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ACE Paper 9/2024

For information on 15 July 2024

Report on the 45th Waste Management Subcommittee Meeting

INTRODUCTION

At the meeting on 10 July 2024, the Waste Management Subcommittee discussed the “Report on the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging Demonstration Scheme”. For details of the subject, please refer to ACE-WM Paper 2/2024 at *Annex*.

KEY DISCUSSIONS

2. While respecting the Government’s decision to suspend MSW charging, Members were worried about the loss of momentum in promoting green practices such as recycling and waste reduction in society. Apart from raising questions on the work plan, timetable and pre-requisites for the subsequent implementation of MSW charging, Members also offered extensive views and comments for improving the charging scheme and sustainable waste management in the long term.

3. In particular, Members highlighted the importance of the Government’s continuous efforts for the preparation of MSW charging through strengthening publicity and public education, expanding the coverage of community recycling facilities, increasing incentives for waste reduction at source and recycling practices etc. Members’ key suggestions are summarised as follows –

Recycling Facilities

- expand the coverage of community recycling facilities by further increasing mobile / fixed recycling points at convenient locations, facilitating the provision of smart recycling bins for food waste in private premises;
- enhance the accessibility of recycling facilities and services, such as 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;
- ensure proper handling of collected recyclables by cleansing contractors and the availability of adequate downstream recycling infrastructure to instill public confidence in practising and maintaining green habits;

Publicity and Public Education

- promote the concepts of “civic responsibility”, “polluters-pay” and “waste reduction at source” to tie in with the national target of carbon neutrality in publicity campaigns;
- illustrate the life cycle and carbon reduction of collected recyclables in particular the end-products to impress upon the public their contribution in recycling;
- deploy more on-trend and creative publicity campaigns with a view to maximising the impact on the public and inducing “buy-in” of green behaviours;
- engage public participation in sharing creative waste-management solutions such as through competitions;
- strengthen inter-departmental collaboration such as with the Education Bureau for stepping up green education from kindergarten to university levels;
- incentivise those “top recyclers” at GREEN@COMMUNITY through the provision of gifts / awards / recognitions with appropriate promotion to the society;

Others

- liaise with the relevant stakeholders including the property management companies, owners committees as well as cleansing contractors to smooth out their difficulties in implementing MSW charging; and
- expedite the implementation of producer-responsibility schemes.

4. Members aspired that MSW charging could be implemented as early as possible and suggested that the Government could consider implementation in phases for selected sectors in society after reviewing and refining the existing scheme, starting with the Government as a whole, public bodies and other sectors with higher readiness such as shopping malls, tertiary institutions and other Government-subsidised organisations.

5. The above key discussions are reported to the ACE for information.

WMSC Secretariat
July 2024



33/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
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ACE-WM Paper 2/2024
For discussion on 10 July 2024

Report on the Municipal Solid Waste Charging Demonstration Scheme

PURPOSE

This paper reports on the observations and outcomes of the Municipal Solid Waste (“MSW”) Charging Demonstration Scheme.

BACKGROUND

2. The bill on MSW charging was enacted before the current-term Government assumed office. To meet this challenge, the current-term Government has been stepping up and making significant efforts in enhancing the recycling network. The Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) has set up collection points at public and private premises with larger amounts of food waste (including food processing factories, markets, cooked food centres, wholesale markets, hospitals, government facilities, tertiary institutions, school lunchbox suppliers, hotels, shopping malls, public and private residential estates, *etc.*) and substantially increased the number of collection points from around 170 in mid-2022 to over 1 100 so far. On collecting domestic food waste, EPD has been installing food waste smart recycling bins (“FWSRBs”) at Public Rental Housing (“PRH”) estates from the ground up since late 2022, and has installed a total of 702 FWSRBs in 90% of the PRH estates in Hong Kong (200 PRH estates) to date. The installation of FWSRBs in all PRH estates is expected to be completed by July 2024. Since late 2023, EPD has also been supporting the installation of FWSRBs in larger private housing estates through the Environment and Conservation Fund. Furthermore, EPD has commenced a trial to collect food waste from street-level restaurants (including setting up food waste collection points at refuse collection points (“RCPs”) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, and areas in which restaurants are concentrated), set up public food waste collection points at government premises (including GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities, RCPs, public markets), *etc.* Through the above measures, the amount of domestic food waste recycled increased significantly from only 1.4 tonnes per day in July 2022 by 43 times to some 60 tonnes per day at present. The overall amount of food waste recycled has almost doubled from about 135 tonnes per day in 2022 to some 270 tonnes per day at present.

