  
on 10 July 2024 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Prof Dan TSANG (Chairman)  
Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP  
Ms Ada FUNG, BBS  
Mr Eric HO  
Ms Linda HO  
Mr Alex KWAN  
Prof Dennis LEUNG  
Mr Simon NG  
Ms Christina TANG  
Dr William YU  
Ms Karen CHEK (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies:**

Dr Sylvia CHAN, MH  
Prof Alexis LAU, JP  
Dr Raymond YAU

**In Attendance:**

*Non-Waste Management Subcommittee (WMSC) Members*

Prof John CHAI, BBS, JP  
Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP

*Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB)*

Miss Sally SHEK      Executive Officer (CBD) 1  
Miss Glory CHONG    Executive Officer (CBD) 2

*Environmental Protection Department (EPD)*

Mr Kenneth CHENG    Acting Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (Waste  
Reduction)/Assistant Director (Waste Management)  
Mr Mike NG            Assistant Director (Municipal Solid Waste Charging)  
Dr Vanessa AU         Assistant Director (Waste Reduction)  
Ms Joanne YUNG       Assistant Director (Special Duties)

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The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and informed Members that apologies of absence had been received from Dr Sylvia Chan, Prof Aleixs Lau and Dr Raymond Yau.

**Item 1 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 26 March 2024**

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without any proposed amendments.

**Item 2 : Matters arising**

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**Item 3 : Report on the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Demonstration Scheme (ACE-WM Paper 2/2024)**

4. The Chairman invited Members to refer to *ACE-WM Paper 2/2024* which was a summary report on the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging Demonstration Scheme (Demonstration Scheme) provided by EPD.

5. There was no declaration of interest by Members.

6. Mr Kenneth Cheng briefed Members on the observations and outcomes of the Demonstration Scheme as well as the way forward on MSW charging.

*Way Forward*

7. Members understood that the Government had suspended the implementation of MSW charging after considering a bundle of factors including the sufficiency of existing recycling facilities, the prevailing business environment in Hong Kong, the operational difficulties of the frontline cleansing staff etc. While noting the Government's efforts in taking actions to follow up on the matter, Members were disappointed with the suspension. Among the proposed actions which included some existing ongoing items, two Members enquired if the Government had identified specific areas of priority for more focused efforts. Mr Kenneth Cheng responded that EPD would expedite the expansion of the recycling network, especially for food waste, which accounted for around one-third of the MSW disposed of in the landfills in Hong Kong. To enhance public acceptance of the matter, the Government would review and optimise the operation details of the MSW charging scheme with a view to resolving the challenges of different stakeholders, such as the workflow of the frontline cleansing staff and the operational practices of other sectors.

8. Members were worried that MSW charging would be shelved and previous efforts would be wasted if there was no clear understanding of the pre-requisites and action timeline for relaunching the scheme. The Chairman and five Members raised questions on the Government's work plan, prioritised action items, timetable, the pre-requisites for the subsequent implementation of MSW charging and the current state of readiness of the matter. In the hope of implementing MSW charging as early as possible, one of the above Members emphasised the importance of defining and understanding clearly the critical conditions and the level of readiness required for relaunching the scheme so that all parties concerned including the Government could prioritise the resources and efforts suitably to achieve them. Taking recycling facilities as an example, Members opined that apart from indicating the number of additional facilities to be provided in the coming year, EPD should also set the ultimate target for the implementation.

