

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Eastern District Council

Date : 5 July 2016 (Tuesday)

Time : 2:30 pm

Venue: Eastern District Council Conference Room

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of Arrival</u> <u>(pm)</u>	<u>Time of Departure</u> <u>(pm)</u>
Mr TING Kong-ho, Eddie	2:30	end of meeting
Mr WONG Chi-chung, Dominic	2:30	end of meeting
Mr WONG Chun-sing, Patrick	2:30	end of meeting
Mr WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH	2:30	3:50
Mr KU Kwai-yiu	2:30	end of meeting
Mr HO Ngai-kam, Stanley	2:30	end of meeting
Ms LI Chun-chau	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LEE Chun-keung	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LAM Sum-lim	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LAM Kei-tung, George	2:30	end of meeting
Ms LAM Chui-lin, Alice, MH	2:30	end of meeting
Mr SHIU Ka-fai	2:30	end of meeting
Mr HUNG Lin-cham	2:30	end of meeting
Mr CHUI Chi-kin	2:30	end of meeting
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-cheong, Howard	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LEUNG Siu-sun, Patrick	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, David	2:30	end of meeting
Ms LEUNG Wing-man, Bonnie	2:45	end of meeting
Mr HUI Lam-hing	2:30	end of meeting
Mr HUI Ching-on	2:30	3:20
Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Aron	3:45	4:00
Mr MAK Tak-ching	2:30	end of meeting
Mr WONG Kin-pan, BBS, MH, JP (Chairman)	2:30	end of meeting
Mr WONG Kin-hing	2:30	end of meeting
Mr YEUNG Sze-chun	2:45	end of meeting
Mr CHIU Ka-yin, Andrew	2:30	end of meeting
Mr CHIU Chi-keung (Vice-chairman)	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LAU Hing-yeung	2:30	end of meeting
Ms CHOY So-yuk, BBS, JP	2:40	end of meeting
Mr CHENG Chi-sing	2:30	end of meeting
Mr CHENG Tat-hung	2:45	end of meeting
Mr LAI Chi-keong, Joseph	2:30	end of meeting
Mr NGAN Chun-lim, MH	2:30	end of meeting
Mr LO Wing-kwan, Frankie, MH	2:30	end of meeting

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Absent with Apologies

Mr KUNG Pak-cheung, MH

In Regular Attendance (Government Representatives)

Ms AU Tsz-kwan, Fiona	Acting District Officer (Eastern), Eastern District Office
Mr Graham MITCHELMORE	District Commander (Eastern District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr KU Siu-fai	Police Community Relations Officer (Eastern District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr LAM Kin-tat	Police Community Relations Officer (Eastern District) (Designate), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr TSE Chick-lam	Chief Manager/Management (Kowloon West and Hong Kong), Housing Department
Mr CHIU Hak-pui, Christopher	Principal Transport Officer / Hong Kong, Transport Department
Mr LAM Kang-fuk	District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Eastern), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr LIU Wai-shing, Simon	Chief Leisure Manager(HKE), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms LOK Mee-mee, Mimi	District Leisure Manager (Eastern), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms CHAN Kit-Ming	Acting Senior Liaison Officer (1), Eastern District Office
Ms WONG Sze-man, Queenie	Senior Liaison Officer (2), Eastern District Office
Ms KONG Kei-kei, Hayley	Senior Executive Officer (District Management), Eastern District Office

In Attendance by Invitation (Representatives from the Government and Organisations)

Mr LAU Ka-keung, Peter, JP	Director of Highways, Highways Department
Mr CHEUNG Chi-hoi	Regional Highway Engineer/Urban, Highways Department
Mr YAN Ki-kit	Acting Senior District Engineer, Highways Department
Mr CHEUNG Tak-wah	Divisional Officer (Hong Kong East), Fire Services Department
Mr TONG Wai-tung	Station Commander (Chai Wan Fire Station), Fire Services Department
Mr PANG Yuk-lung, Michael	Chief Building Surveyor/Fire Safety, Buildings Department
Mr LAU Siu-chung	Chief Land Executive/Lease

Secretary

Miss WAH Pui-ye, Vivian

Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Eastern District Office

In Mourning for the Deceased Firemen Fighting the Mini-storage Fire

The Chairman led the attendees to observe one minute of silence in mourning for the two firemen who lost their lives while battling the blaze at the mini-storage in Ngau Tau Kok.

Opening Remarks

2. The Chairman welcomed Councillors and government representatives to the meeting. He extended special welcome to Mr Peter LAU, JP, the Director of Highways, Mr CHEUNG Chi-hoi, Regional Highway Engineer/Urban and Mr YAN Ki-kit, Acting Senior District Engineer of the Highways Department (HyD) for attending the meeting of Eastern District Council (EDC). He also welcomed Chief Inspector Mr LAM Kin-tat, Police Community Relations Officer (Eastern District) (Designate) of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) who would succeed Chief Inspector Mr KU Siu-fai on transfer. On behalf of all Councillors, the Chairman expressed a vote of thanks to Chief Inspector Mr KU Siu-fai for his contributions to the Eastern District during his term of office.

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Third Eastern District Council Meeting

3. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendments.

II. Director of Highways to Meet Eastern District Council Members

4. Mr Peter LAU, JP, the Director of Highways briefed Councillors on the work of the HyD.

5. 30 Councillors expressed their views and raised enquiries as summarised below:

- (a) Mr Eddie TING expressed concern about the repair works of the footpaths. He said that some public utility contractors did not reinstate the footpaths properly after carrying out their works. Upon erosion of the underlying sand, the eco-block paved footpaths became uneven and easily caused pedestrians to stumble. He hoped that the HyD would monitor the reinstatement works effectively. He also raised concern on the railway development of Hong Kong Island and the progress of North Island Line.