3. In addition, the Government has enhanced the speed and efficiency in strengthening the support for waste reduction at source and recycling. The Government has been expanding the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY, which currently comprises about 380 public collection points, increased from around 160 in July 2022. Since mid-2023, EPD has been progressively establishing GREEN@COMMUNITY Recycling Stores in 50 PRH estates, facilitating about 1.2 million residents in recycling. 45 of these Recycling Stores have commenced operation and we anticipate that the number of public collection points across the territory will be further increased to about 500 by August 2024. In 2023, over 26 000 tonnes of recyclables were collected at GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities, which represents a growth of about 30% from 2022 (around 20 300 tonnes). Moreover, we plan to introduce a bill to establish a common legislative framework for producer responsibility schemes (“PRs”), and will gradually make relevant subsidiary legislations to press ahead with the PRs for plastic beverage containers, beverage cartons, electric vehicle batteries, vehicle tyres, lead-acid batteries, *etc.* These PRs will not only help increase the recycling rates of relevant waste (especially waste plastics), but also facilitate the development of the local recycling industry, thereby improving the overall recycling network.

4. Since the implementation of MSW charging would bring direct impact on over seven million citizens in Hong Kong, the Government launched the Demonstration Scheme starting from 1 April 2024 to examine pragmatically, thoroughly and in detail the processes and actual practices of different stakeholders (including waste producers, frontline cleansing workers, waste collectors, *etc.*) in disposal of waste under different settings with MSW charging in place as well as collecting their views, observing their readiness for practising MSW charging, and collating and analysing relevant data. The Demonstration Scheme was ended on 24 May 2024.

MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE CHARGING DEMONSTRATION SCHEME

5. The Demonstration Scheme mainly targeted at groups and types of premises with greater concerns in the implementation, including a total of 14 selected premises comprising of public and private residential buildings, “three-nil” buildings, shopping malls, restaurants, residential care homes, *etc.* The selected premises also encompassed different waste collection modes (*e.g.* refuse collection through refuse chutes or from rear staircases on each floor), recycling facilities (*e.g.* common three-colour recycling bins and food waste recycling bins), management models (*e.g.* management companies and owners’ corporations (“OCs”)) and operation models (*e.g.* subvented or private residential care homes), *etc.* The list of the selected premises is at **Annex I**.

6. During the two-month demonstration period, the Government provided free designated bags (“DBs”) and designated labels (“DLs”) to the selected premises. For each selected premises, there was an EPD designated team

responsible for recording the waste collection processes, operational arrangements, associated problems and issues to be addressed, as well as the awareness of the process concerned among the public, the staff of the restaurants and residential care homes, their levels of participation, views from relevant stakeholders, the waste disposal amount and handling costs, *etc.* This was to facilitate a comprehensive review of the potential problems that may be encountered upon the implementation of MSW charging. Meanwhile, the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration led an Inter-departmental Working Group to oversee the overall work of the Demonstration Scheme and reviewed its outcome.

OUTCOMES OF THE DEMONSTRATION SCHEME

Usage rate of DBs

7. The Demonstration Scheme was largely conducted as planned. The collection rates of free DBs at the selected premises including restaurants, residential care homes and government buildings reached 100%, while those at shopping malls, and public and private residential buildings (including “three-nil” buildings) were around 80% to over 90%. On the usage rates of DBs at the 14 selected premises, full compliance was achieved in general at residential care homes, restaurants and government buildings owing to the requirements of the respective managements, while the usage rate was around 70% for shopping malls in general. For households, the average usage rate of DBs varied significantly from the range of only around 20% to just over 50% in public and private residential buildings to only around 20% in “three-nil” buildings.

Waste disposal amount

8. In terms of the waste disposal amount, there was a reduction of approximately 10% to 20% at some selected premises (including residential buildings, residential care homes, restaurants and government buildings) as compared with that before the Demonstration Scheme, and there was also an increase in the types and quantities of recyclables collected (*e.g.* food waste and glass bottles). But in other selected premises, no noticeable change in the amounts of waste disposed of and recyclables collected was observed. Details of the relevant data are at **Annex II**.

MAJOR FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Questionnaire survey

9. An anonymous questionnaire survey on the Demonstration Scheme was conducted in the third week after commencement of the scheme to collect opinions and experiences of the trial from various stakeholders including residents, cleansing

workers, property management and business operators, with a view to facilitating the Government's comprehensive understanding of the actual situation if MSW charging is implemented, as well as the readiness of the respective groups.

10. To ensure greater independence of the survey, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau invited District Council ("DC") members of the respective Districts to participate in the survey, hoping that they could collect public opinions in a more effective, independent and objective manner than government officials and reflect truthfully the opinions collected to the Government. EPD and the Home Affairs Department assisted in arranging relevant DC members to visit the selected premises to conduct face-to-face interviews with residents of the public and private residential buildings, cleansing workers, staff of residential care homes/restaurants, etc. In addition, given that some residents were unable to participate in the face-to-face interviews during the DC members' visits, questionnaire forms were also put into the mailboxes of all residential units to collect more views. As for the questionnaire survey involving responsible persons of companies and organisations, they were asked to fill out and return the questionnaires according to their way of preference to encourage wider participation in the survey.

