

# COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Digest of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Strategy Sub-committee  
held on 10 September 2021 at 4:00 p.m.  
in Training cum Lecture Room, 5/F, West Wing,  
Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong**

## **Present:**

Prof Jonathan WONG Woon-chung (Chairman)  
Prof Paul CHU Hoi-shan  
Ms Grace KWOK May-han  
Ms Pamela MAR Chia-ming \*  
Mr Simon NG Ka-wing  
Mr Kevin ORR Ka-yeung  
Miss Samanta PONG Sum-yea \*  
Mr TAM Kent-chung  
Mr Allan WONG Wing-ho  
Dr Daniel YIP Chung-yin \*  
Dr Rita YU Man-sze  
Mr Stephen CHAN Chit-kwai ^  
Mr Alfred CHANG Yu-ching ^  
Ms Linda HO Wai-ping ^  
Dr Patrick LEE Kwan-hon ^  
Dr Peter LEE Wai-man ^  
Mr Sam LIU Hin-sum ^  
Prof Daniel TSANG Chiu-wa ^  
Ms Susanna WONG Sze-lai ^  
Mr D C CHEUNG *Principal Assistant Secretary for  
the Environment (Sustainable  
Development)* (Secretary)

^ co-opt member

\* attended online

## **In Attendance:**

### Government Representatives

#### Environment Bureau

Mrs Millie NG

*Acting Permanent Secretary for the  
Environment / Deputy Secretary  
for the Environment*

Mr Alvin TAI

*Acting Assistant Secretary for the  
Environment (Sustainable  
Development)2 / Economist  
(Sustainable Development)*

Mr Eric WONG *Acting Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)2 / Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)1*

Ms Mimi LO *Senior Executive Officer (Sustainable Development)1*

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Bruno LUK *Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Reduction Policy)*

Ms Iris LEE *Assistant Director (Waste Management Policy)*

Dr Alain LAM *Waste Management Manager*

Ms Amy WONG *Senior Administrative Officer (Waste Management Policy Division)1*

Programme Director – Hong Kong Productivity Council

Ir Kenny WONG *Deputy General Manager / Principal Consultant*

Dr Keith CHOY *Senior Consultant*

Ms Emma TANG *Consultant*

Public Relations Agency – Adbrownies Group

Ms Louise TANG *Associate Account Manager*

Aristo Market Research and Consulting Co. Ltd.

Mr KK CHUNG *Director*

Freedom Communications Limited

Ms Candy CHUI *Director*

**Absent with apologies:**

Ms CHAN Shin-kwan  
Miss Natalie CHUNG Sum-yue  
Prof Laurence HO Hoi-ming  
Mr Jonathan LEUNG Chun  
Mr LEUNG Hiu-fai^  
Dr TANG Chin-cheung^  
Dr William YU Yuen-ping

## **Opening Remarks**

Members were briefed on the follow-up work after the last meeting in June, including the conduct of three Focus Group Meetings (“FGMs”) on 5, 13 and 14 July. The Chairman of the Council for Sustainable Development (“SDC”), some Members from the Strategy Sub-committee (“SSC”) and a total of about 70 stakeholders from 61 organisations had attended the FGMs. Based on the views collected, the Programme Director (“PD”) had drafted the Public Engagement (“PE”) Document.

2. Members were reminded that they should maintain confidentiality of classified materials including those in the draft PE Document and contents of the meeting.

### **Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of the last meeting**

3. Members were informed that the revised minutes with Members’ comments incorporated were circulated to Members. As no further proposed amendments were received, the minutes were taken as confirmed.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Preparatory Work for the Public Interaction Phase of the Public Engagement on Control of Single-use Plastics (SSC Paper No. 02/21)**

4. Members were briefed on the views collected from the three FGMs as follows:

- (a) To control non-essential and / or hard-to-recycle single-use plastic items by different approaches;
- (b) There was room to enhance the Plastic Shopping Bag (“PSB”) Charging Scheme. In particular, the current scope of exemption could be tightened, and the charging level should be adjusted; and
- (c) There was a need to enhance the environmental awareness of different stakeholders, including the business sector, consumers and young people, and to emphasise the significance of the cooperation and engagement among various stakeholders.

5. Members were briefed on the draft PE Document, Views Collection Form (“VCF”) and questions for telephone survey. The following views / enquires were raised:

I. PE Document

- (a) Opined that it was crucial to enable the public to understand the economic cost of dealing with different types of waste. Suggested incorporating examples of good practices of other places in dealing with the problem of waste plastics;
- (b) Expressed that the core issues on the control of single-use plastics should be clarified and defined. There was no end-of-life solution for most waste plastics. Recycling alone was not a sufficient and lasting end-of-life solution. As such, PD might consider posing a question to the public on whether they would agree that an end-of-life solution for waste plastics should be provided;
- (c) Appreciated the design and colour tone of the PE Document and considered that it would be even more attractive if more comic designs could be used in the contents being presented. On the presentation of information, suggested bolding or enlarging the size of key information / messages in the PE Document. Suggested stressing the impact of waste plastics on our future, which would be alarming enough for the public to realise the urgency of the issue; and
- (d) Agreed that the consequence of not solving the problem of waste plastics should be mentioned in the PE Document to create a more impactful image.

