

Arrangement for the collection and recycling of waste plastics (with photos)

The "Pilot Scheme on Collection and Recycling Services of Plastic Recyclable Materials" (Pilot Scheme) of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) will conclude on January 18 this year. The EPD announced today (January 9) the latest arrangements on the collection and recycling of waste plastics.

A spokesman for the EPD said: "Since there is duplication of resources with regard to plastics recycling between the Pilot Scheme and the GREEN@COMMUNITY, it is decided to conclude the Pilot Scheme on January 18, and relevant plastics recycling services will be taken over by the GREEN@COMMUNITY recycling network of respective districts."

The spokesman said, "Apart from reducing duplicated work, future GREEN@COMMUNITY operators may pass the collected plastics to any EPD-approved recyclers for handling, rather than merely the three designated recyclers under the Pilot Scheme, allowing for an open competitive market for the recycling industry, reducing the costs of collection and recycling waste plastics."

The Pilot Scheme commenced in the Eastern, Kwun Tong and Sha Tin districts in January 2020, and was extended to the Tai Po, Sai Kung, Central and Western, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun districts in January 2022. Its work includes complementing with public education, driving people's behavioural change, enhancing public confidence in waste plastics recycling, collecting non-commercial and non-industrial waste plastics in nine districts and collecting waste plastics from three of these districts.

Since end 2020, the Government has gradually expanded the GREEN@COMMUNITY, whose work is to enhance public education on recycling as a whole, drive people's behavioural change, reinforce public confidence in recycling, and start establishing a recycling network across 18 districts to provide recycling services to housing estates for the collection of nine types of recyclables, including waste plastics. There is duplication in various aspects between the work of GREEN@COMMUNITY and the Pilot Scheme.

Under the new arrangements, not only will the plastics collection services for housing estates under the Pilot Scheme remain unaffected, the GREEN@COMMUNITY operators can also liaise with these housing estates for more flexible collection services for plastics, as well as other recyclables, enhancing the cost-effectiveness, with an estimated cost reduction of about 24 per cent as compared with the Pilot Scheme.

Looking forward, the Government will introduce a licensing scheme through the bill on establishing a common legislative framework for producer

responsibility schemes to regulate plastic recyclers with regard to the types of waste plastics to be treated, treatment methods, recycling and disposal quantities, environmental impacts etc., to urge the recycling industry to aim for high-quality development as a goal and convert more waste into valuable resources. The relevant bill will be submitted to the Legislative Council for scrutiny in the first half of this year.

