

BFAC appreciates Government's efforts in ensuring drinking water safety and further promoting smart city initiatives

The following is issued on behalf of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee Secretariat:

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 44th meeting today (January 29). At the meeting, members were briefed by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) on the public consultation on proposed amendments to the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) and by the Innovation and Technology Bureau (ITB) on the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 (Blueprint 2.0).

To bring the regulatory frameworks up to date to cope with the latest developments in the plumbing trade, the WSD has proposed a series of amendments to the Waterworks Ordinance and launched a three-month public consultation which will end on February 3, 2021. Members were briefed on the proposals relevant to the business sector, including the regulation of plumbing works; control of plumbing materials, drinking water dispensers and fountains; the Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme; and maintenance and rectification of water loss in the communal part of the internal plumbing system.

The Committee noted the WSD's proposed amendments to the Waterworks Ordinance to enhance regulation on plumbing-related works and appreciated its efforts in ensuring drinking water safety and water use efficiency.

The ITB released the Blueprint 2.0 on December 10, 2020, setting out over 130 smart city initiatives, with an aim to allow members of the public to better perceive the benefits of smart city and innovation and technology (I&T) in their daily lives. Members were briefed by the ITB on Hong Kong's smart city development and initiatives under the Blueprint 2.0, particularly on initiatives related to business operations such as the "iAM Smart" Platform and the Smart Government Innovation Lab.

The Committee welcomed the ITB's release of the Blueprint 2.0 and appreciated the Government's efforts to better address city management challenges and improve people's livelihood through the use of I&T and business facilitation measures for the industry.

The Committee also received the work report of its three task forces:

Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Trade and Industry

Department, and Hong Kong Productivity Council briefed the WRTF on the integrated services provided by the four SME centres and the setting up of "SME ReachOut". The WRTF welcomed the "4-in-1" integrated services provided by the SME centres and support services by "SME ReachOut" and appreciated the Government's efforts in helping local enterprises.

- The Department of Health (DH) briefed the WRTF on the amendment to Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations to remove the regulatory requirement on submission of the actual sales packs of pharmaceutical products for registration. The WRTF welcomed the amendment which facilitated the trade and appreciated the DH's efforts in the publicity work.

Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department briefed the FRSTF on revisions to the bakery licence requirement for licensed light refreshment restaurants, including facilitation measures regarding premises applying for restaurant and bakery licences. A light refreshment restaurant is not required to obtain a separate bakery licence if the bakery products are for consumption by consumers on the premises. The FRSTF welcomed the facilitation measures which addressed the trade's concern and reduced the trade's administrative burden and compliance cost, and thanked relevant departments for their active response to the concerns of the industry and dedication in facilitating businesses.
- To foster the less-salt-and-sugar dietary culture, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) briefed members on the Less-salt-and-sugar Restaurants Scheme and the Less Sugar Friday Campaign. The FRSTF appreciated FHB's efforts in the promotion work.

Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

- The Office of the Licensing Authority under the Home Affairs Department briefed the BLGTF on its new measures to further facilitate licence applications and business operations of multiple trades, including waiving the requirements of registering drainage plans for new licence applications, streamlining the procedures for alteration works for licensed premises, relaxing document submission requirements for minor works of low complexity, setting a new performance pledge and strengthening application guides. The BLGTF appreciated the new measures which would enhance the efficiency and transparency of the licensing services and reduce the compliance and operating costs of multiple trades at the same time.

- The Fire Services Department briefed the BLGTF on its adoption of a pragmatic approach in granting the validity period of a fire services certificate to facilitate the renewal of Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licences. The BLGTF welcomed the facilitation measure, which would save the operational cost and administrative burden of the trade.

The Committee also expressed appreciation of the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously enhancing their business licensing services under the "Be the Smart Regulator" Programme.

Papers for the Committee meeting are available at www.gov.hk/en/business/supportenterprises/bf/advisory/index.htm for public access.