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- (b) Mr Dominic WONG thanked the staff of the HyD for their swift responses in carrying out maintenance works of footpaths or carriageways in the area. However, some repaired footpaths or carriageways showed signs of wear soon. He hoped that the HyD would monitor the contractors' works so as to prevent them from expediting the works at the expense of the work quality.
- (c) Mr Patrick WONG commented that the footbridge situated at King's Road near Finnie Street did not have any lifts. The elderly often avoided using the footbridge and crossed the road direct to go to the tram station, causing danger to themselves. He pointed out that HyD had recently provided a pedestrian crossing nearby to facilitate passers-by, especially the elderly to go to the tram station. To facilitate the general public, he hoped that the HyD could explore providing similar pedestrian crossing at those footbridges linking tram stations but lacking lift facilities such as the footbridge across King's Road near Taikoo Shing Road (HF70).
- (d) Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the follow-up of the three road repair workers who were killed in a traffic accident when undertaking road repair works. Separately, under the temporary road closure arrangement put in place during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival, taxis and public light buses could not enter Cape Collinson cemetery and Cape Collinson Chinese Permanent Cemetery in Chai Wan. With the connecting road managed by Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery not to be re-opened, much inconvenience was caused to grave-sweepers with disabilities and the elderly. The traffic situation would be further aggravated upon the completion of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's proposed columbarium at Cape Collinson Road. He hoped that the HyD would consider providing assistance to grave-sweepers with disabilities and the elderly. He also urged the HyD to consider the installation of lift facilities at the footbridge situated at Tong Shui Road across King's Road in North Point with a view to boosting up the utilisation rate of the footbridge so as to prevent street sleepers from staying at the footbridge.
- (e) Mr Stanley HO commended the performance of the HyD's staff. He was concerned about the uneven footpath or cracks along the sides of the footpaths, etc caused by the reinstatement works of public utility contractors. He hoped that the HyD would step up the monitoring of such works. He also raised the problem of uneven footpath or misaligned pavement caused by the manhole covers not being replaced at the same time by the utility contractors when undertaking the reinstatement works. He hoped that the HyD could follow up with the public utility contractors so as to improve such situation.
- (f) Ms LI Chun-chau said that she had been striving for years to install lifts at Chai Wan Road near Neptune Terrace linking to Tai Man Street. She hoped that the HyD could expedite the installation of the lifts so as to provide a barrier-free access to facilitate the elderly and the

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residents living in the area.

- (g) Mr LEE Chun-keung said that severe traffic congestion at the cemeteries in Cape Collinson during Ching Ming Festival and Chung Yeung Festival led to an influx of pedestrians to the footbridge above the MTR Chai Wan Station affecting the residents nearby. He hoped that the HyD could help tackle the problem. He also pointed out that heavy goods vehicles passing along the slope of Chai Wan Road caused noise nuisance to residents living in the neighbourhood of Koway Court and Neptune Terrace. While striving for the retrofitting of noise barriers in Chai Wan Road, there was still no concrete implementation schedule by now. He hoped that the HyD could help expedite the project for submission to the Public Works Subcommittee of the Legislative Council for approval. On railway development, he urged for the construction of the MTR Siu Sai Wan extension. He also commended the work performance of HyD's repair workers.
- (h) Ms CHOY So-yuk hoped that the HyD could propose concrete measures to safeguard the workers undertaking road repair works. She also hoped that the HyD could evaluate the actual work time for road repair works so as to prevent the contractors from delaying their works and adversely affecting the public. As regards the footbridge at Tong Shui Road, she opined that with the presence of pedestrian crossing facilities nearby, the installation of lifts might not help boost up the utilisation rate of the footbridge. She suggested that the HyD should consider exploring alternatives such as demolition of the footbridge.
- (i) Mr David LEUNG commended the work performance of the HyD's staff. He said that the work progress of some public utility contractors was not satisfactory leading to work delay. He urged HyD to step up the monitoring. He hoped that the HyD could enhance co-ordination among Government departments so that the repair works could be completed as soon as possible. He also raised concern about uneven footpaths paved with "besser blocks", especially the displacement of blocks caused by growth of tree roots and the uneven surfaces caused by the manhole cover works carried out by some public utility contractors. He hoped that the HyD would improve the situation.
- (j) Mr Patrick LEUNG thanked the HyD's staff for their expeditious responses. On the repair works of footpaths, he hoped the HyD could enhance the co-ordination between the contractor(s) and the local District Councillor(s) to minimise the work impact on local residents. Moreover, with anti-mosquito work being one of the key district initiatives, he hoped that the HyD could strengthen anti-mosquito and tree pruning works on slopes under the HyD's management such as the one at Sai Wan Terrace.
- (k) Mr Howard CHEUNG expressed gratitude to the HyD for its swift completion of upgrading works for the slope off Block 10 of Nan Fung

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Sun Chuen. He also hoped that the HyD could strengthen tree inspection on the slopes near Nan Fung Sun Chuen to reduce the risk of tree collapse in windy seasons. Moreover, he pointed out that the two uneven footpaths from Nan Fung Sun Cheun to MTR Tai Koo Station and to Parkvale respectively had caused pedestrians to stumble. The situation remained unsatisfactory even after the HyD's inspection. He urged the HyD to take follow-up action. He also enquired whether the HyD would pave footpath using better anti-slip blocks as the slopes in the area made it easy for pedestrians to slip and fall in rainy days.

- (l) Mr CHUI Chi-kin raised concern about the death of the three workers caused by the accident when carrying out road repair works. He hoped that the HyD could implement measures to protect the safety of workers. He also suggested that the HyD should consider installing street lamps on the roads near Lok Hin Terrace to enhance lighting at nights. He further pointed out the uneven footpaths in the vicinity of Chai Wan Municipal Services Building caused by the sinking of the channel covers, as well as near Wing Tai Road, Yue Wan Estate caused by the growth of trees. He hoped that the HyD could follow up as soon as possible.
- (m) Mr HUNG Lin-cham said that while the lift installed at the footbridge situated at North Point Road helped facilitate public access, the environmental hygiene of the footbridge still needed to be improved. He hoped that the cleaning work could be stepped up. With the high construction cost of lift installation, he enquired whether the HyD would consider conducting a cost control review. He also suggested that the HyD should explore measures to boost up the utilisation rate of the footbridge at Tong Shui Road so as to prevent street sleepers from staying at the footbridge.
- (n) Mr SHIU Ka-fai said that the Government took years to install the pedestrian escalator at Braemar Hill and there was still no concrete proposal by now. Based on the questionnaires survey conducted among residents, around 80 % of them were in favour of making Shue Yan University at Wai Tsui Crescent the end point of the escalator. He urged the HyD to update on the progress of the project as soon as possible, and to enhance communication with Councillors of the areas for effective follow-up of the project. He also praised the work efficiency of the HyD's staff.
- (o) Ms Alice LAM hoped that the HyD could re-examine the measures to protect the safety of the road repair workers. She said that the HyD should try to minimise the impact on the traffic caused by road repair works. She also suggested that the HyD should consider planting appropriate kinds of trees so as to prevent growing tree roots damaging footpath surfaces and posing danger on pedestrians. Moreover, in view of relatively low utilisation rates of some footbridges, lifts at footbridges and subways, she suggested that the HyD should undergo a detailed need assessment before commencing the construction of such

