

Progress Report of the 16th Meeting of the Kowloon City District Council

Purpose

This paper aims to report on the major issues discussed at the 16th meeting of the Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) on 13 May 2010.

Meeting with the Director of Social Welfare

2. Members welcomed the Director of Social Welfare to the meeting to elaborate on the social welfare service programmes and new initiatives for social welfare services to be launched in the financial year of 2010-2011 with key programmes as follows:

- (a) services for the elderly – to adopt new procedures to speed up the provision of residential care places for the elderly, to increase subsidized day care places for the elderly, to launch a pilot scheme for providing residential care homes with visiting pharmacist services, to offer tailor-made home care services for the elders who were staying at home but queuing up for care places at nursing homes as well as to extend the service network of the District-based Scheme on Carer Training to neighbourhood elderly centres;
- (b) rehabilitation and health care services – to increase the places of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities, to strengthen the support for elderly residents at subvented residential care homes for people with intellectual disability, to introduce a licensing scheme and a pilot Bought Place Scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities as well as to increase the provision of rehabilitation and medical social services for mental patients.
- (c) family and child welfare – to launch the Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence;
- (d) social security – to grant one additional month of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payment to CSSA recipients, one additional month of payment to recipients of old age allowance and disability allowance as well as \$1,000 allowance to kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary students receiving CSSA or Student Finance

Assistance in the next academic year;

- (e) youth service – to strengthen the manpower of the 16 District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams, to open four counseling centres for psychotropic substance abusers with a view to tackle the problem of youth drug abuse; and
- (f) district collaboration – to enhance multi-sectoral and cross-disciplinary co-operation, to inject 200 million dollars into the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged as well as to promote voluntary work.

3. Members endorsed the Department's policy of providing additional places in residential care homes, rendering support to mental patients and mentally retarded persons and developing district co-operation plans. They also put forward the following proposals for the consideration of the Government:

- (a) to step up the supervision of private hostels for the elderly, to incorporate all care and attention homes into the scope of supervision under the district service plan and to consider renewal of licence according to the assessment of the quality of service;
- (b) to allocate more resources as support to rehabilitation services for mental patients, strengthen the ties with the Hospital Authority in a bid to reform mental health services; to form a task force and enhance the co-operation with the Hospital Authority and the Housing Department so as to keep track of patients with violent tendency and a history of occasioning actual bodily harm to others; to offer assistance to mental patients living alone at private housing estates and employ additional medical social workers to visit the patients more frequently;
- (c) to make an upward adjustment of the old age allowance discretionally, relax the absence limit for receiving such "fruit grant" and waive the seven-year residency requirement for new immigrants to apply for CSSA;
- (d) to set up a volunteers' fund or inject capital into current funds for further development of local volunteer service;
- (e) to devise appropriate training programmes for local unemployed women with reference to the experience of foreign countries; and
- (f) to plug the loopholes of law so as to prevent illegal bodies' conspiracy to defraud by conducting fund-raising activities in the street.

Concern over the Development of the Three Greenfield Areas at the Hung Hom Bay Waterfront

4. Members expressed the concern of the residents in Hung Hom district about the development of the three pieces of land at Hung Hom Bay, respectively located at the junction between Hung Luen Road and Wah Shun Street, the junction between Hung Luen Road and Kin Wan Street plus the junction between Hung Luen Road and Oi King Street. They urged the Government and the Development Bureau to address the residents' concern about the wall effect and lower the plot ratio of the sites.

Support for Package of Proposals for the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012

Submission on Political Reform by Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood

The Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012 Should Comply with the Principles of Universality and Equality

5. Members were informed by the Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs of the following main points covered by the Consultation Document on the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012:

- (a) the package of proposals for the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012 published by the HKSAR Government had a broad and strong electorate base. The opinions collected during the consultation period indicated that the public generally supported the move to democratise Hong Kong's electoral system as set out in the consultation paper;
- (b) the proposed package put forth by the HKSAR Government substantially increased the participation of the elected District Council members in the Election Committee (EC) and the Legislative Council (Legco). In so doing, the electorate base of representatives into the EC and the Legco was expanded and the democratic elements of the two electoral methods for 2012 significantly elevated;
- (c) the package of proposals widely adopted views and opinions of different political parties and groups, say, no further creation of functional constituency seats in Legco in 2012; all the five new

functional constituency seats and the existing District Council seat should be returned through election among elected District Council members; under the framework of the “Decision” made by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC) in 2007, the package had achieved the greatest degree of democracy; and

- (d) the public’s opinions of the 2012 Reform Package was recorded in the Report and would be dealt with by the next-term Government.

6. After much discussion, Members passed the motion of “Kowloon City District Council Supporting the Government’s Package of Proposals for the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012”.

Concern about Social Order in the Community — Control the Spread of Vice Establishments

7. In Hong Kong, there was no law regulating prostitution in one-woman brothels. As Kowloon City was an old district and rent was relatively low, vice establishments of such kind grew incessantly in number, worsening the problem of “sub-divided units”. In view of the negative impacts of one-woman brothels on public order and environmental hygiene, Members opined that the Government should address the problem and study the way to plug loopholes in law to control the spread of sex establishments in the district.

Attention Caused by the Problems Related to “Private Streets” of Whampoa Garden

8. Given that the MTR Kwun Tong Line Extension project would construct entrances and exits at private streets of Whampoa Garden which would bring about a huge pedestrian flow, hence generating additional maintenance cost, Members proposed the Government to consider recovering the private streets concerned and to negotiate with residents in Whampoa Garden as soon as possible with a view to ensure proper maintenance of the streets and hence, safeguard the safety of pedestrians.

9. In response, the representative from the Lands Department explained that prior to any decision of recovering the private streets, the Government would take into account many factors such as if the owners had a good title of the streets and

consented to a handover, which department would undertake the management and repairs of roads in the future and so on. As to the takeover of the responsibility of management and repairs of roads, the opinions of relevant government departments would be sought. However, the Transport Department and the Highways Department revealed to the District Council that the proposal would not be deliberated at this stage.

Rising Prices for Everything Pose Great Pressure on the Public — Opposition against Public Utilities Increasing Prices Despite Making Huge Profits

10. In light of the rise in gas charges, rent for Housing Society flats, MTR fares, electricity charges by CLP and so on, which were closely linked with the life of the general public, Members urged the Government to rein in rising fees and charges of public services in order to safeguard the interest of the citizens. Members took the view that, as a non-profit making organisation, the Housing Society (HS) should have regard to public interest and reasonably adjust the rent downwards considering its huge surplus every year and the still-weak economy.

11. The representative from the HS explicated that as the organization was independent and self-financing and various improvement works were carried out in many housing estates over the years like installing lifts and entrance gates, enhancing security and cleansing services etc., it was necessary to increase rent to offset the spiralling operation cost. She also pointed out that the new rents would remain unchanged for two years until 31 March 2012.

Kowloon City District Office
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