

Summary of the Minutes of 4th Meeting of the Tsuen Wan District Council

The 4th Meeting of the Tsuen Wan District Council was held on 27 May 2008. The major issues discussed were summarised as follows:

Healthcare Reform Consultation Document

2. Councillors pointed out that most members of the public objected to the health insurance contribution because they worried that as the contribution of each one was different, they could not receive same kind of medical treatment. Low-income and middle-class residents concerned that healthcare financing would increase their expenses and burden. Councillors put forward suggestions on the financing arrangement. Some of them considered that the low-income group should be exempted from the insurance contribution and the payment should be shared between employers and employees. The Government should be careful not to increase the burden of the middle-class, low-income and chronically ill and should find other sources for financing, such as investment, savings from cutting the administration cost of the Hospital Authority, income from tax and so on. Apart from health insurance, Councillors also put forward their opinions on other aspects. A Councillor considered that the Government should subsidised the elderly to consult private practitioners. Other Councillors thought the Government should also improve the medical services as a whole.

3. In response, the Secretary for Food and Health explained that with the aging of population and increase in the cost of medical services, it would be more and more difficult for the Government to maintain quality services. It was the proper time to implement the healthcare reform to resolve the problems in public medical services. Health insurance ensured that patients could have proper treatment and caring, and mandatory health insurance system could safeguard the provision of medical services to the retired. The Government would establish a safe net for low-income group, recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Allowance and the underprivileged class, and carefully considered the responsibility of payment between employers and employees. Moreover, the Government must carefully control the expenditure on medical services to meet the future demands. They would clearly explain the usage of resources and the scope of improvement after the direction of reform was finalised. Regarding the medical services for the elderly, he said that the Health Care Voucher Pilot Scheme was being implemented and the Government would decide whether the amount and coverage of the vouchers would be increased after reviewing the scheme. He also responded to the other views and suggestions of Councillors. At last, he said the Government would further

consult the public after they had collected the opinions from different sectors in this round of consultation.

4. Councillors passed a motion: “Tsuen Wan District Council welcomes the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document which widely consults the members of public about the healthcare reform and financing. This Council urges the Government to continue to take care of the low-income families and the underprivileged and to take into account the burdens and needs of the middle-class when formulating any healthcare financing arrangement.”

Visit of Permanent Secretary for the Environment to Tsuen Wan District Council

5. Councillors expressed their views on different environmental issues, such as air pollution, recycling industry, aircraft noise pollution, greening work, emission of vehicles and factories, landfill and so on. Besides, a Councillor objected to the introduction of a tax to minimise the use of plastic bags. Instead, the Government should achieve its goal by enhancing the civic education. Some Councillors said they supported the Programme on Source Separation of Domestic Waste. However, they thought the facilities in old buildings should be improved to maximise the effectiveness of the programme. Councillors also urged the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to pay attention to some local environmental issues, such as the hygiene of Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen, cooking fume from restaurants in Luk Yeung Sun Tsuen, offensive odour from drains near Discovery Park and Chiu Tam Path, traffic and industrial noise of Texaco Road and Wo Yi Hop Road and the nuisance caused by the recovery shops at the town centre.

6. In response, the Permanent Secretary for the Environment pointed out that the Government would handle the noise pollution complaints according to the law, and the problem of aircraft noise would be followed up by the Civil Aviation Department/Hong Kong Airport Authority. She agreed that the operation of recycling industry/shops still had room for improvement. Relevant department would discuss with the operators about how to improve the business process and equipment to eliminate the nuisance. The Government put great emphasis on greening work. Greening element was included in some public works and schools and social institutes were financed to implement greening work. Vehicles and factories should comply with their respective emission standards and those who failed to do so might be prosecuted. Besides, the incinerator would be commenced between 2014 and 2015. However, it was not used to replace the landfill but to extend the life span of the landfill only. Regarding the waste collection in old buildings, the building management could place the recycle bins at

the ground floor of the buildings and the department would also study the feasibility of introducing bins of smaller size. EPD would follow up the local environmental issues raised by Councillors. They had all along laying drains in rural area such as Sham Tseng, Chuen Lung, Lo Wai and so on, and would continue to study the feasibility of including other villages in the works. For the traffic noise, the Government would provide noise barriers on existing roads or pave the roads with noise reduction surfacing material if possible.

Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront – Stage 2 Public Engagement

7. Some Councillors supported the concept of re-assembling the Queen's Pier at the waterfront and reviving the pier function. They thought the concept would enhance Hong Kong's image of international metropolitan and attracted more tourists. A Councillor supported the concept of re-assembling the Pier at the original location for historical reason. A Councillor would like to know if the Government had any resolution to deal with the big waves created by the reclamation works. Another Councillor asked whether there was any special feature to attract the public or tourists to the green area and open space of the harbourfront. A Councillor urged the Government to start the works as soon as possible.

8. The representative of Development Bureau explained that under the concept of re-assembling the Queen's Pier at the waterfront, the pier function could be revived and the design of Central Piers No. 9 and 10 also integrated with the design of the Queen's Pier. Different elements of design and areas with special features were included in the urban design for the new Central harbourfront, with a view to increasing the energy of the location. The Government understood Councillors would like the works to start early. However, as the commencement date of the construction of Central-Wan Chai Bypass had not been confirmed yet, the construction of some new harbourfront facilities which were on the bypass was affected. The new Central harbourfront would be developed in phases, so that the public could enjoy the facilities as soon as possible.

9. Councillors passed a motion: "Tsuen Wan District Council supports the Urban Design Study for the New Central Waterfront. The development density of Central business centre shall be reduced and the greening work shall be actively implemented, with a view to provide large amount of open space and facilities for Hong Kong people. This Council wishes the Queen's Pier can be revived at Central waterfront as soon as possible."

Request MTR Corporation Limited to Speed Up Installation of Platform Screen Doors at Tsuen Wan Station

10. Some Councillors pointed out that as more than 200,000 passengers would use MTR Tsuen Wan Station everyday, there was an urgent need to install platform screen doors at the station. They thought that the company should enhance and improve their services to fulfil the needs of the passengers.

11. In response, the representative of MTR Corporation Limited pointed out that 30 underground MTR stations had been installed with platform screen doors and the rail system as a whole met the safety standard. In order to provide the passengers with better services, the company planned to install platform screen doors at 8 ground and elevated stations (including Tsuen Wan Station). The works was expected to be completed in 2012.

Issue about Dilapidated Pedestrian Link at Section 4 of Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen

12. In response to the points raised in the document submitted by a Councillor, the representative of Lands Department pointed out the department considered the link concerned could not be rehabilitated and should be demolished. The department would construct another pedestrian access and the works would be commenced in July.

13. The Councillor wished that the Lands Department would provide street light at the location before the pedestrian link was demolished. She also asked if the one-month consultation period could be shortened, so that the works could start earlier.

14. The representative of Lands Department said that they would liaise with the villagers, hoping to reach a consensus on shortening the consultation period.