

FEHD continuously improves service level of public toilets through application of technology

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (November 17) that the FEHD will continue to proactively take forward the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme to improve the design and facilities of public toilets (PTs), as well as enhance the service level of PTs in a persistent manner by utilising technology. The FEHD has been piloting the Smart Public Toilet System (SPTS) in some PTs and mapping out a blueprint for ideal and modernised PTs through a design thinking programme and PT design competition co-organised with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD).

The FEHD currently manages some 810 PTs open round the clock. "Adopting a multi-pronged approach, the department is committed to improving PT facilities and monitoring their operation and performance as well as enhancing public education, with a view to upgrading the overall hygiene and service level of PTs. Under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, 240 PTs under the FEHD's management will undergo refurbishment or facelifting works in phases from 2019-20 to 2023-24, of which works for 91 PTs have already been commenced or completed in the first two years whilst the remainder are also being handled as scheduled," the spokesman said.

Among PTs that have completed facelifting works this year, the Design for Manufacture and Assembly concept has been applied to some of them (such as Wing Lok Street PT in Central and Western District). This has not only shortened construction time as well as the time required for suspension of services and minimised the impact on users by using prefabricated components, but also allows better quality control and facilitates future repair and maintenance. The FEHD is, with ArchSD, actively exploring the piloting of application of such technologies and modular integrated construction at improvement projects of PTs and new PT projects to expedite the progress of improvement works, especially for those situated in rural areas. In addition, wheelchair user-friendly facilities and toilet cubicles with baby rests have been installed in Sai Yee Street Garden PT in Mong Kok District and Hoi Hing Road PT in Tsuen Wan District respectively. When refurbishing public toilets, the FEHD will provide attendant rooms for toilet attendants as far as practicable (e.g. Exchange Square PT in Central and Western District and Moreton Terrance PT in Wan Chai District), or provide facilities such as wall-mounted fans, exhaust fans, propulsion fans, power sockets, lockers, rest places and changing facilities at the in-service PTs with attendant rooms to improve the working environment of toilet attendants.

The FEHD has introduced and piloted the SPTS in Tsim Sha Tsui East Public Transport Interchange Public Toilet and Southorn Centre Public Toilet in Wan Chai through the application of Internet of Things (IoT) solutions on a one-year basis since this May. The system will collect information and data

to improve the management, service quality and user experience of PTs.

The FEHD is also working with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department by making use of the Government-Wide IoT Network to launch a Smart Toilet Pilot Programme. Relevant devices will be successively installed at 10 FEHD PTs from the third quarter of this year onwards to collect various data related to PT operation, including PT usage, environmental parameters (such as temperature, humidity and odour), usage of consumables (such as soap, toilet paper, toilet seat sanitiser and hand sanitiser), the operating status of electrical and mechanical equipment (including hand dryers and floor fans) and user feedback.

By developing a pilot scheme on the SPTS, the FEHD aims to study, develop and construct an SPTS prototype that can enhance the management and service quality of PTs. The scheme collects PT operation data in order to monitor facilities' daily operation, improve their service quality and enhance their management. It also provides information for the enhancement of PT construction and refurbishment projects that can meet public needs in a more appropriate manner. The FEHD will, based on the effectiveness of the SPTS pilot scheme, consider applying the system to other PTs to enhance the overall quality of management and services of PTs.

To gauge views from stakeholders with innovative design ideas for the construction of PTs with high levels of buildability and cost-effectiveness, the FEHD and ArchSD co-organised the Toilet Tells: Rediscover Public Toilet design thinking workshops and the PT 2.0 Public Toilet Design Competition, and the programme and events are all completed. The two departments are now studying the implementation of innovative ideas for the service, design and management of PTs where practicable and also considering application of the design concepts of the winning entries in PT projects as appropriate.

Furthermore, the FEHD has all along been disseminating messages on the proper use of PT facilities through various means, including making use of the Facebook and Instagram pages of Keep Clean Ambassador Ah Tak, broadcasting systems at PTs, publicity stickers and a thematic webpage.

"The department will strive to enhance the overall service level of PTs through improvement and management measures on various fronts, combining application of technology and innovative ideas, as well as full co-operation with relevant departments," the spokesman said. He also appealed to members of the public to take good care of public facilities and keep PTs clean and hygienic.