

Progress Report of the 18h Meeting of the Kowloon City District Council

Purpose

This paper aims to report on the major issues discussed at the 18th meeting of the Kowloon City District Council (KCDC) on 9 September 2010.

Meeting with the Director of Highways

2. Members welcomed the Director of Highways to the meeting to elaborate the organisation of the Highways Department (HD) and the main tasks of the department in Kowloon City district.
3. During the discussion, Members gave various proposals / opinions for the consideration of the HD including:
 - (a) to properly co-ordinate the work of various departments during the construction of the Kwun Tong Line Extension, the Shatin to Central Link and the Central Kowloon Route so as to ensure that the traffic would not be adversely affected;
 - (b) to review the current management of underground facilities;
 - (c) to construct more entrances / exits at the stations along the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the Shatin to Central Link as well as to develop a good pedestrian linkage system to provide the aged and disabled barrier-free access to the rail service;
 - (d) to commence as soon as possible the construction of an elevator at Waterloo Hill;
 - (e) to build a green corridor at each of the entrances / exits at Man Siu Street and Tak Man Street along the Kwun Tong Line Extension for the use of nearby residents;
 - (f) to install street lamps at 21 rear lanes in To Kwa Wan South to enhance the lighting facilities;
 - (g) to accelerate the laying of environmental tiles on the ground, to follow up actively the problem of holes appearing on road surface after rain and to ensure proper maintenance of road surfaces;

- (h) to release more information about works proceeded by drill and blast methods and to provide the Chinese version of information and publications uploaded on the webpage of the HD; and
- (i) to pave steel sand or other anti-slippery materials on the section of the flyover between Princess Margaret Road and Argyle Street to reduce the occurrence of traffic accidents.

4. In response, the Director of Highways said that after collecting the public's views about the location of MTR entrances / exits and the provision of pedestrian links, the Department would closely discuss with the MTR Corporation Limited in a bid to perfect the design of the linkage system. Moreover, the HD had established a stringent control system governing the works for laying underground facilities. Prior to the commencement of a major project, a traffic impact assessment would be undertaken. An on-site liaison team would be formed to conduct supervision and co-ordination with the aim of ensuring that servicing works were carried out in order and traffic flow would not be seriously disrupted by the projects. In addition, the Department would continue to co-ordinate road digging works to guarantee early completion as well as to study ways for maintaining road surface and resurfacing existing roads with tiles. Regarding the proposals of installing an elevator at Waterloo Hill and street lamps in 21 rear lanes at To Kwa Wan South, further study would be required. Yet the proposal for constructing a cover at the flyover of Princess Margaret Road would not be adopted owing to its low load-carrying capacity.

Management Scheme for the Display of Roadside Non-commercial Publicity Materials

5. In respect of the proposals put forward by the Ombudsman on the Management Scheme for the Display of Roadside Non-commercial Publicity Materials, the Lands Department had conducted consultation with the 18 District Boards since August 2010. The result indicated that most of the Members in this district held opposite views or reservations towards the Scheme particularly on the proposals of replacing designated spots at central dividers and 10 metres on the traffic downstream as there was a lack of evidence showing that banners or publicity materials at such display spots affected drivers or caused traffic accidents. Furthermore, conspicuous places for Members to display banners to report their work and achievements were inadequate. For these reasons, they suggested that the

Government should keep the display spots, take measures to secure banners and clear illegal publicity items properly in order to guarantee efficient management of the display of roadside publicity materials.

6. A Member opined that traffic safety was a prime concern and thus, the two display spots should be replaced. It was also suggested that the Government should conduct a consultation to enhance communication with Members before deciding on the location of designated spots for hanging banners.

Call for the Formulation of Comprehensive Housing and Land Policies to Help Citizens to Purchase Homes

7. In view of the difficulty of citizens in purchasing homes due to the continuous rise in prices of private properties, Members urged the Government to formulate a long-term housing policy to meet the public demand for housing. Members made the following proposals on two major aspects, namely land supply and housing policy, for the consideration of the Government:

- (a) to speed up the pace of redevelopment of districts in Kowloon such as 5th Street, 13th Street and eight “Wan” streets in Kowloon City to increase the supply of land;
- (b) to develop new towns and construct more public housing estates at relatively remote areas in the New Territories;
- (c) to increase the supply of small and medium residential flats and to contemplate imposing conditions on flat numbers and flat size for the sale of land so as to lead developers to build more small and medium units; in this connection, Members expressed support for the Government’s pilot scheme at a site near the West Rail Long Ping Station;
- (d) to consider to build an appropriate amount of Home Ownership Scheme flats and public housing units for the middle class as well as to implement the Transfer of Public Housing Rent Allowance Rebate Scheme in order to resolve the housing problem for middle class people;
- (e) to plan the construction of flats priced at HK\$2,000,000 to HK\$3,000,000 and provision of up-to-standard rental units at

reasonable rentals for citizens with different financial ability to purchase or rent;

- (f) to simplify the application form for public rental housing and to handle the cases in which the elders failed to submit marriage documents flexibly as well as to consider the implementation of the reverse mortgage scheme to help improve the living of the elderly; and
- (g) to put forward measures for curbing property speculation such as stepping up efforts to collect profits tax on property transactions.

8. However, a Member commented that the responsibility of the Government was to provide basic accommodation for citizens to rent instead of assisting them to purchase property.

Combating Unscrupulous Shops to Maintain the Confidence of Tourists Coming to Hong Kong for Shopping

9. A tourist guide compelling mainland visitors to make purchases aroused territory-wide concern and cases related to unscrupulous retail shops in shopping areas were reported recently. Members expressed concern about the issue and suggested the following ways to the Government in an attempt to govern and combat shops operating in an unscrupulous way:

- (a) the departments concerned and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong should step up the regulation of travel agencies and the “zero-fare” operation mode;
- (b) to publish a list of shops involved in malpractices and explore ways of stopping the shops from obtaining a new business registration certificate and continuing to operate after being prosecuted; and
- (c) to strengthen the education of mainland compatriots so as to heighten their awareness towards shops operating unscrupulously.