11. Through the anonymous questionnaire survey on the Demonstration Scheme conducted at the selected premises with the assistance of DC members, the Government collected views from a total of about 750 stakeholders (including residents, cleansing workers, property management, business operators), and thereby gained a deeper understanding of the situation if MSW charging is implemented and the readiness of the respective groups. The response rate of selected premises for the Demonstration Scheme questionnaire survey ranged from 24% to 100%¹. Details of the figures are at **Annex III**. The views collected in the survey are generally consistent with the observations and feedback learned from the stakeholders by the designated teams of EPD during the demonstration period.

12. The major feedback from various stakeholders is summarised below:

- (1) *Residents (including households of private residential buildings, PRH and "three-nil" buildings)*
- i. DBs are overpriced, adding to the financial burden of citizens;
 - ii. Government guidelines and instructions lack clarity, some households do not understand that the legislative intent is to promote waste reduction and recycling. Publicity and education on waste reduction and proper recycling should be enhanced before implementing MSW charging;

¹ Survey response rates: around 24% for residents of selected premises (public and private residential buildings and "three-nil" buildings); around 65% for tenants of shopping malls; around 77% for cleansing/frontline workers; and 100% for the responsible persons of premises/property management companies/cleansing service contractors.

- iii. Provision of more/enhanced recycling facilities (especially food waste recycling bins) should be arranged first; and
- iv. The difficulties in disposing of oversized waste and the insufficient number of collection points for such items would cause much inconvenience.

(2) *Cleansing/frontline workers*

- i. Most of the workers considered that implementing MSW charging was difficult, would create additional workload and increase work hours, work becoming more complex, bring inconvenience due to change of workflow, which necessitate a long period of time to understand and adapt to MSW charging;
- ii. Publicity and education on waste reduction and proper recycling should be enhanced to minimise the additional work required to rectify non-compliant waste, and avoid conflicts with tenants/residents;
- iii. Cleansing workers can differentiate between compliant and non-compliant waste by the colour of the bags, but ascertaining whether oversized waste is affixed with a DL would be difficult; and
- iv. Some cleansing workers indicated that they would leave the cleansing trade upon the implementation of MSW charging.

(3) *Tenants of shopping malls*

- i. The implementation of MSW charging is a waste of manpower and resources under the current economic environment;
- ii. Provision of more/enhanced educational activities and recycling facilities (especially food waste recycling bins) should be in place first. Otherwise, we would only see an increase in business cost but not the intended reduction in waste; and
- iii. There is no suitable space or spare time during work hours for waste separation and recycling.

(4) *Responsible persons of premises/property management companies/cleansing service contractors*

- i. While additional manpower and higher operating costs would be involved, the amount of day-to-day waste disposal amount could not be completely controlled;

- ii. It would be difficult to monitor non-compliant waste and giving reminders or advice in person may cause disputes;
- iii. Workers would need to use twice as much time to sort out compliant and non-compliant waste, which is a significant increase in workload; and
- iv. DBs are overpriced and dealing with non-compliant waste creates extra work. In the prevailing unfavorable economic situation, this increases financial burden and is unfair to compliant residents/tenants.

(5) *Other observations*

13. The adoption of DBs for waste disposal was fully put into practice at premises including residential care homes, restaurants and government buildings owing to the requirements of the respective managements. The usage rate of DBs for shops in shopping malls reached 70% in general. However, for households in public and private residential buildings and “three-nil” buildings, the usage rates of DBs ranged from only 20% to over 50% and even gradually declined over time despite the free provision of DBs by the Government.

14. In comparison with “three-nil” buildings, residential buildings and public housing estates with property management companies handling waste disposal showed a relatively satisfactory result in terms of the usage of DBs. Since it was the property management companies and the cleansing workers who handled the waste in these buildings, the usage of DBs would not have significant impact on the residents. Moreover, since these buildings with management have been distributing garbage bags to residents regularly and have been equipped with existing recycling facilities even before the implementation of the Demonstration Scheme, there was little difference for the residents in the process of using DBs instead of ordinary garbage bags.

15. From the Demonstration Scheme, we have learned that the prevailing waste disposal practices of residents, the workflow of frontline cleansing workers and the operational practices of tenants, restaurants and residential care homes are deeply entrenched due to the long-standing practice of free waste disposal. When MSW charging is implemented, members of the public and various business sectors, would indeed require some time to gradually change their habits, mind-sets, modes of operation and practices, *etc.*

OVERALL OBSERVATION FROM THE DEMONSTRATION SCHEME

16. In conclusion, the feedback from many residents showed that they considered MSW charging a public disturbance while some considered the charging level as too high and a heavy burden. There were concerns that the implementation of the legislation would lead to more fly-tipping, especially in the vicinity of ‘three-nil’ buildings without property management and in the older

neighbourhoods, causing cityscape and environmental hygiene problems. As for the frontline cleansing workers, most of them reported experiencing a significant increase in the workload and that it was strenuous to handle non-compliant waste not properly wrapped in DBs. They also expressed concerns about the possibility of getting into conflicts with residents or even inadvertently breaching the law once the legislation took effect. Some even mentioned that they would consider changing jobs for these reasons. The management of the restaurants, the tenants and the residential care homes generally expressed that MSW charging would put pressure on the operating costs and suggested improving the design of DBs of larger sizes for easier use and waste wrapping.

