

## LCQ12: Operation of the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY

Following is a question by the Hon Edward Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (February 28):

Question:

Regarding the operation of the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Secretary for Environment and Ecology indicated earlier on that the contractors of the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY (the contractors) would not be required to pay disposal fees for the non-recyclable waste collected in their daily operation, whether the authorities will issue guidelines to the contractors on the ways to dispose of such waste or provide the contractors with an appropriate quantity of designated bags (DBs); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as it is learnt that at present, the authorities will disburse performance pay according to the percentage by which the quantity of recyclables handled by the contractors is greater than the target handling quantity each month, of the various contractors' percentages of attaining the target handling quantity since the establishment of the relevant performance pay mechanism, as well as the number of times the authorities disbursed the performance pay and its amount, with a breakdown by GREEN@COMMUNITY Recycling Stores; whether the authorities have plans to raise the ceiling on the amount of the aforesaid performance pay in the light of the implementation of Municipal Solid Waste Charging (MSW charging), so as to encourage the contractors to raise the handling quantity of recyclables; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as some of the contractors have told me that following the implementation of MSW charging, it is believed that members of the public will have greater incentive to deliver styrofoam to them for recycling, but since styrofoam is in general larger in size whereas many shops provided under GREEN@COMMUNITY are small in area, they are worried that it will be difficult for those shops to cope with the relevant demand, of the corresponding measures put in place by the authorities in this regard;

(4) as there are views that at present, the opening hours of GREEN@COMMUNITY Recycling Stores are generally from 9am to 7pm, making it difficult for the working people to deliver waste to them for recycling on working days, whether the authorities will consider allocating additional resources so that the contractors can extend the opening hours of various Recycling Stores; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) as the authorities have already signed operating contracts with many of the contractors before the implementation of MSW charging, whether the authorities have examined afresh the terms of those contracts and allocated additional resources in the light of the expected changes in the demand of members of the public following the implementation of MSW charging; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) as the authorities indicated earlier on that members of the public could redeem DBs through the GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme in the future, whether the authorities have plans to include DBs in the relevant gift redemption list before the implementation of MSW charging in government departments and some buildings under an "early and pilot implementation" approach on April 1 this year; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(7) given that the current GREEN\$ Mobile App only has Chinese and English versions and is not available in languages such as Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu which are common among ethnic minorities (EMs), whether the authorities will consider adding these language versions to incentivize EMs to participate in recycling and support them in recycling; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has rolled out a number of waste reduction and recycling schemes to improve the community recycling network progressively, thereby helping the public practise waste reduction at source. For example, the Promotion Programme on Source Separation of Waste provides waste separation bins for free to over 2 700 housing estates / residential buildings and 1 200 commercial and industrial buildings, as well as providing about 1 100 sets of roadside recycling bins to rural areas to assist the public in recycling plastics, waste paper and metals. Besides, the EPD is continuously expanding GREEN@COMMUNITY, which is a community recycling network covering over 180 public collection points comprising 11 Recycling Stations, 40 Recycling Stores and over 130 Recycling Spots, to specifically support residents living in the clusters of residential buildings (including single-block buildings and "three-nil" buildings) that are lacking the space for setting up recycling facilities on their own to participate in separation at source and clean recycling. The EPD is also setting up 50 small-scale Recycling Stores in public rental housing (PRH) estates progressively and a total of 76 sets of smart recycling bins have been installed at various application points for trial use by the public under the pilot programme for a smart recycling system. The recycling network comprising the above schemes has already covered over 80 per cent of the population in various districts of Hong Kong.

â€‹The reply to the question raised by the Hon Edward Leung is as follows:

(1) Currently, all public collection points of GREEN@COMMUNITY collect nine common types of recyclables (including plastics, glass containers, small electrical appliances, regulated electrical equipment, fluorescent lamps/tubes, rechargeable batteries, beverage cartons, waste paper and metals), and, at the same time, explain to the public through publicity and education on how to practise clean recycling. At present, most of the recyclables handed in by the public to GREEN@COMMUNITY are suitable for recycling, and only a small amount is not recyclable and needs to be disposed of.

The EPD anticipates that the incentives for the public to practise recycling will continue to increase. The operators of GREEN@COMMUNITY have already enhanced the promotion of municipal solid waste (MSW) charging in the community, as well as making use of their dedicated social media pages to issue posts and organising educational activities from time to time to educate the public on how to differentiate between recyclables that can or cannot be received. Moreover, based on the community needs, the Green Outreach of the EPD has also been organising different types of waste reduction and recycling promotional activities, thereby educating and encouraging the public to practise waste separation at source properly and integrate clean recycling into their daily lives.

As the waste sorted out from the recyclables is not generated by the operators of GREEN@COMMUNITY, the EPD will not require the operators to pay the relevant MSW charges and is discussing with the operators on how to handle such waste.