9. Mr Kenneth Cheng shared that the Demonstration Scheme had provided useful feedback and insights to the Government on the challenges encountered by stakeholders in the execution process. Notwithstanding the suspension of MSW charging, EPD had been taking actions to address the different challenges identified during the Demonstration Scheme. Among others, expanding the coverage of recycling facilities, facilitating the collection and handling of food waste and increasing the incentives for the public to practise recycling were EPD's priorities. To better support the collection of food waste, Mr Cheng said that the total number of smart bins in public and private estates would be doubled to reach 1,600 in the coming year. The number of GREEN@COMMUNITY stores would also be substantially increased from the current some 300 to about 800 with operating hours extended to start from 8 am till 9 pm to meet the recycling needs of the public. Mr Mike Ng furthered that EPD would also focus on resolving the technical issues such as clarifying the legal responsibility and reducing the workload of the frontline cleansing staff. He said that the Government would report the work progress to the Legislative Council in mid-2025. The timetable and conditions for relaunching MSW charging would hinge on public acceptance and support and readiness of society. Mr Cheng assured Members that EPD would strive to address relevant issues for refining the scheme.

10. In terms of priority and readiness of the public, a Member shared with Members the findings of a recent research. The Member remarked that the "community" factor was found to be one of the most significant driving forces for behavioural changes. EPD might consider taking this factor into consideration when devising policies and measures for engaging the public. Mr Kenneth Cheng thanked the Member for his sharing and said that EPD would approach him separately to learn more about the study. EPD

11. To keep up the momentum and to show the Government's commitment in providing the infrastructure required for recycling, the Chairman urged that EPD should press ahead with the submission of the legislation on the producer responsibility schemes (PRSS) to the Legislative Council in 2024 as planned. The

Chairman considered it important to have the PRS in place as the Hong Kong market was more driven by regulation. When PRS became mandatory, recycling facilities such as reverse vending machines could be available in supermarkets which would facilitate the public in practising recycling. Mr Kenneth Cheng confirmed that producers of plastic beverage containers and beverage cartons would be required to collect and recycle their products when PRS came into operation after the completion of the relevant legislative process.

12. Noting the positive outcome of the Demonstration Scheme in the business sector, the Chairman and three Members encouraged the Government to consider implementing MSW charging in phases, starting with public bodies and other sectors with higher readiness such as shopping malls, tertiary institutions and other Government-subsidised organisations after reviewing and refining the existing scheme. In particular, one of the above Members suggested that the Government as a whole should lead by example in the initiative and demonstrate the implementation to the general community to pave way for the full relaunch. He added that some companies were willing and ready to implement MSW charging as part of their environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts while the Chairman supplemented that tertiary institutions were also forthcoming in demonstrating the implementation. The Chairman remarked that implementing MSW charging in the business sector could provide business opportunities to relevant stakeholders such as auditing services and bring benefits to the economy as a whole. Mr Mike Ng responded that EPD would review the implementation details and consider the appropriate arrangement in due course.

13. Sharing his observations on the implementation, a Member suggested and another Member echoed that EPD should grasp the opportunity to study in detail the operational issues and smooth out the execution problems and conflicts among stakeholders such as those between the cleansing contractors and the property management companies. One of the above Members reminded that EPD should address timely the issues identified and liaise with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to sort out the waste collection arrangements. Given the technical issues identified in the implementation process, the Member said that EPD should review and consider if the MSW charges should still be levied in the form of designated bags. The Member highlighted that the focus should be waste reduction rather than charging. Another Member suggested that EPD should promote the use of waste carbon calculator to help corporations work out the credits earned through recycling. Mr Kenneth Cheng replied that EPD would review the operational details of different parties with a view to resolving their conflicts or challenges.

### *Recycling Facilities*

14. With reference to the practice in Finland, three Members stressed that convenience and accessibility of the recycling facilities together with suitable incentives were of paramount importance to induce public participation in recycling.

One of the above Members shared that the Government could enhance the accessibility of recycling facilities through partnering with supermarkets or department stores for the collection of recyclables and in return arranging for the rewards collected by the public from recycling to be consumed in the stores concerned. He added that the Government could consider including in the relevant land leases or rental contracts the requirements for supermarkets, department stores etc. to provide recycling facilities in their premises. The Member reminded that the Government should ensure proper handling of collected recyclables by cleansing contractors to instil public confidence in practising and maintaining green habits.

