

LCQ20: Municipal solid waste charging

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (December 5):

Question:

To complement the implementation of the municipal solid waste charging (MSWC), the Government will provide recurrent resources to strengthen the relevant waste reduction and recycling work. The provision for the next financial year will be around \$300 million to \$400 million, which will be increased to \$800 million to \$1 billion each year from the financial year in which MSWC is implemented. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective estimated amounts of the aforesaid provision of \$300 million to \$400 million to be spent on the following three tasks and the details of the tasks: (i) setting up of outreaching teams across the territory, (ii) provision of free collection service in respect of waste plastics from non-commercial-and-industrial sources and food waste from commercial and industrial (C&I) sources, and (iii) implementation of a pilot scheme of applying reverse vending machines in the recycling of waste plastic containers;

(2) whether it will inject the annual revenues from MSWC directly into a fund dedicated for the promotion of waste reduction and recycling in the community; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) regarding the measures to improve (i) refuse collection points and (ii) rubbish bins and recycling bins placed in public spaces, of the relevant work targets, timetables and progress; the respective numbers of rubbish bins and recycling bins placed in public spaces in each of the past three years, as well as the estimated numbers of such bins in the first year in which MSWC is implemented;

(4) in respect of the municipal solid waste from households and C&I sources, of the respective (i) quantities generated, (ii) quantities recovered and (iii) recovery rates, in each of the past three years, with a tabulated breakdown by type of waste (i.e. food waste, paper, plastics, metal, glass and others);

(5) of the respective quantities and percentages of the solid waste, generated in each of the past three years, which was (i) handled by recovery facilities and (ii) exported; and

(6) of the number of reports/complaints about illegal refuse dumping received by the Government, and the number of prosecutions instituted against the persons concerned, in each of the past three years?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan is as follows:

(1) and (2) To complement the implementation of the municipal solid waste (MSW) charging, the Government has announced in the Policy Address the allocation of additional recurrent resources to strengthen our complementary work on promotion of waste reduction and recycling and public education. The Government will provide an additional provision of around \$300 million to \$400 million for the financial year (FY) 2019/20 to start with, which will be further increased to no less than \$800 million to \$1,000 million from the FY when the MSW charging is to be implemented. The amount of this annual provision will be commensurate with the estimated gross revenue to be generated from the MSW charging so as to achieve the effect of "dedicated-fund-for-dedicated-use", i.e. the revenue generated from the MSW charging will be used for enhancing waste reduction and recycling work. The Government has been emphasising all along that the introduction of the MSW charging is not for raising public revenue or recovering the cost, as the total revenue generated will be used for enhancing waste reduction and recycling work.

Relevant waste reduction and recycling work under planning include the setting up of new outreaching teams under the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to provide on-site assistance to the community, thereby putting waste reduction and recycling and the MSW charging into practice; provision of free territory-wide collection service in respect of waste plastics from non-commercial and industrial (C&I) sources and food waste from all sources in the longer run subject to the experiences gained from the pilot schemes to collect non-C&I waste plastics and C&I food waste, as well as the progress of developing food waste recycling facilities in Hong Kong; and implementation of a pilot scheme to assess the effectiveness of applying reverse vending machines (RVMs) in promoting the recycling of plastic beverage containers. The details and estimated expenditure of the above work are as follows:

Outreaching Teams

To further enhance on-site support for recycling, we will set up new outreaching teams directly under the EPD. Building on the existing waste reduction and recycling network, the outreaching teams will collaborate closely with the community green stations (CGSs) and other community partners to educate the public on the importance of waste reduction at source and assist them in practising waste separation and clean recycling, as well as in identifying proper outlets for recyclables. At the same time, the outreaching teams will also promote at the district level the various waste reduction and recycling initiatives launched by the EPD, including the MSW charging and the producer responsibility scheme (PRS) on glass beverage containers, so as to raise public awareness and enhance stakeholders' understanding on the implementation details. We will kick-start pilot outreaching services in the

Eastern, Kwun Tong and Sha Tin districts. After gaining actual experiences, we will gradually expand the outreaching services to all districts in Hong Kong. The estimated expenditure for FY 2019/20 is about \$130 million.

Pilot schemes for collection service in respect of waste plastics from non-C&I sources

To raise the quantities of waste plastics recovered from households and enhance public confidence in the waste separation and recycling system, the EPD plans to roll out a two-year pilot scheme in the Eastern, Kwun Tong and Sha Tin districts to provide free collection service for waste plastics from non-C&I sources. Service contractors engaged by the EPD will directly collect waste plastics from non-C&I premises in the community such as public and private housing estates, schools, public organisations and the EPD's community recycling centres and CGSs for further treatment including sorting, shredding, cleaning, and melting to produce recycled raw materials or products so that they can be supplied to the local market or exported to ensure proper handling of the collected waste plastics. Having regard to the data collected and experience gained in the pilot scheme and the progress of development of the PRS on plastic beverage containers, we will consider expanding the free collection service for non-C&I waste plastics to cover the whole territory. The estimated expenditure for FY 2019/20 is around \$70 million.