17. Food waste accounts for 30% of the total waste disposed of in Hong Kong. The cost of recycling food waste is high, and the number and coverage of existing food waste collection points are inadequate on the whole. Many citizens considered that an easily accessible recycling network was necessary to allow the public to lower their expenses on waste disposal through recycling food waste. Meanwhile, many citizens were still uncertain about the effect on waste reduction through charging by DBs, and believed that requiring each household to purchase DBs for waste disposal would lead to higher consumption of plastic bags, hence contradicting the environmental policy of reducing plastic use.

18. Moreover, quite a number of residents, responsible persons of residential care homes and tenants of shopping malls of the selected premises stated that their premises did not accept oversized waste for disposal. There were also controversies regarding the use of DLs in residential buildings/private housing estates, such as cleansing workers expressing difficulties in checking whether the oversized waste is affixed with a DL; the reasonableness for property management companies to charge additional fees (such as transportation fee) even after the households have used DLs; and whether it would be acceptable to bundle different types of oversized waste together and use only one DL. Members of the public opined that it would be difficult to understand how they should dispose of oversized waste once MSW charging was implemented and considered the measure a disturbance.

WAY FORWARD

19. The outcomes of the Demonstration Scheme, public views and media reports reflect that currently Hong Kong does not possess the necessary conditions to implement MSW charging, and we must vigorously improve the complementary recycling network, and cultivate a green culture in practicing waste reduction and recycling. Although we have suspended the implementation of MSW charging on 1 August 2024, the determination of the Government to reduce MSW has not wavered. We will continue our utmost endeavour to promote waste reduction and source separation in the community.

20. The Government will continue to expedite the expansion of community recycling network, especially for food waste, which accounts for around one-third of the MSW disposed of in the landfills in Hong Kong. We will drastically expand the food waste collection network by installing additional FWSRBs for food waste collection in PRH estates and large private residential estates in Hong Kong, with a target to double the number in one year. As at mid-June 2024, we have already installed FWSRBs for food waste collection in 200 PRH estates and received 207 applications from private residential estates. Moreover, we will set up 100 mobile food waste collection points in various districts in the coming year, as well as collection points at around 100 refuse collection points for use by the general public and restaurants. We will keep a close view of the usage rate of, and demand for food waste collection facilities at different locations. We will accord priority to installing more of such facilities at locations with higher usage rate.

21. On GREEN@COMMUNITY recycling facilities, we will extend their operating hours; increase the number of collection points from currently 200 to 800; and set up additional recycling facilities at suitable refuse collection points. The Government will also study the feasibility of converting electronic GREEN\$ into consumption vouchers so as to enhance the attractiveness of practising recycling.

22. As for private residential estates as well as commercial and industrial (“C&I”) buildings, EPD has implemented The Programme on Source Separation under which more than 2 000 residential estates or buildings and 1 200 C&I buildings have been provided with free recycling bins for waste separation. That said, there is feedback about the mismanagement of these recycling bins where some cleansing workers disposed of the recyclables together with general waste, thus discouraging residents from using the recycling bins. To address such problem and fully tap into this huge recycling network, we have introduced a “Waste Reduction and Recycling Charter” in early June to encourage property management companies and owners committees to sign and commit to providing recycling facilities in their premises as well as engaging recyclers for proper handling of recyclables collected.

23. We have also received suggestions that the Government may expand the provision of free DBs for educating and encouraging the citizens to practise waste reduction and recycling. To this end, since 1 June 2024, we have started to provide 20 free DBs to every PRH households every month for an initial period of six months. This is to facilitate the public to gradually develop a habit of waste reduction at source and make proper use of recycling facilities, through which they should be able to dispose of all their waste with only the 20 DBs without additional garbage bags. Given that the objective of providing DBs is for publicity and public education, it is not necessary for frontline cleansing staff to change their existing way of handling waste.

24. As for private residential estates or buildings, if the property management companies or owners’ committees have signed the aforementioned “Waste Reduction and Recycling Charter”, they will also be provided with free DBs.

Relevant details and application form have already been uploaded to the Hong Kong Waste Reduction website (<https://www.wastereduction.gov.hk/>).

25. To strengthen recycling support, EPD will mobilise the Green Outreach and GREEN@COMMUNITY operators, as well as to seek assistance from DCs and the District Services and Community Care Teams, to continue to educate and encourage citizens to practise waste reduction and recycling in the community. EPD will also collaborate with business chambers, associations from different sectors, schools *etc.* to promote waste reduction and recycling on all fronts.

