

(Information Paper)

Progress Report of the 21st Meeting of the Kowloon City District Council

Purpose

This paper aims to report on the major issues discussed at the 21st meeting of the Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) on 22 March 2007.

Review of Built Heritage Conservation Policy

2. Members welcomed the Government's built heritage conservation policy and its decision to designate 12 old buildings in the District as historical buildings. Members put forward two main recommendations for conserving these old buildings: 1) to preserve the "spirit" as well as the original appearances of old buildings, so that people would still feel the same when they revisited the places again. If necessary, conservation work should be expanded to include the surroundings of the old buildings; 2) to make good use of resources and turn these historical relics into tourist spots to boost local community economy, for instance. In view of the fact that the two recommendations involved city planning and the development of Hong Kong's tourism, Members considered that conservation work for historical relics should not be the sole responsibility of the Home Affairs Bureau, but should have the participation of the Planning Department and other government departments responsible for promoting Hong Kong's tourism. In addition, Members advised the Government to include the following old buildings into the list of historical buildings in the District:

- (1) Fishtail Rock;
- (2) The air-raid shelter around Hok Yuen Shan and Chatham Road;
- (3) Sung Wong Toi;
- (4) The Royal Flying Centre in the former Kai Tak Airport;
- (5) Village God Shrine in Whampoa;
- (6) The old Chinese temple on Lomond Road; and
- (7) The Chinese tenements with overhanging eaves in the District.

Housing Policy that Cares for the Elderly

3. Members were pleased to learn that the Housing Department (HD) would introduce a series of measures to provide better care for the elderly who live in public housing estates (PHEs), and praised its compassionate approach in delivering services. Many Members urged the HD to expedite the work of installing spacious lifts in some old PHEs to make them more convenient for residents with physical disabilities or in a wheelchair. It was hoped that these facilities would benefit disabled people. Separately, Members suggested that the HD follow the example of the Social Welfare Department and use its discretion to allow elderly people who live on the rent of their privately-owned flats or who live in poor conditions in their own flats to be allotted public housing flats. Furthermore, Members suggested that domestic helpers should also be counted as household members, so that elderly people who could not live on their own would be allotted a bigger public housing unit for the domestic helpers to live in. Members expressed their views to the HD on the following housing affairs:

- (1) Government's policy on public housing rent adjustment;
- (2) Rent reduction for well-off tenants in PHEs as well;
- (3) Security loopholes caused by a shortage of security guards in PHEs;
- (4) Vacant sites in urban areas to be fully utilised to build PHEs;
- (5) Divorced people who were denied joint ownership of property with their ex-spouse by court to be allowed to apply for public housing units at once;
and
- (6) Progress of redevelopment and construction of PHEs in the District.

Services of the Central Kowloon Elderly Service Centre

4. Members were concerned that there was a huge demand for the services of the Central Kowloon Elderly Service Centre among elderly people in the District. However, due to limited resources, elderly people who had already registered as members still had to wait several years before they could receive health care services. The Department of Health (DH) explained to Members that it was indeed a real challenge to meet the needs of all elderly people in the District with limited public resources. To reduce the waiting time for the services of the elderly service centres,

the DH had introduced various measures in the short term, medium term and long term. They included:

(1) **Short-term Measures**

- To lengthen the time between follow-up consultations for patients in more stable health condition;
- To streamline medical check-up procedures so that doctors could handle more cases.

(2) **Medium-term Measures**

- To refocus the work of the elderly service centres on the prevention of diseases, with the out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority specialising in treatment;
- To hold discussions with private practitioners on ways of co-operation in providing private health care services such as health assessment and medical check-ups for the elderly in an attempt to reduce waiting time;
- To form partnership with non-governmental organisations to provide health education and individual counselling for target groups.

(3) **Long-term Measures**

- To review the division of work between the public and private health services sectors and examine ways of raising funds for medical services in future.

While medical check-ups could no doubt help identify latent diseases, it was even better to prevent diseases in the first place. In view of this, the DH emphasised that learning more about the cause and risks of diseases, following a healthy life style and improving the environmental factors in the community (such as the promotion of a healthy city) would prove more beneficial than the early identification of diseases.

Banquets to be Held in Accordance with the Principle of Environmental

Conservation

5. Members recognised that some traditional foods such as trichome and shark's fin was only of little nutritious value and, more importantly, when people picked large quantities of plants and committed large-scale killing of animals for such foods, the ecology would be adversely affected. Members, therefore, agreed that they should set an example by choosing what to eat in accordance with the principle of environmental conservation at future banquets.

Kowloon City District Office

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