(2) The operators of Recycling Stores are required to provide the specified services during the contract period and meet the pre-determined performance targets, including the contractual monthly recycling quantity. The recycling targets specified in the operating contracts of respective Recycling Stores are set with reference to the community conditions of the districts in which they are located (e.g. population, the number of buildings participating in the Promotion Programme on Source Separation of Waste and the number of "three-nil" buildings, etc). The operators are subject to deduction of operational fees if they fail to meet the targets as required by the contracts. On the other hand, if the quantity of recyclables collected by the operators exceeds the recycling target to a specified level for a particular month, the EPD would grant performance payment to the operators so that they can make use of these additional resources to further promote recycling work in the community. According to EPD's preliminary figures for the third quarter of 2023, all operators of Recycling Stores could meet the contractual monthly recycling targets and over 90 per cent of operators received performance payment. As at mid-February this year, the EPD has granted about 200 times of performance payment totalling \$22 million to the operators concerned on a monthly basis in 2023-24, accounting for about 16 per cent of the total operating expenditure of the contracts. As the amount of performance payment received by individual operator involves sensitive information on contractual terms, we are unable to provide the relevant details. Based on EPD's preliminary figures for the third quarter of 2023, the recycling performance of each Recycling Store is tabulated below:

Recycling Store	Plastics	Designated Recyclables other than Plastics
	Rate of Reaching the Recycling Targets	
GREEN@QUARRY BAY	119%	231%
GREEN@ABERDEEN	147%	146%
GREEN@TIN HAU	180%	247%
GREEN@SAI YING PUN	181%	175%
GREEN@SHEUNG WAN	156%	124%
GREEN@TO KWA WAN	165%	268%
GREEN@HUNG HOM	274%	248%
GREEN@WALLED CITY	196%	320%
GREEN@YUE MAN SQUARE	174%	233%
GREEN@CHEUNG SHA WAN	108%	150%
GREEN@TAI KOK TSUI	119%	226%
GREEN@SAN PO KONG	143%	227%
GREEN@MUI WO	127%	163%
GREEN@FANLING	218%	245%
GREEN@SHEK WU HUI	194%	237%
GREEN@PO LAM	232%	249%
GREEN@TAI WAI	235%	223%
GREEN@TAI PO MARKET	122%	145%
GREEN@LO TAK COURT	186%	247%
GREEN@SAN HUI	123%	159%
GREEN@YUEN LONG HUI	101%	164%
GREEN@LONG PING	277%	501%
GREEN@SAI KUNG TOWN	168%	484%
GREEN@KIN SANG	271%	378%
GREEN@YI PEI SQUARE	405%	651%
GREEN@JORDAN	161%	557%
GREEN@KENNEDY TOWN	355%	1040%
GREEN@HAPPY VALLEY	162%	556%
GREEN@LUEN WO HUI	348%	617%
GREEN@AP LEI CHAU	378%	739%
GREEN@TAI WO	335%	557%

All the operating contracts of Recycling Stores will expire in 2025 successively. The EPD will, based on the overall recycling situation during the current contractual period, comprehensively review the contractual clauses on operational arrangement and performance payment, etc when preparing the tender documents of the follow-on operating contracts.

(3) Currently, the public can hand over styrofoam to GREEN@COMMUNITY for passing on to downstream recyclers approved by the EPD for proper treatment. Each GREEN@COMMUNITY facility has a workshop for temporary storage of recyclables. If the public needs to hand over styrofoam that is relatively bulky in size to GREEN@COMMUNITY, they are advised to contact the relevant facility to make prior arrangements.

The EPD has been encouraging the public and the business sector to avoid using single-use styrofoam products as far as possible and to promote the use of more environmentally friendly substitutes (such as durable containers that are reusable). Upon the implementation of the first-phase regulation of disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products on April 22 this year, the sale of expanded polystyrene (EPS) tableware will be totally banned and the provision of EPS tableware to dine-in and takeaway customers at catering premises will be prohibited, thereby reducing the use of styrofoam at source and reducing the quantity of styrofoam requiring handling.

(4) and (5) Currently, all Recycling Stores are basically open from 9am to 7pm or from 10am to 8pm all year round, including Sundays and public holidays (except for the Christmas holidays, the Lunar New Year holidays and on their eves, as well as the New Year's Eve, the Mid-Autumn Festival and the Winter Solstice, which are subject to separate arrangements). In response to the service demand of the public, the EPD has also adjusted the operating hours of most of the Recycling Stores in PRH estates to until 8pm. The opening hours of Recycling Stations are from 8am to 8pm.

The EPD will keep reviewing the operation of all GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities and the specific needs of individual districts for recycling facilities, and will proactively explore various measures with the operators such as increasing the number of Recycling Spots and extending their service hours, etc before the implementation of the MSW charging, so as to cope with possible increase in the amount of recyclables and to improve the services of the community recycling network.

When drawing up the existing services contracts in 2021 and 2022, the EPD had already taken into account the increase in incentives for the public to participate in recycling during the initial stage of implementation of MSW charging. We will closely monitor the operation of GREEN@COMMUNITY and maintain close communication with the operators. The EPD will consider allocating additional resources to the operators if necessary.

(6) To complement the implementation of MSW charging and continue attracting the public to participate in recycling actively, the EPD will introduce several types of designated bags for MSW charging as rewards for the GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme. In addition, the EPD is considering to allow the public to redeem the designated bags with fewer GREEN\$ points at the initial stage of implementation of MSW charging in order to encourage the public to practise recycling. The details will be announced on the Hong Kong Waste Reduction Website, the GREEN\$ mobile app, and the dedicated pages of the various GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities on social media in

due course.

(7) The interface of the GREEN\$ mobile app adopts a design of infographic paired with simple text to provide users an intuitive, easy-to-understand, and user-friendly experience. The staff of GREEN@COMMUNITY will also provide immediate on-site assistance to the public (including ethnic minorities) when they are using the GREEN\$ mobile app or whenever necessary. Currently, the users of the GREEN\$ mobile app comprise many ethnic minorities. They are generally able to complete the recycling process smoothly. We will keep evaluating the users' feedback to continuously optimise the GREEN\$ mobile app.