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facilities.

- (p) Mr George LAM indicated that janitors of primary schools in the area faced danger when they were helping students to cross the road after school. He hoped that the Government could install additional traffic lights or extend traffic signal time near all schools in the district so as to enhance safety.
- (q) Mr LAM Sum-lim said that no major repair of the footpath(s) at Shau Kei Wan Main Street East had been made in the past few years. The cracks or uneven surfaces easily caused pedestrians, especially the elderly to stumble. He hoped that the HyD could conduct on-site inspection and arrange for repaving works. He also suggested that the HyD, when approving road opening works, should impose conditions that required utility undertakers to reinstate the entire road so as to reduce the road unevenness caused by their works.
- (r) Mr HUI Lam-hing said that to facilitate the access of residents of Tung Yan Court through the Holy Cross Path, he had been striving for many years to replace the steps with barrier free facilities. He urged the department(s) concerned to take forward the works as soon as possible. He added that the Holy Cross Path near the entrance of Tung Yan Court got flooded when raining and according to the staff of the HyD, they could not embark on the related works without the co-operation of the church nearby. He hoped the HyD could follow up with the church.
- (s) Mr KU Kwai-yiu commended the work efficiency of the HyD's staff. He pointed out that some contractors skipped the process of laying sands resulting in the sinking of paving blocks. He urged the HyD to strengthen monitoring of the contractors' works. He further said that in spite of the increase in the motorcycle parking spaces in Tsui Wan Street recently, these parking spaces were still insufficient. He hoped that the HyD could increase motorcycle parking spaces under the footbridge at Tsui Wan Street and enhance the communication with the Councillor of the area during the process. Separately, he considered that the HyD should carefully study the pedestrian flow at the location before installing the lifts to avoid low utilisation after the completion of such facilities.
- (t) Mr MAK Tak-ching said that the Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims and the family members of the three deceased road repair workers had earlier presented petition letters and urged the HyD to give an account of the accident and investigation report as soon as possible. No reply was received so far and he asked the HyD to respond to the family members as soon as possible. He also enquired whether the section of the Island Eastern Corridor from Felicity Garden to Perfect Mount Gardens, etc would be retrofitted with noise barriers. Moreover, with the low utilisation rates of the footbridge and subway near the Felicity Garden and MTR Sai Wan Ho Station and the soon provision of pedestrian crossing facilities, he

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asked whether the HyD would consider demolishing the footbridge or closing the subway after assessing the frequency of use.

- (u) Mr WONG Kin-hing expressed strong dissatisfaction that the railway network did not extend to Siu Sai Wan. While the HyD commissioned a consultant to map out the Railway Development Strategy 2014, he considered it unreasonable that the Siu Sai Wan MTR extension was finally scrapped on the ground of inadequate population. He urged the HyD to revisit the development of Siu Sai Wan railway network as soon as possible. For the lift installation at a footbridge in Siu Sai Wan (HF163) under “universal accessibility” programme., he hoped that the works would not fall behind schedule and would be completed as soon as possible in 2017 to facilitate the residents. He also hoped that the Director of Highways could ensure on-time completion of the Central - Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link as soon as possible. As regards the repaving of footpaths and carriageways, he suggested that the HyD should consider carrying out inspection to replace the dilapidated road surfaces proactively.
- (v) Mr YEUNG Sze-chun thanked the HyD’s staff for their hard work. He pointed out that some large-scale construction works such as repaving the Island Eastern Corridor often took place in the early hours and caused noise nuisance. He hoped that the relevant departments could enhance co-ordination and arrange for the works to be carried out at other time. He also suggested that the HyD should consider measures that could enhance the use of subways or footbridges with low utilisation rates.
- (w) Mr Andrew CHIU expressed gratitude to the HyD’s staff for their hard work. He pointed out that the Water Supplies Department was carrying out stage four of water pipeline replacement works at Taikoo Shing which was expected to be completed by the end of the year. He hoped that the HyD could pledge to conduct a full review of the footpaths and carriageways under its management in the Taikoo Shing area upon completion of the water pipeline works and carry out necessary repair works to improve the road condition. He also hoped that the Central - Wan Chai Bypass could be completed as soon as possible to help relieve the traffic congestion in the northern region of Hong Kong Island.
- (x) Mr LAU Hing-yeung appreciated the work efficiency of the HyD’s frontline staff, especially for dealing with those small-scale road repair works. He pointed out that the lift installation at the footbridge situated at Hing Man Estate (HF63) under “universal accessibility” programme was expected to be completed in 2017. The connectivity was nonetheless restricted by the geographical constraints. He suggested that a study to be conducted on building footbridges connecting Chai Wan West including Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Hing Man Estate, Shan Tsui Court to facilitate public access.