15. Mr Kenneth Cheng responded that EPD had launched the “Waste Reduction and Recycling Charter” to encourage property management companies and owners’ committees to sign and commit to providing accessible recycling facilities in their premises as well as engaging recyclers for proper handling of recyclables collected. He considered that the Charter would help raise the public’s confidence in utilising the recycling facilities in their own housing estates which should be the most convenient for the majority of residents. Dr Vanessa Au added that EPD had been working with FEHD in setting up recycling stores in new wet markets such as the refurbished Aberdeen Market which received very positive responses. For the existing wet markets with space limitations or other constraints, EPD had arranged for mobile recycling spots to be provided near their entrances as far as possible. A Member enquired and Mr Mike Ng supplemented that the Charter applied only to residential premises at the moment.

16. A Member proposed the inclusion of a compartment for the collection of recyclables in all public refuse bins while modern technology could be used to separate the recyclables afterwards. Having regard to the recommendations of the Ombudsman in 2022, Dr Vanessa Au informed Members that EPD had phased out kerbside recycling bins in urban areas in view of their low efficacy. Instead, GREEN@COMMUNITY had been providing mobile recycling spots with staff supervision to ensure the quality of the recyclables collected. Dr Au shared that EPD had been putting on trial some smart recycling bins and the quality of the recyclables collected was found to be satisfactory. EPD would explore to introduce more of those in shopping malls, universities and housing estates to provide convenient recycling channels for the public.

17. Four Members suggested that the Government should incentivise those “top recyclers” at GREEN@COMMUNITY stores through the provision of gifts, additional rewards or other forms of recognition with appropriate promotion to the society to recognise their contribution to the environment. Dr Vanessa Au shared that the choice of redeemable gifts at the stores had been enriched to include new items such as MTR tickets. EPD would continue to explore the possibilities to include other new gift items as appropriate.

18. A Member expressed that EPD should facilitate funding applications for the installation of food waste smart recycling bins in private housing estates. Another

Member echoed and shared that despite the spaces available in the rural area, her village still failed to fulfil the criteria imposed by EPD for the installation of such bins. Dr Vanessa Au responded that the application procedures for food waste smart recycling bins under the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) had been streamlined with reduced requirements since late last year. She said that ECC had already processed about 80 out of the some 200 applications received and EPD would continue to speed up the process to increase the coverage of food waste smart recycling bins in private housing estates.

19. In anticipation of the large amount of food waste to be collected, three Members raised concerns about the adequacy of downstream recycling infrastructure. Dr Vanessa Au explained that O·PARK1 and O·PARK2 had a total treatment capacity of 500 tonnes/day. Together with the 50-100 tonnes/day treatment capacity of slurry in the sewage treatment plants, the existing food waste treatment capacity was adequate to cope with the current need of Hong Kong. Following the increase in the number of smart bins for collecting food waste, she said that EPD would keep a close view of the usage and put in place suitable downstream recycling infrastructure through incorporating the co-digestion function in the new sewage treatment works for food-waste pre-treatment.

20. In response to a Member's question, Dr Vanessa Au advised that O·PARK2 was already equipped with the pre-treatment device to screen out large bones, plastic bags etc. The Member held the view that EPD should strengthen the publicity work to let the public know of the improvement. Dr Au thanked the Member for his suggestion and said that EPD would continue to enrich the content of the promotional videos.

### *Publicity and Public Education*

21. A Member highlighted the importance of interdepartmental collaboration and suggested that EPD should collaborate with the Education Bureau for stepping up green education from kindergarten to university levels.

22. Apart from improving the existing recycling facilities, three Members opined that the Government should also strengthen publicity and public education by illustrating the life cycle and carbon reduction of collected recyclables, in particular the end-products to impress upon the public their contribution in recycling. Dr Vanessa Au indicated that EPD had been showing at GREEN@COMMUNITY stores some promotional videos on recyclable processing and their end-products. In addition, the GREEN@COMMUNITY stores had been providing support services to housing estates with difficulties in sourcing proper recyclers for certain types of items. Dr Au shared that such services had covered around 60 – 70% of the housing estates in Hong Kong.