ADVICE SOUGHT

26. Members are invited to take note of and offer views on the above report on the Demonstration Scheme.

Environment and Ecology Bureau (Environment Branch)
Environmental Protection Department
July 2024

Demonstration Scheme Selected Premises

Premises	Remarks
1. West Kowloon Government Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government offices • About 2 500 employees involved in two buildings, <i>i.e.</i> the South and the North Towers
2. Moon Lok Dai Ha, Tsuen Wan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society • Of all the 4 blocks in Moon Lok Dai Ha, On Ning House is included in the Demonstration Scheme, involving about 450 households
3. Lin Tsui Estate, Chai Wan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed by the Hong Kong Housing Authority • About 300 households involved in the single-block housing estate
4. Genius Court, Kowloon City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners' corporation established • About 140 households involved in the single-block residential building
5. 15 & 17 Pei Ho Street, Shum Shui Po	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 30-odd households involved in the seven-storey "three-nil" building • No cleansing workers employed
6. 58 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Shum Shui Po	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 10-odd households involved in the five-storey "three-nil" building • Cleansing worker(s) employed
7. Uptown Plaza, Tai Po	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shopping mall linked to Tai Po Market MTR station, accommodating about 100 shops and restaurants
8. Chelsea Heights Plaza, Tuen Mun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shopping mall close to Tuen Mun MTR station and Choi Yee Bridge Light Rail stop, accommodating about 50 shops and restaurants
9. New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association Tuen Mun Long Stay Care Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised residential care home for persons with disabilities • Providing 210 attention places, with about 100 staff members
10. Kato Home for the Elderly, Tuen Mun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private residential care home for the elderly • Providing 170 care units for the elderly, with about 70 staff members
11. SC Cuisine, Mong Kok	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese restaurant • Seating for about 90 people
12. Hsin Kuang Banquet Hall, San Po Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese restaurant • Seating for about 600 people
13. Café de Coral (Admiralty Centre branch), Admiralty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast food restaurant • Seating for about 200 people
14. Hong Lin Restaurant, Tai Wai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Kong-style cafes • Seating for about 40 people

Demonstration Scheme
Operational Data and Information collected

Group of Selected Premises	Percentage of DBs collected	Average waste disposal amount (Liter/ day) (amount compared with pre-demonstration period)	Average usage rate of DBs (%)	Recycling situation compared with pre-demonstration period
Public Housing and Private Residential Buildings (about 880 households)	94% - 97%	About 1 500 - 4 000 (about 10% reduction in individual selected premise(s); similar amounts in the rest)	About 20% - 56%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision of food waste recycling bins in individual selected premise(s); similar amounts for other types of recyclables • There were residents bringing recyclables to GREEN@COMMUNITY
“Three-nil” Building (about 50 households)	About 80% - 94%	About 100 - 450 (similar)	About 20%	Not applicable
Shopping Malls (about 155 tenants)	95% - 100%	About 20 000 (similar)	About 70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in recycling amount of food waste and new provision of glass bottle recycling bins in individual selected premise(s); similar amounts for other types of recyclables
Restaurants (4 premises)	100%	About 600 - 6 000 (about 10% reduction in individual selected premise(s); similar amounts in the rest)	About 80% - 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision of food waste recycling bins and glass bottle recycling bins in individual premise(s)
Residential Care Homes (2 premises)	100%	About 2 600 - 3 500 (about 10% - 20% reduction)	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New provision of three-colour waste collection bins and food waste and glass bottle recycling bins in individual selected premise premise(s); similar amounts for other types of recyclables

Group of Selected Premises	Percentage of DBs collected	Average waste disposal amount (Liter/ day) (amount compared with pre-demonstration period)	Average usage rate of DBs (%)	Recycling situation compared with pre-demonstration period
Government Buildings	100%	About 18 000 (about 10% reduction)	100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling categories expanded from five types (waste paper, plastic, metal, glass bottles, and rechargeable batteries) to eight types (with the addition of regulated Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment, fluorescent/energy-saving light tubes and small appliances)

Detailed Data of the Questionnaire Survey

Residents of selected premises

1. According to the questionnaire survey findings for **residents of public housing, private residential buildings and “three-nil” buildings**, 94%² of the resident respondents indicated that they collected designated bags (“DBs”). Among these respondents, **60%** reported using **DBs every time or frequently** and 20% reported using them sometimes, while about 15% rarely or never used them.
 - (a) Regarding the **waste disposal amount**, 70% of the resident respondents indicated no change and about 20% reported a slight or significant decrease, while less than 10% advised a slight or significant increase;
 - (b) As for the **adequacy of recycling facilities** near their homes, nearly 40% of the resident respondents considered them adequate, 25% moderately so and 35% inadequate or very inadequate. Only about 30% of the respondents indicated that they slightly or substantially increased the amount of recyclables due to the Demonstration Scheme, while 60% reported no change;
 - (c) On the **compliance with MSW charging**, about 45% believed it to be **difficult or very difficult**, about 40% moderately so and about 15% easy or very easy; and
 - (d) On **taking in lifestyle changes/the implementation details of MSW charging**, about 60% of the resident respondents indicated that more time was needed or much needed and 20% gave no strong view, while about 20% reported no need or absolutely no need for more time. Among these respondents, about 20% considered a year or more necessary, about 20% one to two years, about 10% three to four years and about 20% four years or more, while the remaining 30% did not respond.