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- (y) Mr Frankie LO said that some street lamps caused light pollution to the adjoining residential areas. Upon receipt of complaints, the HyD would implement measures such as installing light screens, etc to reduce the impact of street lamps on residents. He voiced that the HyD could take initiative to inspect the street lamps and follow up on those lamps affecting residential areas. He also hoped that the HyD could regularly clear garbage, dry leaves and other objects on the slopes under its management to avoid clogging of the drainage. Moreover, he hoped that the HyD could instruct the contractor responsible for cleaning lift(s) and escalator(s) at Fortress Hill to improve the hygiene of the said facilities. He also relayed residents' request to install a downhill escalator for the HyD's consideration. Furthermore, he suggested that the Government should consider demolishing the footbridges with low utilisation rate such as the one at Tong Shui Road.
- (z) Mr Joseph LAI hoped that the HyD could give an account of the incident to family members of the three road repair workers as soon as possible. He also hoped that the HyD could improve the narrow section of a carriageway at Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir Dam at Tai Tam Road as congestion often occurred. He also pointed out two other spots with uneven bituminous road surfaces caused by soil erosion and enquired whether materials other than bitumen could be used to pave roads.
- (aa) Mr CHENG Tat-hung said that given the presence of pedestrian crossing facilities at Tong Shui Road, the installation of a lift at the footbridge would not boost the utilisation rate of the footbridge. He expressed grievance over the death of the three road repair workers, and enquired whether they were contractors' workers and any compensation to be made by the HyD to their family members. He also asked how the HyD handled the road unevenness caused by manhole cover works carried out by utility undertakers. Moreover, he enquired about the scope of the HyD in taking follow-up actions on public utility facilities, including water seepage problems arising from water pipelines. Furthermore, he hoped that the HyD could reduce night-time works so as to prevent noise nuisance.
- (bb) Mr CHENG Chi-sing said that the lift installation works at the footbridge at the intersection between Tin Chiu Street and King's Road was underway. On the other hand, there was only an escalator on the other side of the footbridge connecting to the mall at Healthy Gardens. He hoped that the HyD could discuss with the corporation concerned to install lifts on both sides of the footbridge to facilitate public access. He also pointed out that the footpath from Pak Fuk Road to the entrance of Healthy Village Estate Phase III was uneven due to the growth of tree roots, and hoped that the HyD could conduct on-site inspection and follow up. He also hoped that the departments concerned could enhance co-operation for early completion of the HyD's excavation works.

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- (cc) The Vice-chairman said that when utility contractors reinstated footpaths, they often skipped the processes such as cementing and caused unevenness of footpaths paved with “besser blocks”. He urged the HyD to step up its monitoring. He further said that the completion of the Central - Wan Chai Bypass would connect Hong Kong Island East and West and hoped that the HyD could consider the development of a circular expressway connecting the entire Hong Kong Island in the long run.
- (dd) The Chairman said that owing to the geographical attributes of Eastern District, some footpaths especially those at King’s Road were steep slopes. He hoped that the HyD could make appropriate adjustments to the gradient when designing, levelling or repairing these footpaths. He was also concerned about whether the Central - Wan Chai Bypass could be completed on schedule to alleviate the traffic congestion in Eastern District. He also voiced concern over the compensation arrangement of the three deceased repair workers and hoped that the HyD could provide the family members an account of the incident as soon as possible.

6. Mr Peter LAU, JP, the Director of Highways responded to the views and enquiries of Councillors as follows:

- (a) The HyD was deeply saddened by the accident which killed the three road repair workers. The HKPF was currently conducting investigation of the accident and relevant information was unable to be provided. The workers were the staff of the contractor. The HyD had liaised with the contractor immediately after the accident and urged the contractor to contact the family members of the deceased and provide appropriate assistance. The Development Bureau had also contacted the Construction Industry Council to provide financial support to the family members of the three deceased workers through its fund. On road repairs, the HyD had issued the Code of Practice for the Lighting, Signing and Guarding of Road Works (the Code). When conducting road repair works, contractors had to follow the Code and implement safety measures. The HyD would remind all of its road repair contractors to ensure strict compliance with the Code .
- (b) As far as repair and maintenance of footpaths was concerned, the HyD had formulated work specifications for contractors’ compliance when carrying out paving works. As regards footpath reinstatement works carried out by the contractors of public utilities after their excavation works, the utility undertakers had to follow the reinstatement procedures and conditions as laid down in the evacuation permits issued. As regards the unevenness surface caused by growth of tree roots, the HyD would work together with arborists to explore ways to preserve the trees while minimising the impact on pedestrians.
- (c) Besides following up on complaints, the HyD would regularly arrange staff to inspect the footpaths under its management, and carry out

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repair and maintenance works as appropriate to ensure the conditions of the footpaths and protect the safety of road users. Regular inspections would be arranged at least every six months, and the inspection would be stepped up if necessary.

- (d) On road repairs, the HyD would take into account various aspects including the impact of the works on traffic flow and noise level for arranging repair works. The HyD would co-ordinate with departments such as the HKPF, the Environmental Protection Department and Transport Department (TD) to arrange for repair works as appropriate. The HyD was aware of the residents' concern on the implementation of works for retrofitting noise barriers. Priority for such works would follow the established procedures and resources allocation mechanism.
- (e) In devising the railway development strategies, the HyD's consultant explored three schemes for Siu Sai Wan Line, namely the "Extension" Scheme, the "Bifurcation" Scheme and the "Feeder" Scheme. Among the options, the public generally agreed that extending the Island Line to serve the Siu Sai Wan residents would be the most preferred option. In respect of technical assessment, the Chai Wan end of the Island Line was currently surrounded by a number of buildings which blocked the extension of that line and the proposal would require further consideration of the extension arrangement. Taking into account various factors, three of the seven railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 were hence taken forward first, with the North Island Line to be implemented at the next stage. The development of Siu Sai Wan Line would be revisited later.
- (f) Regarding the escalator installation at Braemar Hill, the HyD was carrying out ground investigation and preliminary design, and it was planned that the progress be further reported in the final quarter of 2016.
- (g) With regard to footbridges and subways with low utilisation rates, the HyD together with the TD would keep in view the utilisation and consider taking appropriate measures to enhance utilisation. As for the suggestions of connecting the entire Chai Wan West with footbridges and installation of traffic lights in the neighbourhood of the schools in the district, the HyD would relay these suggestions to the TD.
- (h) The Central - Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link project encountered difficulties and challenges since commencement, including a large metal object being found at the seabed of the reclamation site in Wan Chai. It was currently anticipated that the Bypass could not be commissioned in 2017 as originally scheduled. The HyD was closely monitoring the progress of the works, and would implement appropriate measures to expedite the works with a view to commissioning the Bypass as early as possible so as to improve the traffic conditions of the northern shore of Hong Kong Island.