23. Two Members furthered that the Government should strengthen public education for domestic helpers since they played an important role in household

waste disposal practices. Dr Vanessa Au indicated that EPD had been promoting waste reduction and recycling to different target groups including the domestic helpers through the Green Outreach.

24. Highlighting the substantial resources involved in waste treatment, a Member said that the whole society continued to pay for the relevant cost after the suspension of MSW charging. The Chairman and four Members remarked that the Government should promote and underscore the concepts of “civic responsibility” and “polluters-pay” in publicity campaigns. One of the above Members hoped that the actions to be taken by the Government in the coming time including public education and promotion would better prepare the society for MSW charging in the future. Two Members added that EPD should also promote waste reduction at source to tie in with the long-term national target of carbon neutrality.

25. Mr Kenneth Cheng thanked Members for their comments and said that more promotional and educational efforts would be placed on illustrating the end-products of the recyclables, the “polluters-pay” principle etc. so that the messages could get across to all members of the society.

26. A Member noted and was concerned about the increasing MSW per capita disposal rate. She remarked that EPD should strive to minimise waste generation at source through changing consumer behaviours, and encouraging simple packaging and products with refillable options with a view to tackling the surge in packaging waste from online shopping. Mr Kenneth Cheng remarked that waste reduction at source was one of the key policy objectives and EPD would spare no efforts in this regard. He explained that EPD had published practical guides on packaging reduction tips for different sectors, although it would be difficult to regulate those imported consumer products. Mr Cheng further shared that since the introduction of the plastic shopping bag charging scheme and the new regulation on disposable plastic tableware, there were rather substantial reductions in the relevant waste items indicating that both measures had helped minimise waste generation at source.

27. With reference to the Hong Kong Police Force’s publicity campaign “OffBeat 120 seconds” and the anti-scam mascot “The Little Grape”, three Members suggested that EPD should deploy more on-trend and creative publicity campaigns with a view to maximising their impact on the public and inducing “buy-in” of green behaviours, especially from the younger generation. Another Member added that EPD should engage public participation in sharing creative waste-management solutions such as through competitions. The Chairman further suggested that EPD should leverage on the Internet of Things data such as those collected through the existing smart bins to illustrate the positive outcomes of the public’s participation in recycling and waste reduction. By visualising their contribution in environmental protection through concrete figures, members of the public should have more ownership and incentive in practising waste reduction and recycling. Members hoped that the Government could give a clear message about the way forward so that different parties would know what to expect and get prepared for the work ahead.

A Member considered that EPD should standardise and improve the presentation of statistics and data in future reports by specifying the units of measurement concerned, such as per day or per capita.

28. Mr Kenneth Cheng thanked Members for their support to EPD's waste management work in particular MSW charging and their invaluable suggestions to help refine the scheme. He agreed that publicity and public education among other actions would be critical to the implementation of MSW charging. Leveraging on the enhanced public awareness achieved through the Demonstration Scheme, Mr Cheng assured that EPD would follow up closely on the afore-mentioned measures and collaborate with different organisations and stakeholders to step up the relevant publicity and educational efforts. As the implementation of MSW charging would depend on a bundle of factors including the availability of sufficient recycling facilities, the economic environment for business, the recycling culture in society etc., Mr Cheng indicated that the Government would take all relevant factors into consideration and conduct a comprehensive review on the operational and technical details, mode of implementation etc. in the coming year.

#### *Conclusion*

29. The Chairman thanked the subject team for the detailed presentation. He invited the Government representatives to consider the suggestions of Members and EPD provide an update on PRS before the end of the year.

*(Four Members left the meeting during the discussion of the item.)*

#### **Item 4 : Any other business**

30. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

#### **Item 5 : Date of next meeting**

31. Members would be advised on the date and agenda for the next meeting in due course.

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at around 5:00 p.m.

**Waste Management Subcommittee Secretariat  
August 2024**