

(Information Paper)

Progress Report of the 3rd Meeting of the Kowloon City District Council

Purpose

This paper aims to report on the major issues discussed at the 3rd meeting of the Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) on 25 March 2004.

The Hung Hom Peninsula Issue

2. **Members** said that the KCDC and the area committees had persistently asked the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau and the Housing Department (HD) how the Hung Hom Peninsula would be dealt with since the Government had stopped selling Home Ownership Scheme flats. The reply they received from the HD then was that since no information or instructions were available, the department was not in a position to answer their enquiries. **Members** expressed their discontent with the sudden announcement by the Government that it had reached an agreement with the developers. The HD asserted that the current agreement was reached after all possible ways of dealing with the Hung Hom Peninsula had been carefully considered. All the other options were considered unfeasible because of political, legal or land lease implications. The department apologized to **Members** for not having briefed the KCDC on the progress of the matter earlier, adding that the agreement could only be revealed at the final stage since the process was very complicated and involved confidential and commercial information.

3. **Members** said that the Government, having paid a high price, should learn a lesson from the Hung Hom Peninsula incident. After discussion, the KCDC passed the following amended motion:

“The KCDC opined that the HKSAR Government and the departments concerned should learn a lesson from the experience gained in the controversial Hung Hom Peninsula incident, and should plug legal loopholes to prevent similar incidents from happening again.”

Concern over School Violence

4. **The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB)** emphasised that they had all

along been paying due attention to school violence. To continuously reduce the occurrence of school bullying, anti-bullying policies and measures had to be implemented at the school level. The EMB briefed Members on the various resource kits available, including video discs, questionnaires on student relationship and leaflets. The bureau would organise workshops, seminars and experience-sharing sessions in April and May to facilitate the exchange of experience among schools. In addition, the EMB had recently held an inter-departmental meeting with the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), Social Welfare Department (SWD), Department of Justice, school councils and professional bodies to draw up initiatives targeted at the problem with a view to giving active support to the schools in need through the concerted efforts of all parties.

5. **The SWD** said that they mainly played a supportive role on the issue of school violence. They attached much importance to the sharing of teaching materials and cultures among social workers, and would hold experience-sharing seminars for them. To improve preventive and supportive work, the department had maintained regular channels over the past few years, including implementing the One School One Social Worker Scheme and upgrading the Understanding the Adolescent Project into a permanent scheme. In addition, the Department of Health (DH), EMB and schools provided referral service for students with health problems, so that schools could take preventive measures by identifying such students at an early stage.

6. **The HKPF** informed Members that they adopted an inter-departmental approach in tackling school bullying. They provided assistance to the EMB and SWD by holding counselling sessions and talks. Five School Liaison Officers were deployed to visit schools in the district to teach students the meaning of “bullying” and remind them of the legal liability and consequences of committing the crime of assault. Through regular gatherings with school discipline masters and by meeting school principals from time to time, the HKPF helped them understand the true nature of bullying and the legal definition and consequences of such an offence. The HKPF also, through the Junior Police Call Scheme and the Youth Award Scheme, sent positive and healthy message to young students.

7. **Members** suggested that the Government should assess the need for and effectiveness of the One School One Social Worker Scheme and examine whether the departments concerned had gained a thorough understanding of the root of the school violence problem before formulating strategies. Members also questioned whether deterrent punishments were meted out or sufficient incentives given to student

offenders to encourage them to re-integrate into the society and serve the community.

Opposition to Cuts in Social Welfare Spending

8. **Members** pointed out that the Government had cut social welfare spending by 20% since 2000. A further 10% cut in the next five years was certain to bring about the closure of youth centres and homes for the elderly, affecting the society as a whole.