² There were 6% of them not having participated in the Demonstration Scheme for reasons of: being mistaken that DBs were charged under the Demonstration Scheme and therefore it was a waste of money to them; intending to be environmental by using up the existing stock of refuse bags before joining; having no spare time to participate; being unaware of or unclear about it due to the lack of publicity; being mistaken that MSW charge would not take effect until 1 August and unaware of/unclear about the policies concerned; being out of town/unwilling to participate for the troubles.

2. The major views and suggestions of the residents are summarised below:
- (a) DBs are overpriced, adding to the financial burden of the citizens;
 - (b) It is suggested that MSW charging should be called off or the community should be given time to have thorough understanding and get fully prepared, and that it would be unsuitable to implement MSW charging on 1 August as scheduled;
 - (c) Government guidelines and instructions lack clarity, the households do not understand the legislative intent to promote waste reduction and recycling. Publicity and public education on waste reduction and proper recycling should be enhanced before implementing MSW charging;
 - (d) Provision of more/enhanced recycling facilities (especially for food waste recycling bins) should be arranged first;
 - (e) It is even worst for the environment to use DBs for waste disposal (*e.g.* multiple bags for wrapping waste). It is suggested that plastic bags obtained from shopping or buying takeaways should be allowed for waste disposal purpose so as not to waste them;
 - (f) The difficulties in disposing of oversized waste and the insufficient number of collection points for such items cause great inconvenience;
 - (g) MSW charging is so complex in operation that it is difficult for cleansing workers to trace the origin of non-compliant waste/that it adds to the workload of the cleansing workers;
 - (h) It is doubtful whether any monitoring mechanism is in place for the enforcement of MSW charging. Where there is no monitoring of waste separation and recycling, there is no enforcement; and
 - (i) Residents of “three-nil” buildings are particularly concerned about enforcement issues as they worry that some tenants may dispose of their wastes on rooftops or stairways to the detriment of environmental hygiene.

Cleansing/frontline workers of selected premises

3. **Cleansing workers of residential buildings** – a total of 13 cleansing workers (including two temporary cleansing workers of the “three-nil” building) interviewed
- (a) Two respondents stated that they **would leave the cleansing trade** after the implementation of MSW charging, while others would stay on;
 - (b) Most respondents stated that implementing MSW charging was difficult, would create **additional workload and increase work hours, work becoming more complex, bring inconvenience due to change of workflow**, which necessitate

a long period of time to understand and adapt to MSW charging;

- (c) A majority of views focused on the workload, indicating the requirement of **double the time** to complete routine procedures after the implementation of MSW charging, and the difficulties in requiring households to comply with MSW charging; and
 - (d) Some cleansing workers particularly pointed out that they mostly lived in the residential estate concerned or in its vicinity, so they would not report non-compliant cases even after the implementation of MSW charging lest conflicts arise between residents, which would complicate their job.
4. **Cleansing workers of residential care homes** – a total of 10 cleansing staff members interviewed
- (a) One respondent stated that he/she **would leave the cleansing trade** after the implementation of MSW charging, while others would stay on;
 - (b) Four respondents stated that implementing MSW charging was difficult and would affect the daily workflow mainly because **it would create additional workload and increase work hours and work becoming more complex**, which necessitate a long period of time to understand and adapt to MSW charging. However, the other six respondents stated that the impact of MSW charging on their daily work would not be significant; and
 - (c) Staff members of a residential care home hoped for more recycling facilities, including food waste recycling bins and three-colour bins. In addition, three cleansing workers suggested that MSW charging should not be implemented.
5. **Cleansing staff of shopping malls** – a total of 15 cleansing workers interviewed
- (a) One respondent stated that he/she **would leave the cleansing trade** after the implementation of MSW charging, while others would stay on;
 - (b) **Most respondents stated that implementing MSW charging was difficult, would greatly affect the daily workflow mainly because it would create additional workload, work becoming more complex, and bring inconvenience due to change of workflow;**
 - (c) A majority of views focused on the education for tenants. If the tenants can do properly in wrapping waste with DBs, waste separation and clean recycling, it would help reduce additional work to “rectify the non-compliant waste” and avoid conflicts with tenants. Even if the cleansing workers are familiar with the workflow, it would still require the full understanding and compliance of tenants to give support to the implementation of MSW charging. Otherwise, it would only make the life of frontline cleansing workers difficult; and