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- (i) Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir Dam was a declared monument. Road widening works would affect the structure of the dam and could not be proceeded. Meanwhile, it was anticipated that the installation project at the footbridge in Siu Sai Wan (HF 163) under “universal accessibility” programme would be implemented as scheduled. If there were other situations affecting the work progress, the HyD would inform the Councillor(s) of the area. With regard to the issues concerning Shau Kei Wan Main Street East and Taikoo Shing, the HyD would gather further information and follow up with the relevant Councillors after the meeting.

7. The Chairman thanked Mr Peter LAU, JP, the Director of Highways and his colleagues for attending the meeting, and invited the Director to note Councillors’ views.

III. Strongly Requesting the Relevant Government Departments to Inspect All Mini-storage Facilities in Hong Kong and Enhance Their Fire Safety and Regulation As Soon As Possible
(EDC Paper No. 58/16)

IV. Concern about the Safety of Mini-storage Facilities
(EDC Paper No. 59/16)

8. Since the above two documents were related to the fire safety of mini-storages, the Chairman proposed and Councillors agreed to discussing them together.

9. The Chairman welcomed Mr CHEUNG Tak-wah, Divisional Officer (Hong Kong East) and Mr TONG Wai-tung, Station Commander (Chai Wan Fire Station) of the Fire Services Department (FSD); Mr Michael PANG, Chief Building Surveyor/Fire Safety of the Buildings Department (BD); and Mr LAU Siu-chung, Chief Land Executive/Lease Enforcement of the Lands Department (Lands D) to the meeting. Mr HUNG Lin-cham and Mr KU Kwai-yiu briefed the meeting on Paper Nos. 58/16 and 59/16 respectively.

10. Councillors noted the consolidated reply of the Security Bureau, Development Bureau, FSD, BD and Lands D.

11. Mr CHEUNG Tak-wah of the FSD, Mr Michael PANG of the BD and Mr LAU Siu-chung of the Lands D responded as follows:

FSD

- (a) The inter-departmental working group formed to enhance the fire safety of mini-storages had convened its first meeting on 27 June to explore short, medium and long-term measures to strengthen the fire safety of mini-storages and similar premises. The FSD, BD, Lands D and Labour Department had started to inspect all mini-storages and similar premises in Hong Kong on 28 June for any breach of the

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existing statutory requirements.

- (b) The FSD and other relevant departments would arrange to meet with the major operators of mini-storages in Hong Kong and request them to take management measures as soon as possible to improve fire safety, including increasing the number of security personnel, preventing storage of dangerous goods, strengthening fire prevention training for their employees, etc. The inter-departmental working group would further discuss how to make legislative amendments to strengthen the regulation of mini-storages.
- (c) According to preliminary information, there were currently 600 odd mini-storages in Hong Kong, they were mainly located in the industrial buildings in different districts. In Eastern District, there were 100 odd mini-storages which were located mainly in the industrial buildings in Chai Wan, Quarry Bay, Tin Hau and North Point. The FSD could get a more precise number after the inspection of all mini-storages in Hong Kong.
- (d) The territory-wide inspection would first target those mini-storages in industrial buildings without automatic sprinkler systems, and then extend to other mini-storages. If any non-compliance was found during the inspection, the FSD would take appropriate enforcement actions.

BD

- (e) The BD and the relevant departments were inspecting all mini-storages in Hong Kong. Mini-storages had to meet the requirements under the Buildings Ordinance. Regarding fire safety, mini-storages had to comply with the requirements of providing means of escape, means of access for firefighting and rescue, etc. If any unauthorised building works were found, the BD would issue statutory orders under the Buildings Ordinance to require the owners to rectify the irregularities.

Lands D

- (f) The Lands D had commenced to carry out joint inspections of mini-storages with the relevant departments since 28 June. All district lands offices would check the land leases of all the industrial buildings with mini-storages in Hong Kong to ensure that uses of premises as mini-storages in industrial buildings were in compliance with the purposes specified in the lease conditions of the buildings concerned. If the uses were in breach of the lease conditions, the district lands offices would carry out site inspections. All inspection work was expected to be completed within two months.

12. 24 Councillors expressed their views and enquiries as summarised below:

- (a) Mr CHENG Chi-sing expressed his grievance over the death of the two firemen in the fire. He pointed out that many small engineering companies would rent mini-storages for storing materials, which might

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include inflammable substances. Storage of dangerous goods was regulated by the Dangerous Goods Ordinance. The department concerned however could not inspect every locked cubicle. He suggested that the Government should legislate against storage of dangerous goods in mini-storages.

- (b) Mr CHENG Tat-hung hoped that the FSD could provide the number of mini-storages in the district and their information afterwards. He enquired about the existing legislation regulating mini-storages, the proposals for amending the legislation, and whether the law would require that mini-storages be away from residential centres for the elderly and other similar premises. In addition, he asked whether the FSD would inspect the materials stored in mini-storages and whether the equipment of firemen was sufficient to deal with fire incidents of mini-storages.
- (c) Mr LO Wing-kwan mourned for the death of the two firemen. He pointed out that the FSD should mandate immediate installation of sprinkler systems in mini-storages lacking such systems. He also proposed that the Government should consider introducing a licensing system similar to that for guesthouses. Only operators of mini-storages in compliance with the relevant legislation and fire safety requirements would be issued with operating licences.
- (d) Mr Andrew CHIU said that the incident was a tragedy. He thanked the staff of the FSD for their perseverance in serving the public and expressed his profound sadness at the death of the firemen and deep condolences to their families. The Government implemented the policy of revitalising industrial buildings and provided the business sector with flexibility. However, the relevant regulation of the old industrial buildings could not meet the up-to-date fire safety standards. In particular, the storage of a large number of goods and articles and even inflammable substance, etc, in mini-storages would pose difficulty for firefighting. He hoped that the department(s) concerned could inspect mini-storages as soon as possible and order operators to make improvement so as to prevent recurrence of such tragedy.
- (e) Mr YEUNG Sze-chun thanked the FSD for its efforts and expressed his sadness over the sacrifice of the two firemen. He said that the department(s) concerned had inspected the mini-storage at Tai On Building the previous week. He asked whether the mini-storage complied with fire safety requirements and lease conditions, and any follow-up actions to be taken. He also hoped that the FSD could provide the information of those mini-storages identified with irregularities.
- (f) Mr MAK Tak-ching said that the residents of Tai On Building expressed great concern about the safety of the mini-storage therein. He had written to the Security Bureau for an early inspection at Tai On Building. He pointed out that the mini-storage had up to 80 cubicles with narrow passageways. Although the information issued to renters by the operator of the mini-storage clearly stated that equipment such

