

# LCQ17: Promoting waste reduction and recycling

Following is a question by the Hon Dennis 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 promoting waste reduction and recycling, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has plans for extending the service hours of Recycling Stores of the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY to 8pm across the board, and for Recycling Stations, Recycling Stores and Recycling Spots of GREEN@COMMUNITY to open on all public holidays in order to facilitate delivery of waste for recycling by members of the public; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) prior to the implementation of Municipal Solid Waste Charging in August this year, whether it has plans to increase the number of Recycling Stations, Recycling Stores and Recycling Spots of GREEN@COMMUNITY; if so, of their numbers;
- (3) as it is learnt that waste plastics recycling bins for recycling, among others, "other plastics" (such as plastic bags, polyfoam products and plastic utensils) are provided in some public and private residential buildings registered under the pilot scheme on waste plastics collection and recycling, of the respective numbers of public rental housing (PRH) estates and private housing courts provided with such recycling bins as at December 31 last year, as well as the number of recycling bins involved; whether EPD has plans to provide more of such recycling bins at PRH estates and private housing courts by August this year; if so, of the respective numbers of relevant PRH estates and private housing courts, as well as the number of recycling bins involved; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) of the number of public refuse collection points (RCPs) in rural villages provided with waste plastics recycling bins for recycling other plastics as at December 31 last year, as well as the number of recycling bins involved; whether the EPD has plans to provide more of such recycling bins at RCPs in rural villages by August this year; if so, of the respective numbers of RCPs and recycling bins involved; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Currently, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has rolled out

a number of waste reduction and recycling schemes to improve the recycling network progressively, thereby helping the public practise waste reduction at source. For example, the 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 to specifically support residents living in the clusters of residential buildings (including single-block residential 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 on Smart Recycling Systems. The recycling network comprising the above schemes has already covered over 80 per cent of the population in various districts of Hong Kong. The reply to the question raised by the Hon Dennis Leung is as follows:

(1) 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 (LNY) 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 make special service arrangements for GREEN@COMMUNITY from time to time as necessary. For example, during the weekend preceding the last LNY holidays, the operators of individual Recycling Stations and Recycling Stores set up a total of about 20 add-on Recycling Spots. All Recycling Stores also extended their service hours by three hours (i.e. operating from 9am to 10pm) on the 28th day of the last lunar month (February 7) and opened for six hours (from 11am to 5pm) from the second to fourth days of the LNY holidays (from February 11 to 13). These arrangements enabled the public to recycle the recyclables generated from the clean-up activities before the LNY.

(2) As at mid-February 2024, a total of 11 Recycling Stations, 40 Recycling Stores and over 130 Recycling Spots have been set up throughout the 18 districts in Hong Kong under GREEN@COMMUNITY for the collection of 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. The first Recycling Store in an MTR station, GREEN@TSING YI, has just been put into service in February 2024, and the twelfth Recycling Station, GREEN@WONG TAI SIN, is also expected to commence services in the fourth quarter of 2024 gradually. The EPD is setting up small-scale Recycling Stores in 50 PRH estates progressively in order to enable residents living in the PRH estates and nearby to participate in clean recycling. Eight of the small-

scale Recycling Stores have already commenced operation, and the remaining Recycling Stores will commence operation gradually around April 1 this year. We will also enhance recycling services by increasing the number of Recycling Spots in the vicinity of "three-nil buildings" and in public markets.

The EPD will keep reviewing the operation of all community recycling facilities and the specific needs of individual districts for recycling facilities, and will proactively explore various measures such as increasing the number of Recycling Spots and extending their service hours, etc. We anticipate that the number of public collection points in Hong Kong will increase to about 500 in August this year to cope with the possible increase in the amount of recyclables and to improve the services of the community recycling network.

(3) At present, GREEN@COMMUNITY provides collection-at-door service to a total of about 200 PRH estates and over 1 800 private housing estates/single-block buildings/villages, etc for collection of nine common types of recyclables, including plastic bottles and other plastics. The contractors of EPD have provided about 2 300 designated recycling bins for "other plastics" for 99 PRH estates and about 350 private housing estates/residential buildings. Some housing estates/residential buildings have also set up their own recycling bins for "other plastics". We do not have statistical data on the numbers of these recycling bins.

In addition, the EPD is implementing the Pilot Programme on Smart Recycling Systems to enhance the operational efficiency of GREEN@COMMUNITY and provide the public with new recycling experience. At the present stage, a total of about 50 sets of smart recycling bins which can collect "other plastics" have been distributed to different application points (including PRH estates, private housing estates, villages, shopping malls, universities and government venues, etc) and have already been put into service.

(4) As at mid-February 2024, the EPD has set up about 1 100 sets of roadside recycling bins in public places in the rural areas, among which about 600 sets are placed outside the refuse collection points managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to enable residents in rural areas to recycle the most common types of recyclables, including paper, plastic bottles and metals. In case "other plastics" are received by the roadside recycling bins for plastic bottles, the service contractors of EPD will collect and deliver them to the workshops altogether for sorting before delivering to the approved recyclers for proper treatment. We will review the usage of roadside recycling bins in rural areas and change the labels of "plastic bottles" to "plastics" progressively in order to clearly indicate that the recycling bins concerned can receive any type of waste plastics.