- (d) The respondents also suggested improving the design of DBs to facilitate people to securely fasten bag openings.
6. **Cleansing workers of government offices** – a total of 36 cleansing workers interviewed
- (a) All cleansing workers stated that implementing MSW charging was not difficult and would continue working in the cleansing trade after its implementation. Moreover, they did not perceive their work becoming complex, inconvenience or additional workload thereafter; and
- (b) Among them, 34 cleansing workers reported having adapted to the operations concerned. Their major views focused on issues with the use and design of DBs, such as the technical details related to DBs for the shallow height, the difficulty in fastening the opening and the narrow bottom.
7. **Frontline staff of the catering premises** - a total of 11 restaurants staff were interviewed
- (a) Nine of them stated that **implementing MSW charging was difficult**;
- (b) Some staff of the restaurants said that DBs and the usual refuse bags were similar in using, so they only needed to use DBs instead of the usual refuse bags when going about the work. Therefore, the regular **workflow changes were insignificant**;
- (c) Some staff of the restaurants expressed that **waste separation was very troublesome**, greatly adding to their workload. For example, some solely tasked with dish-washing and waste disposal were therefore given additional duties such as separating food waste, glasses and aluminium cans. Moreover, food waste being heavier and containing sharp objects like fish bones would easily cause stabbing to their hands and punctures to DBs;
- (d) Some staff of the restaurants indicated that food waste recycling was not dealt with much attention in the past. During the Demonstration Scheme period, food waste separation was handled in a more proper and detailed way. As a result, the amount of food waste recycled was about half again as much; and
- (e) Some staff of the restaurants saw MSW charging as the cause of increases in workload to frontline workers and in business costs, so they called for its withdrawal.

Tenants of selected shopping malls

8. The findings of the questionnaire survey with tenants of the shopping malls revealed that 96% of the respondents indicated having collected DBs. Among them, **70% used DBs for waste disposal every time or very often** and about 15% only occasionally, while about 10% seldom or never used them.
- (a) Regarding the **amount of waste disposal**, about 60% of the tenant respondents reported no changes, while about 20% indicated a slight or substantial decrease and the remaining 20% a slight or substantial increase;
 - (b) As for **waste separation facilities in the shopping malls**, about 30% of the tenant respondents considered the provision sufficient and about 50% considered it fair, while the remaining 20% considered it insufficient. Only about 20% of the tenant respondents indicated that the amount of recyclables was slightly or substantially increased because of the Demonstration Scheme and 70% experienced no changes;
 - (c) On **the compliance with MSW charging**, 60% of the tenant respondents considered it difficult and very difficult and about 30% considered it fair, while 10% deemed it easy or very easy; and
 - (d) On **taking in lifestyle changes/the implementation details of MSW charging**, about 60% of the tenant respondents indicated that more time was needed or much needed and about 10% gave no strong view, while 25% reported no need or absolutely no need for more time. Among these respondents, about 20% considered half a year or more necessary and about 20% one to two years, while about 10% three to four years and about 25% four years or more. The remaining 25% or so did not respond.
9. The major views and suggestions of **tenants of the shopping malls** are summarised below:
- (a) They considered that implementation of MSW charging is a waste of manpower and resources under the current economic environment and suggested postponing or calling off the MSW Charging Scheme. At the same time, they considered the implementation of the Scheme too hasty and lacking education, thorough planning and supporting facilities, making it difficult for the general public to follow;
 - (b) Provision of more/enhanced recycling facilities (especially for food waste recycling bins) should be in place first. Otherwise, there may not be a reduction in waste, and expenses for shops could increase;
 - (c) Publicity should be stepped up to educate tenants and staff on how to separate and recycle waste properly;

- (d) DBs are poor in quality, easily worn and not user-friendly. A higher number of DBs are needed compared with the usual plastics bags, which by contrast is less environmentally friendly as more plastics bags are wasted;
- (e) There is no suitable place or spare time during work hours for waste separation and recycling; and
- (f) Plastics bags obtained from daily activities should be allowed for use of waste disposal.

Responsible persons of premises/property management company/cleansing contractor

10. **Public housing** – The responsible persons of premises/property management companies and cleansing contractors found it difficult for them to implement MSW charging mainly for the following reasons:

- (a) **Additional expenditures would be incurred, and the difficulty in ascertaining non-compliant households as giving any reminder/advice in person would cause disputes.** It would be costly to install CCTV to monitor illegal waste disposal. Moreover, giving non-compliant households any reminder/advice in person would cause disputes;
- (b) **An increase of manpower by about 15% - 30% would be necessary under MSW charging.** For the property management companies of housing estates to **cover the expenses on non-compliance cases**; the Government should **provide allowances and subsidies**;
- (c) The cleansing contractors considered that residents should be educated so that legal compliance and waste separation and recycling could be ensured at source. Since frontline cleansing workers are not in the position to directly accuse households of non-compliant acts, there are concerns about lacking sufficient monitoring after the full implementation of MSW charging and the unsatisfactory level of compliance among members of the public; and
- (d) It would be necessary for cleansing workers to spend double the time working to handle the compliant and non-compliant bags, hence a significant increase in workload. They would also be required to spend more physical energy working, which would easily strain their physical strength.

11. **Private Residential Building** – The property management companies and cleansing contractors found it difficult for them to implement MSW charging mainly for the following reasons:

- (a) **It would involve additional manpower, higher operating costs and difficulties in monitoring non-compliant waste.** The property management companies do not wish to get into any dispute and confrontation with residents for handling non-compliant cases to avoid grave impacts on the relationship

between property management staff and residents and also possibly affecting the building management contracts;

- (b) The property management companies and the cleansing contractors indicated the need for **some 5% - 10% increase in manpower**, hence **some 15% - 20% increase in management fees**, under MSW charging;
- (c) The property management companies considered DBs overpriced. In case of a substantial amount of non-compliant waste, the expenses have to be borne by the coffers of the buildings. In the prevailing unfavorable economic situation, this increases financial burden and is unfair to compliant residents; and
- (d) It should be done by learning from other countries in introducing consumption tax (which may reduce mindless consumption), or implementing MSW charging by household size.