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as fire hose reels and fire extinguishers, etc. were provided in the mini-storage, the locations of such equipment were not shown. With a filling station in the vicinity, he hoped that the department(s) concerned could follow up as soon as possible. According to the reply of the Lands D, the mini-storage complied with the relevant lease conditions. He asked the BD whether unauthorised building works, etc were found.

- (g) Mr HUI Lam-hing said that mini-storages were divided up by many partitions with narrow passageways and each cubicle was surrounded by iron sheets and locked, which greatly increased the difficulties of firefighting. He enquired whether the FSD would increase and upgrade firefighting equipment in response to such incident. In addition, if an accident occurred in the mini-storage at Tai On Building, it might turn into a disaster due to the high density of people there. He hoped that the department(s) concerned could take follow-up actions as soon as possible to protect public safety.
- (h) Mr LAM Sum-lim showed his respect for the firemen's efforts. He suggested that during inspections of mini-storages, attention should also be paid to other premises with potential risks in industrial buildings. Besides, he suggested that the FSD should review the need for upgrading the equipment, including considering the use of more equipment to help assess the risks at fire scenes before deploying firemen into the scenes so as to prevent their sacrifice.
- (i) Mr George LAM showed the photos of a mini-storage in A Kung Ngam and pointed out that fire appliances might not be able to drive into the area concerned due to the narrow access. There was also rumour that someone was living in the mini-storage. The building was adjacent to the squatter area comprising structure of wood and tin sheets. He hoped that the department(s) concerned could inspect the mini-storage as soon as possible and conduct a review to prohibit unsuitable premises from being used as mini-storages.
- (j) Ms Alice LAM offered her profound condolences to the families of the late firemen. She pointed out that there was demand for mini-storages due to the small size of flats in Hong Kong, and hoped that the Government could formulate regulations to regulate mini-storages as soon as possible. She said that if estate management companies could raise their alertness and pay more attention to fire escapes, unauthorised building works etc., and provide the FSD with information as necessary for inspection arrangement, the fire safety could be enhanced.
- (k) Mr HUNG Lin-cham commended the professionalism and dedication of the firefighters in the incident. The Government had formed an inter-departmental working group and commenced the conduct of inspections, as well as meeting with the industry to consider enhancing fire safety measures. He considered that the follow-up work after inspection was of great importance and it was necessary to rectify the irregularities carefully and explore how to strengthen the fire safety of

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mini-storages, subdivided units or other similar premises. In the long run, the Government should study regulation of such premises by legislation.

- (l) Mr CHUI Chi-kin thanked firemen for their efforts. He pointed out that the complicated layout of mini-storages caused difficulties in firefighting. He suggested that the layout plans of mini-storages should be collected during applications for conversion and the passageways should not be too narrow. Another problem about mini-storages was the difficulty to identify the items stored therein. He suggested that consideration be given to strengthening the penalty for storing unauthorised items. He said that shower facilities were available in some mini-storages that provided for bicycle storage and proposed to consider introducing legislation to avoid people from staying there overnight.
- (m) Mr Patrick LEUNG thanked the FSD's staff for their hard work. He enquired if the FSD would announce the results after the completion of inspections in two months to provide the public with information on mini-storages that met the relevant requirements. Besides, according to the current information provided by the FSD, there were about 134 mini-storages on Hong Kong Island. With regard to mini-storages in Quarry Bay and Taikoo Shing, he pointed out that there were already about 20 odd in Wah Ha Factory Building, and hoped that the department(s) concerned could fully obtain the number of mini-storages and notify mini-storages with irregularities or without sprinkler systems to make improvement as soon as possible.
- (n) Ms LI Chun-chau said that the incident was a tragedy. She expressed her gratitude to the staff of the FSD and deep condolences to the families of the late firemen. The issues involved in the mini-storages were complicated, with fire safety being one of the important issues. Old buildings followed the fire safety standards drawn up decades ago and this incident was a lesson to be learnt. The inter-departmental working group should enhance inspection and amend the relevant legislation to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. She pointed out that industrial buildings had other issues such as subdivided units and so on, and hoped that the department(s) concerned could strengthen regulation of the safety of industrial buildings.
- (o) Mr Stanley HO enquired whether the department(s) concerned had issued warnings, fire hazard abatement notices, removal orders on unauthorised building works, etc. to the mini-storages inspected. He also asked whether the department(s) concerned would take the initiative to inspect similar premises used as mini-storages and review the arrangement to ensure effective rescue in those mini-storages located in industrial buildings where the fire appliances could not gain access.
- (p) Mr KU Kwai-yiu thanked the FSD's frontline officers for their efforts. He asked whether there would be a deadline for completing the improvement works following the issue of fire hazard abatement

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notice. In addition, he enquired if there were any measures to regulate the items that could be stored in mini-storages. He hoped that the FSD could provide the number of mini-storages in Eastern District after the meeting.