9. **The SWD** said in response that the Government's actual expenditure on social welfare had been on the increase over the past 10 years. Since pay adjustment was a reality faced by all sectors of the community, the adjustment in the social service sector was not reflected in the cuts in welfare spending. The department was flexible in cutting resources, so that some small-scale social service agencies with financial difficulties could be exempted from subsidy cuts. Furthermore, the Government would save resources through re-structuring and in situ expansion so as to avoid the overlapping of social welfare services. Since fiscal deficit was a territory-wide problem, public expenditure on social welfare had to be reduced by 10% in the coming years, albeit in phases.

10. **Members** objected to the cuts in welfare spending, but supported the re-organisation and re-structuring of the social service sector by the SWD to provide the public with more diversified services. Given the serious deficit, the Government had to make better use of resources available by encouraging the unemployed to seek employment and severely punishing those who abused the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme.

Construction of a Private Independent School on Norfolk Road in Kowloon Tong

11. **Members** raised many questions covering a wide range of topics about this issue. In view of this and the lack of information in the papers, the Chairman declined to continue the discussion as requested by the EMB. He requested the EMB to give a written reply for the KCDC's consideration after they received the main points of discussion from the KCDC Secretariat.

Concern over Cervical Cytology Screening Programme for Women

12. **Members** pointed out that the incidence of cervical cancer had sent a warning signal to women, and expressed concern about how women in the Hung Hom District could obtain screening service at the Hung Hom Clinic. They said that the service should be publicized in the district so that more women would be aware of it.

13. The **DH** responded that cervical cytology screening service was available at the Maternal and Child Health Centre of the Hung Hom Clinic on Station Lane and another such centre in the district. Appointment could be made simply by calling the central telephone appointment hotline at 3166 6631. Judging from the number of appointments already made, the waiting time would not be too long for women in the district.

14. **Members** suggested that the HD should put more emphasis on the facts about the disease in their publicity campaign and encourage women to come forward for screening. Response would certainly be more encouraging if an appointment could be made via the Internet. Imposing mandatory screening on women through legislation was totally out of the question. **Members** supported the establishment of a central database to facilitate the sharing of medical records of patients, so as to avoid unnecessary and redundant tests.

Request for Legislation Requiring Shops to be Marked with Building Numbers

15. **Members** stressed the importance of building numbers in handling complaints. It was understood that the existing legislation required building numbers to be marked at the entrance of buildings. However, a lot of residential premises and buildings in, say, Hung Hom were not marked with building numbers. It would be difficult for government departments to follow up on complaints if the buildings in question could not be clearly identified.

16. **The Rating and Valuation Department (RVD)** responded that the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation would allocate a number to each building upon its completion and the staff of the department would inspect buildings regularly to ensure that building numbers were shown. If the situation was serious, the RVD would step up inspection and follow-up action and advise the shop concerned to mark its building number.

Matters Concerning the Community Hall

17. **Members** pointed out that the shortage of community hall facilities had been a long-standing problem in the district. Although a site in Bailey Street had been identified and reserved for the construction of a community hall long ago, no specific date had been set for the construction works. Members raised doubts as to whether the community hall would be built after all. As an administrative district, Kowloon City would compare unfavourably with other districts if it did not have its own community hall.

18. **The Home Affairs Department (HAD)** said that they well understood the needs of the residents in the district, adding that two community halls were to be built under the current plan. The HD had already commenced the technical feasibility study on the one in Ho Man Tin and planned to seek funding approval from the Government in this financial year. It was hoped that construction works could be expedited by upgrading the project to Category B works. As regards the proposed community hall in Bailey Street in To Kwa Wan, the HAD said that the department was only one of the users. Since other user departments had withdrawn, the project was delayed. Given the latest developments, the HAD had discussed with the Government Property Agency about encouraging other departments, including the Kowloon City District Office, to relocate to the community hall so that the project could proceed at an early date.

19. **Members** said that community hall facilities were very important to the district. While every other district had its own community hall, this district had to seek the permission of schools and shopping malls to use their places as venues for its activities, causing inconvenience to over 400 000 residents in the district. Members urged the HAD to continue to work for the early construction of community halls in the district.

Kowloon City District Office
April 2004