12. **Residential care homes** - The responsible persons found it difficult for them to implement MSW charging mainly for the following reasons:

- (a) **It would involve additional manpower and higher operating costs while they cannot achieve a significant reduction in the waste disposal amount.** The responsible persons commented that MSW charging would generate additional workload for their staff. As a result, there would be a need for **some 5% - 30% of extra manpower and higher operating costs**, hence **some 5% - 20% increase in service charge**;
- (b) The responsible persons of the residential care homes stated that MSW charging would involve participation by different parties in the residential care homes. With varying capabilities to adapt and different habits, some may find it difficult to make a change. Since administrative expenses are the linchpin of operation, the management hopes to minimise expenses on DBs but the frontline staff and residents are more concerned about the actual implementation and hygiene issues;
- (c) The responsible persons considered it a financial incentive for practising waste reduction at source (*e.g.* recycling of food waste *etc.*) that they are required to pay for DBs. However, it would not bring any reduction to certain daily waste such as diapers and anti-epidemic supplies;
- (d) The responsible persons pointed out that in case the additional costs and the entire expenses on DBs were passed on to the residents, it would put certain financial burden on the financially less capable residents or their family members; and
- (e) The responsible persons suggested provision of more recycling facilities in the vicinity of the residential care homes to facilitate their recycling work. In terms of supporting facilities/support, there would be a need for to-the-door food

waste collection services because the residential care homes generate a considerable amount of food waste.

13. **Management companies of the shopping malls** considered the time inopportune for implementing MSW charging under the very unfavourable business environment at present. It would be difficult to implement MSW charging mainly for the following reasons:

- (a) **It would involve additional manpower and operating costs, difficulties in identifying non-compliant tenants, confrontation with the non-compliant tenants in the reports they file, the need for the shopping malls to rectify non-compliant waste of tenants and patrons, which would put a heavy financial burden on the shopping malls.** Moreover, these would give reasons to more people to avoid compliance and responsibility, making MSW charging effective in title only. These challenges required collaboration and compliance of all stakeholders, and it would not be the case where only the property management companies becoming adapt to the workflow would suffice for rationalising the implementation details of MSW charging;
- (b) The property management companies of the shopping malls also considered the government recycling facilities and support (such as for polystyrene recycling) insufficient, making it inconvenient for tenants to practise waste separation and recycling. The property management companies would charge higher management fees due to MSW charging at a rate pending estimation, which would be passed on to tenants/the public in the end; and
- (c) **The cleansing contractors** commented that even with cleansing workers being adapt to the workflow, the community as a whole needed to fully understand and comply with the legislation. **The cleansing contractors** stated that the cleansing workers would have to separate waste every day, adding to their workload. Moreover, it would be necessary to tie in with the schedule of refuse collection trucks for waste collection. Failure to timely separate and re-wrap waste would necessitate handling of the waste again the following day, greatly affecting the workflow. Given the current manpower shortage, it would be difficult to recruit additional workers.

14. **The responsible persons of the four restaurants** invariably commented as follows:

- (a) MSW charging would increase the operation costs, but they would not employ any additional manpower accordingly;
- (b) All responsible persons stated that MSW charging would generate additional workload for their staff, but not cause wastage of them. For one of the restaurants, the responsible person indicated a price increase (of <5%) in response to MSW charging, while those of the remaining three restaurants reported no price increases for the time being, pending observations for the longer term;

- (c) For one of the restaurants, the responsible person stated that no waste separation would be practised even after the implementation of the MSW charging considering the insufficient manpower at present, or else it would need to employ an additional staffer, which would be more costly than using DBs;
 - (d) For one of the restaurants, the responsible person pointed out that staff regularly cleaned up all refuse bins before the peak dining hours or the arrival of the waste disposal service provider. As a result, it would bear approximately double the cost for DBs alone than expected, which would add to the operating costs;
 - (e) For one of the restaurants, the responsible person considered the major challenge of implementing MSW charging would be placing the wet waste (food waste) in DBs for their very heavy weight. Moreover, for some unrecyclable soiled cardboards, they could not fit in DBs for their large sizes; and
 - (f) Some responsible persons of the restaurants commented that the kitchen staff would be too busy to practise waste separation and recycling or comply with the requirements. Given the existing serious manpower shortage for kitchen positions, there were concerns that wastage of staff would result from giving them extra workload.
15. The property management company of the **Government Offices** had no strong views. It just hoped that DBs could be priced half as much to help all become familiarised with the MSW Charging Scheme and then the price be adjusted upward gradually. The cleansing contractors considered it necessary to have six months to one year for familiarisation with MSW charging and the implementation details.