- (q) Mr Patrick WONG expressed his condolences over the death of the firemen. According to the figures provided by the FSD at the meeting, there were about 17 mini-storages in Sai Wan Ho and over 10 odd mini-storages in the vicinity of Taikoo Shing and Kornhill. Nonetheless, there were nine storeys of mini-storages in Wah Ha Factory Building, at least three storeys in Zung Fu Industrial Building, two storeys in Westlands Centre, one unit in Tai On Building in Sai Wan Ho and one storey in Wing Wah Industrial Building. The FSD had mentioned that inspection would first target industrial buildings without automatic sprinkler systems, and hence, the over-40-year-old Wah Ha Factory Building and Zung Fu Industrial Building would likely be the targets for inspection. He requested that priority of inspection be accorded to mini-storages near residential areas first. He also enquired whether the Government would set up a hotline for public enquiry about mini-storages, and whether and how the inspection results would be announced.
- (r) Mr Dominic WONG thanked firemen for their dedication to duty, and expressed his deep sadness over the unfortunate death of the firemen and condolences to their families. He pointed out that the safety of mini-storages was of utmost importance. Relevant department(s) should not slacken their efforts and should step up law enforcement and allocate more resources, as well as deal with the safety issue by amending legislation, etc as soon as possible.
- (s) Mr Eddie TING thanked the firemen for fighting the fire and conveyed deep condolences to the families of the firemen who had sacrificed their lives on duty. A number of buildings in Quarry Bay converted into mini-storages were near residential areas. He pointed out that the Government should inspect fire safety facilities and amend the Fire Services Ordinance to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. In respect of short-term measures, he hoped that follow-up actions could be taken as soon as possible to install firefighting equipment and sprinkler systems. In addition, owners or operators of mini-storages should be held responsible for the safety of mini-storages and adopt appropriate fire prevention measures.
- (t) Mr Joseph LAI was sorry that the two outstanding firemen had lost their valuable lives and hoped that such tragedy would not occur again. He was concerned about the FSD's guidelines for deploying firemen into fire scenes and the procedures for deploying firemen into scenes of fierce fires when firefighting equipment could not resist high temperature. Lives were invaluable. He hoped that the professional decisions of the FSD could protect the lives of the public and firemen.
- (u) Mr WONG Kin-hing said that review and improvement was required after the occurrence of the unfortunate incident. The incident

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revealed the necessity of enhancing regulation of mini-storages and the public would also concur with the significance of regulating the safety of mini-storages. He said that while the relevant department(s) might not have full information of all mini-storages in Hong Kong, consideration might be given to issuing letters to the owners or management offices of industrial buildings to invite provision of information about the mini-storages in their buildings to avoid omission. He also proposed regulating mini-storages by introducing a licensing system.

- (v) Mr SHIU Ka-fai thanked the staff of the FSD for their efforts. As problems were revealed about regulation of mini-storages, it was appropriate that a review be conducted. The unfortunate incident had aroused discussion in the society. He supported and believed in the professional judgement of the personnel of the FSD at fire scenes, and expressed his confidence and encouragement to the FSD for their work.
- (w) Mr LEE Chun-keung expressed his deep sorrow over the death of the two brave firemen and showed his respect to all the firemen fighting the fire. It was necessary to conduct a review after the incident and address the existing deficiencies, including giving consideration to requiring mini-storages to install sprinkler systems, etc. Furthermore, he said that other than mini-storages, it was also necessary to monitor situations such as sub-divided units in industrial building to provide for leasing as a number of business centres, etc.
- (x) The Chairman mourned the two firemen who were killed on duty during the No. 4 alarm fire in Ngau Tau Kok. He enquired whether a thorough check had been conducted on the existing mini-storages on Hong Kong Island, especially the number of mini-storages in the three industrial buildings, namely, Wah Ha Factory Building, Zung Fu Industrial Building and Westlands Centre. On those mini-storages identified with irregularities, he enquired whether the FSD would request the owners or tenants to make improvement within a specified time frame, and whether additional resources would be provided to enhance firefighting equipment.

13. Mr CHEUNG Tak-wah of the FSD, Mr Michael PANG of the BD and Mr LAU Siu-chung of the Lands D responded to the views and enquiries of Councillors as follows:

FSD

- (a) The FSD appreciated Councillors' expression of condolences for the two deceased firemen, and noted their views on legislation, inspection, and firefighting equipment, etc. Since the inspection had just commenced, the FSD would only be able to get hold of more information of mini-storages in the Eastern District such as their numbers, locations, cases involving irregularities, etc after the conduct of inspection.

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- (b) The mini-storage at Tai On Building was already put on the list of inspection. If the mini-storage was found in breach of the Fire Services Ordinance and Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations, the FSD would take enforcement actions as appropriate. The mini-storage in the said building in A Kung Ngam was also on the inspection list. If the carriageways did not have enough space for access of fire service vehicles, the firefighters of the areas concerned would formulate contingency plans for handling fires or other emergencies.
- (c) In general, for cases in breach of the existing statutory requirements such as obstructions to the means of escape, the FSD would initiate a prosecution against or issue a fire hazard abatement notice as appropriate requiring the offender(s) to abate the fire hazard within 24 hours. For more complicated situations such as problems of maintenance and repair of fire services installations and equipment, or obstructions to fire services installations and equipment, the people-in-charge would be granted a reasonable period of time to rectify the irregularities. If a portable fire extinguisher was involved, 10 days would be given for rectification. If a systemic problem of a building was identified, a period of 60 days would be given for rectification.
- (d) Regarding firefighting equipment, firefighters had sufficient training, techniques and tools to break the locks of mini-storages. For the fire at the mini-storage, owing to the extremely hot, smoke-filled and dark environment and the complicated internal layout, the difficulties faced by firefighters in bursting the cubicles open and putting out the fire had significantly increased.
- (e) On legislation, the inter-departmental working group led by the Security Bureau was exploring ways to strengthen fire safety of mini-storages and how to amend relevant law(s) to strengthen the regulation of mini-storages.

BD

- (f) If operators of mini-storages were to carry out alteration works for the units which were not exempted works or minor works under the Buildings Ordinance, approval of building plans and consent from the BD should be obtained before commencement of works. In addition, no matter whether the works required prior approval from BD, it must comply with the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance..
- (g) Tai On Building was a commercial and residential building with the godown not being permitted. The mini-storage was in breach of the Buildings Ordinance. The BD would take enforcement actions.