II. VCF

- (a) Opined that the draft VCF had covered a lot of information;
- (b) Suggested revising some of the terms for easier understanding by the public;
- (c) Suggested revising and rephrasing certain words and sentences, such as using rating scale (i.e. 1 to 5) to measure the extent of respondents’ concern in some questions and allowing multiple options in some questions; and

- (d) Commented that some questions appeared to be quite academic and technical, such as the concern on climate change. The public might not find it easy to understand the relationship between single-use plastics and climate change.

### III. Randomised Telephone Survey

- (a) Opined that the draft telephone survey questions had a wide coverage of information;
- (b) Suggested that instead of asking in the survey how much one would be willing to pay for the use of PSB, the question might be whether the respondent would bring their own bags and give up using PSB for financial reward to be given by retailers;
- (c) Agreed that there were shortcomings in the use of telephone survey but it would be a channel to cover the older generation and people who were not active in social media;
- (d) Suggested quantifying the impact of waste plastics for the public's information, for example, listing the percentage of plastic recycling, percentage of plastics dumped in the landfills and the cost of landfill disposal;
- (e) Commented that the questionnaire should set out its objectives clearly and provide the necessary background information before seeking public views; and
- (f) Suggested rephrasing some of the questions in order to obtain useful information for policy making.

### IV. Channels of Views Collection

- (a) Suggested making use of more social media platforms for views collection; and
- (b) Suggested adopting a more forward-looking and contemporary methodology in conducting surveys through various social media platforms. The quantity of surveys to be conducted could be increased in order to enhance the representativeness of the findings.

### V. Others

- (a) Raised that it was important to discuss the uses of the PSB charges

collected, such as supporting the recycling industry in a relevant funding scheme.

6. The meeting noted the following responses:
  - (a) Considered that the PSB Charging Scheme should not be regarded as a “punishment” as no fees would be charged if the consumer did not request a PSB. The charges under the Municipal Solid Waste charging scheme were based on the quantity of waste generated so as to provide financial disincentive for driving behavioural and cultural changes. There seemed to be a need to adjust the current charging level of PSB which had never been adjusted since the introduction of the PSB Charging Scheme over a decade ago. The PE could be an opportunity to collect public views on any enhancement of the PSB Charging Scheme;
  - (b) Agreed that it was pivotal to educate the public and that the economic cost to the public and the Government arising from the handling of plastic waste might be included in the PE Document. The functions of different single-use plastics items were included, though not explicitly, in the draft PE Document;
  - (c) Explained that in order to obtain the general views of the population, the telephone survey could cover the views of the silent majority, including those who were not social media users (e.g. some elderly);
  - (d) Agreed that social media was an active way to connect with the youngsters. On the other hand, using telephone interview was a common approach in seeking the general public views and it could cover more than 90% of the population if mobile phones were used in the survey;
  - (e) Explained that the VCF would also be uploaded on the social media for facilitating the users to give their comments;
  - (f) Explained that as compared to street interviews, telephone survey was fully randomised and demographic factors such as age, gender etc. would be accounted for to enhance the representativeness of the results. Telephone survey was only one of the many means to collect views, alongside with the VCFs, PE sessions, etc.;

- (g) Shared the experience of a recent public consultation on the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers. Public opinions on the amount of rebate for returning a plastic beverage container collected through view response forms were polarized. A telephone survey was then conducted with random respondents and the views collected were much more balanced;
- (h) Explained that a randomised telephone survey would be considered as a useful means for obtaining general and balanced views, which would better reflect the opinions of the population at large with statistical weighting according to the age-sex distribution of the population;
- (i) Agreed that information relevant to the waste treatment cost (including waste plastics) could be provided in the PE Document. It was not advisable to highlight incineration in the questionnaire as this might distract the discussion unnecessarily. In recent years, the general public had become more supportive of the concept of waste-to-energy. With the advancement of technology, waste-to-energy would be able to help reduce pollution, size of waste and land cost in waste treatment;
- (j) Responded that people were expected to complete the VCF on an informed basis (e.g. after reading the PE Document or pamphlet, or attending briefings in PE sessions). The telephone survey would be launched after the publicity and public education through various channels (e.g. Announcements in the Public Interest, social media, and newspapers);
- (k) Agreed that a multiple-choice question of the telephone survey on the acceptable extra cost for the alternatives of plastic products could be refined. The percentage increase of each option could be added for better illustration;
- (l) Explained that a pamphlet with similar graphic designs in an easy-to-read style would be produced;
- (m) Responded that information on climate change might be included in the PE Document to facilitate the public to answer the relevant question; and

- (n) Explained that the handling of PSB charges would not be discussed in the meeting as the PE would only focus on the proposed enhancement of the PSB Charging Scheme.

7. The meeting concluded that the comments received were positive. The PD would assist in refining the presentation of the PE Document having regard to Members' comments. The revised PE Document, with Members' views incorporated, would be submitted to the SDC meeting for endorsement.

**Agenda Item 3 – Date of the next meeting**

8. The Secretary would confirm the date of the next meeting nearer the time.

**Secretariat  
Council for Sustainable Development**