Pilot schemes for collection service in respect of food waste from C&I sources

We will continue to promote food waste source separation in the C&I sectors, and plan to make use of the Organic Resources Recovery Centre Phase 1 (Oâ™Park1) as well as the food waste/sewage sludge co-digesting facilities in Tai Po to conduct a two-year pilot scheme for free collection of food waste, with a view to exploring the feasibility of extending the food waste collection service (which covers transportation and treatment free of charge) to cover all sectors in Hong Kong. The estimated expenditure for FY 2019/20 is approximately \$60 million.

Pilot scheme on RVMs

The Government is preparing to introduce a pilot scheme on RVMs in 2019 by placing them at various locations to assess their performance and effectiveness in recycling waste plastic beverage containers. The estimated expenditure for FY 2019/20 is some \$4 million.

Besides, we also plan to proactively explore regularising the funding support for Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) and encourage these non-governmental organisation-operated centres to beef up their waste reduction and recycling support to local residents, in close collaboration with the outreaching teams.

As mentioned above, the Government will further increase the financial provision to no less than \$800 million to \$1,000 million from the FY when the MSW charging is to be implemented. The amount of this annual provision will

be commensurate with the estimated gross revenue to be generated from the MSW charging so as to achieve the effect of "dedicated-fund-for-dedicated-use". We plan to use part of the provision on the aforementioned waste reduction and recycling measures, which would be expanded to cover the whole territory gradually. We are also prepared to gauge the views from the members of the public on how to make use of the rest of the provision to promote waste reduction and recycling work in the community.

(3) To enhance the service quality at refuse collection points and improve the environmental hygiene, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is planning to upgrade, on a trial basis, the facilities at existing aluminium refuse collection points and bin sites in rural areas. This will include introducing "sensor-operated easy-thrown aluminium refuse collection points" and "solar-powered compacting refuse bins", with a view to increasing the storage capacity of refuse collection facilities in rural areas, providing enough space for refuse disposal and reducing environmental nuisance. To this end, the FEHD has approached suitable science and technology companies through the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park Corporation, inviting them to submit design proposals on enhancing refuse collection points. If the trial works well, the FEHD will carefully examine the resources and land space required for the new design, and devise a plan on adopting the new design in other rural refuse collection facilities.

To further enhance the Government's waste reduction and resource recovery efforts in support of the implementation of the MSW charging, the Government has set up the Steering Group on the Modification of Recycling and Refuse Collection Facilities in Public Places (Steering Group) to review the provision and design of recycling bins (RBs) and litter containers (LCs) in public places so as to put forward relevant recommendations.

Having considered the planning parameters recommended by the consultant commissioned by the Steering Group, the FEHD as well as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) plan to gradually reduce the number of LCs in public places by 40 percent to around 24 000 by the time when the MSW charging is implemented. The overall ratio of RB to LC in public places will be roughly enhanced from 1:14 to 1:6 and the number of RBs in public places will be increased by 45 percent to about 4 000.

Having regard to relevant factors such as the implementation progress of the MSW charging, the situation on the ground and public reaction, we will from time to time review and adjust the arrangements and complementary measures adopted for recycling and refuse collection facilities in public places. In addition, the Steering Group has also commissioned a consultant to conduct the Stage 2 Consultancy Study to recommend conceptual designs for RBs and LCs and produce prototypes for future public consultation to gauge the views from members of the public, frontline workers and relevant stakeholders.

Statistics on RBs and LCs provided by the FEHD and the LCSD in public places between 2016 and 2018 are tabulated below (Note 1).

Year	Recycling Bins	Litter Containers
2016	2 900	33 900
2017	3 000	30 400
2018	3 200	27 400

(Note 1): Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

(4) Statistics on the disposal and recovery of food waste, paper, plastics, metals and glass between 2014 and 2016 are set out at Annex 1 (2017 figures are being prepared). The EPD does not compile breakdown statistics on the quantities recovered and recovery rates of various waste types by waste source.

(5) Statistics on the recyclables recovered from MSW (Note 2) via our local recovery systems from 2014 to 2016 are tabulated below (2017 figures are being prepared).

	2014	2015	2016
Total quantity of recyclables recovered from MSW (thousand tonnes) (a)	2 053	2 033	1 912
Quantity of recyclables recovered from MSW and exported (thousand tonnes) (b)	2 008	1 987	1 856
Proportion of recyclables recovered from MSW and exported (percentage) (c) [(c)=(b)/(a) x 100%]	98%	98%	97%

(Note 2): Recyclables recovered from MSW include paper, plastics, metals, glass, rubber tyres, textiles, wood, food waste and electrical and electronic equipment.

(6) Figures on the relevant reports/complaints received by the EPD and the FEHD and the number of prosecutions between 2015 and 2017 are set out at Annex 2.