(Post-meeting notes: The BD had issued three statutory orders (including a removal order, a discontinuance order and a repair order) to the owner(s) on 28 July 2016, requiring the rectification of the breaches within 60 days.)

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- (h) Concerning subdivided units in industrial buildings, the BD had launched large-scale operations targeting illegal domestic use of units in industrial buildings since 2012. As of the end of May 2016, 99 industrial buildings with suspected subdivided units were inspected, among which around 80 units were found to be converted to domestic use. The BD had issued 110 removal orders and discontinuance orders, of which 65 orders had been complied with. For the non-compliance cases, the BD had also initiated 29 prosecutions.

Lands D

- (i) During the inspection, the Lands D would check whether the mini-storages had breached the uses specified in the relevant land leases. In the case of Tai On Building, the land lease permitted non-industrial use. Given that the nature of godown was not considered industrial, the mini-storage used for storing objects did not breach the relevant lease conditions. The mini-storage, nevertheless, should have to comply with the laws of Hong Kong, including the Fire Services Ordinance and Buildings Ordinance.
- (j) In regard to domestic use in industrial buildings such as subdivided units, the BD launched large-scale operations targeting these buildings and the Lands D would keep close contact and exchange information with the BD. If those subdivided units in industrial buildings were found in breach of land leases, the Lands D would take action and require rectification of the breaches.

14. Mr Andrew CHIU made a statement on behalf of Mr Joseph LAI, Mr Andrew CHIU, Mr Patrick LEUNG, Mr Howard CHEUNG, Mr MAK Tak-ching, Mr KU Kwai-yiu, Mr Patrick WONG, Ms Bonnie LEUNG, Mr CHENG Tat-hung, Mr CHUI Chi-kin as follows:

“With regard to EDC Paper titled ‘Concern about the Safety of Mini-storage Facilities’, we hereby give the following statement:

1. Requesting the authorities to conduct inspections and strengthen management of mini-storages of the Eastern District and the entire territory;
2. Requesting the department(s) concerned to supervise the industrial buildings built before 1973 to enhance their internal firefighting equipment;
3. Requesting the department(s) concerned to examine and formulate fire safety guidelines specifically for mini-storages;
4. Requesting the department(s) concerned to enhance firefighting training targeting mini-storages having regard to the present fire at the mini-storage;
5. Paying respects to all firefighters and urging the Government to improve the remuneration package of frontline firefighters.

Finally, on this occasion we would like to express the noblest respect to the deceased firemen, and send the deepest condolences to their spouses and

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family members.”

15. The Chairman thanked the representatives of FSD, BD and Lands D for attending the meeting, and invited all departments concerned to supplement further information after the meeting, and note Councillors’ views.

(Post-meeting notes: The consolidated supplementary information provided by the Security Bureau was circulated to Councillors on 22 August 2016.)

V. Information Items

Chairman’s Report on the Discussion Items of the Regular Meeting

16. The Chairman reported that the discussion items for May and June 2016 had been set out in the reports of Chairman/ Vice-chairman in detail. Councillors could send their enquiries or views to the Chairman or Vice-chairman for relaying at the coming regular meeting to be held.

VI. Financial Position of Eastern District Council Funds

(EDC Paper No. 44/16)

17. The Secretary briefed the meeting on EDC Paper No. 44/16.

18. Mr Andrew CHIU enquired about the over-commitment of funds under the community involvement project subsidy scheme. The Secretary replied that since the actual spending of some projects could be lower than the approved amount, to make better use of resources, the budget would provide for over-commitment of funds with the total approved funding exceeding the allocation in a particular financial year.

19. Councillors noted the financial position of the above funds.

VII. Report on the Fourth Meeting of District Facilities Management Committee

(EDC Paper No. 45/16)

20. Councillors noted the above report and endorsed the funding applications of item VI in EDC Paper No. 45/16, and also noted the recurrent maintenance expenses of the relevant works.

VIII. Report on the Third Meeting of Culture, Leisure, Community Building and Services Committee

(EDC Paper No. 46/16)

21. Councillors noted the above report.

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IX. Reports on the Special Meeting and the Fourth Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee

(EDC Paper Nos. 47/16 and 48/16)

22. Councillors noted the above reports.

X. Report on the Fourth Meeting of Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee

(EDC Paper No. 49/16)

23. Councillors noted the above report.

XI. Report on the Fourth Meeting of Planning, Works and Housing Committee

(EDC Paper No. 50/16)

24. Councillors noted the above report.

25. Mr Andrew CHIU suggested that the voting results on the motion should be set out in the reports. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to follow up.

(Post-meeting notes: The voting details on the motion had already been set out in the meeting minutes, and the Secretariat would include relevant voting results in the reports.)

XII. Report on the Third Meeting of Vetting Committee

(EDC Paper No. 51/16)

26. Councillors noted the above report.

XIII. Report on the Third Meeting of Task Group on Festival Celebrations

(EDC Paper No. 52/16)

27. Councillors noted the above report.

XIV. Report on the Third Meeting of Task Group on Publicity about the Work of Eastern District Council

(EDC Paper No. 53/16)

28. Councillors noted the above report.

XV. Report on the Second Meeting of Steering Group on the Signature Project of Eastern District

(EDC Paper No. 54/16)

29. Councillors noted the above report and endorsed the financial arrangement

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of item IV in EDC Paper No. 54/16.

XVI. Reports on the First and Second Meetings of “2016 Eastern District Cultural Festival” Organizing Committee

(EDC Paper Nos. 55/16 and 56/16)

30. Councillors noted the above reports and endorsed the funding applications of item I in EDC Paper No. 56/16.

XVII. Report on the 215th Meeting of the Eastern District Management Committee

(EDC Paper No. 57/16)

31. Councillors noted the above report.

XVIII. Any Other Business

(A) Duty Visits related to the Work of District Council

32. For the duty visits related to the work of the District Council, the Chairman said that the matter would later be discussed with reference to the specific guidelines.

XIX. Date of the Next Meeting

33. The meeting ended at 5:45 pm. The 5th EDC meeting would be held at 2:30 pm on 4 October 2016 (Tuesday).

Eastern District Council Secretariat
September 2016