

LC: CS presents Government Minute in response to Report of Public Accounts Committee No. 73

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in presenting the Government Minute in response to the Report of the Public Accounts Committee No. 73 in the Legislative Council today (May 27):

President,

Laid on the table today is the Government Minute (GM) responding to Report No. 73 of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) which was presented to the Legislative Council on February 26, 2020.

I welcome the Report of PAC and am grateful for the time and efforts devoted by the Chairman, Hon Abraham Shek, and Members of PAC on it. The Government accepts PAC's various recommendations and sets out in detail the specific responses of the relevant bureaux and departments in the GM. PAC conducted public hearings on the chapters on "Planning, provision and management of public toilets by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department" and "Provision of consultancy, research and development and training services by the Hong Kong Productivity Council" in its Report No. 73. I would like to highlight the key measures taken and progress made by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) in response to the recommendations.

Planning, provision and management of public toilets by FEHD

Provision of clean and hygienic public toilets is an important public service. FEHD has taken the initiative to gradually upgrade public toilets under its management in recent years. These measures include the implementation of the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme to which over \$600 million has been allocated, and the expedition of refurbishment works. FEHD will also continue to make use of technology and step up collaboration with relevant departments to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public toilet management and maintenance.

Specifically, FEHD completed in February 2020 a data-collection exercise on the utilisation rate of its public toilets. FEHD would plan and manage public toilets on the basis of the data collected, such as to review the mode of cleaning services for individual toilets, the frequency of cleaning services, the male-to-female compartment ratio, and the timing for refurbishment. In addition, FEHD has put on trial a visitor feedback system in November 2019 for users to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction on the overall cleanliness and maintenance of the toilet facilities. We agree that views of the public have positive value on the enhancement of public

service. FEHD will consider extending an enhanced version of the system to other public toilets as appropriate, taking into account the cost-effectiveness and results of the trial. FEHD aims to come up with a specific plan in 2020 (i.e. this year) to further collect views from the public.

Provision of consultancy, research and development and training services by HKPC

The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) and HKPC accept the findings and recommendations made by the Audit Commission and PAC on HKPC's provision of consultancy, research and development and training services. ITC and HKPC have immediately taken appropriate follow-up actions to implement the recommendations.

To more effectively measure and monitor HKPC's performance in various aspects, including the provision of consultancy and manufacturing support services, ITC and HKPC have completed a comprehensive review on HKPC's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and have formulated 19 new KPIs for implementation since 2020-21. Separately, ITC and HKPC have completed a review on the "Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements on the Administration of the Subvention for the Hong Kong Productivity Council" (MAA), and have agreed to specify in the revised MAA that prior agreement of the Council and the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology has to be obtained by HKPC for any proposed change of a certain KPI or its definition or target.

HKPC has also taken follow-up actions on its inability to achieve full cost recovery for some consultancy projects. HKPC has strengthened its project management and will closely monitor the costs of consultancy projects. Separately, ITC has reviewed whether the full cost recovery principle should be applicable to all HKPC's activities, taking into account HKPC's public mission. ITC considers that for HKPC to better serve the community, it could deviate from the principle when it is engaged for Government consultancy projects involving public interests, provided that specified conditions are met. In this regard, HKPC has formulated guiding principles when accepting such Government projects. Meanwhile, HKPC has implemented various improvement measures on its contract management, such as strengthening its review on the risk assessment of consultancy projects, as well as strengthening the protection of HKPC's interests by setting out clearer terms in its consultancy project proposal and contractual agreements.

HKPC is planning to conduct a review on its mode of operation, future business direction and mode of subvention. The Innovation and Technology Bureau and ITC will participate in the review and provide views, while maintaining communication with HKPC and continuing to offer views on HKPC's development strategies to ensure that HKPC's work is in line with its mission and functions and supports Government policies.

President, I would like to thank the Chairman and Members of PAC again for their efforts and guidance. The concerned bureaux and departments will strictly adhere to its responses in the GM to implement improvement measures

as soon as possible.

Thank you, President.