

Summary of Minutes of Meeting of Islands District Council

Date : 28 April 2014 (Monday)
Time : 2:00 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room, Islands District Council, 14/F., Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

I. Planning and Engineering Study on Future Land Use at the Ex-Lamma Quarry Area at Sok Kwu Wan, Lamma Island – Feasibility Study (Stage Two Community Engagement)

A representative of the Planning Department and a representative of the consultant respectively introduced the contents of the paper, and the planning and design concepts of the draft development plan.

A member said that he and residents of Lamma Island were supportive of the development plan. However, he was very concerned that the Planning Department took into consideration only the planning of the newly development area, and there was no overall planning for Lamma Island. It did not consider whether the development and ancillary facilities of surrounding areas and villages would be able to cope with the newly added population of 5 000 people. The existing north-south passageway on Lamma Island was very narrow and emergency vehicles could hardly pass through. He worried that the passageway would not be able to meet the demand of future population growth. He urged the Planning Department to include the road network on Lamma Island into the plan. He also hoped that the proposals raised at the Lamma North Rural Committee meeting held on April 6 would be followed up on. Residents worried whether existing community facilities at Sok Kwu Wan would be moved to the new development area, and he was concerned of marginalization of Sok Kwu Wan in the future. He said that the Government should take a holistic view of Lamma Island as a whole in allocating resources. If there was third phase consultation, he hoped that the Department would conduct planning to meet residents' demands.

A member said that she welcomed the development plan of the Ex-Lamma Quarry Area. She hoped that the Government would make use of the opportunity to conduct planning on Lamma Island anew, so that public facilities in the new development area and old areas would complement each other. The north-south passageway on Lamma Island was too narrow for emergency vehicles to pass through. While she welcomed the establishment of a fire station in the new development area, there should be a satisfactory road network linking the old areas. She also hoped that medical services on the island would be improved.

The Chairman welcomed the development plan of the Ex-Lamma Quarry Area. He said that the planning of ancillary facilities in the vicinity of the new development area was less than satisfactory. When the consultant visited the rural committees on the island, residents had expressed their wishes of improving the road network and community facilities. He said that their demands were reasonable. He reiterated that not only the new area should be developed, but the surrounding areas as well.

The representative of the Planning Department responded as follows:

- a. The demands of improving medical services and road network would be related to policy bureaux and departments concerned.
- b. There would be a new pier in the new development area to provide for ferry services. The existing ferry service of the “Central-Sok Kwu Wan” route would not be affected. Arrangement for ferry service between Sok Kwu Wan and new development area would be explored in detail in the following stage.
- c. New community and welfare facilities would be provided in the new development area to meet the demands raised by residents in the first stage of consultation. The authorities currently had no plan to relocate the community facilities of Sok Kwu Wan. The Planning Department would conduct planning of community facilities on Lamma Island as a whole.

The Vice-chairlady welcomed the development plan and hoped that the needs of old areas would also be taken into account. She concurred that

inter-departmental studies should be conducted so that overall improvement of facilities could be achieved. If planning of surrounding areas could be improved as well, residents would welcome the development plan. She hoped that requests of residents would be met in the following stage of consultation.

II. Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan and Amendments to Lamma Island and Cheung Chau Outline Zoning Plans

A representative of the Planning Department said that Lamma North Rural Committee had handed in a written submission in support of the amendments to Lamma Island Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

A member said that he had no comment on Amendment Item A in the Cheung Chau OZP and he supported the Amendment Item B2. However, he objected to Amendment Items B1, B3 and C. He said that the land lots of “Residential(Group C)7” and “Residential (Group C)8” were far away from Cheung Chau Pier. Existing neighbouring flats were mostly used as vacation houses, thus he opined that the change of land from “Government, Institution and Community(4)” use to residential use would only provide holiday facilities for corporates or the wealthy, and it would not be helpful in increasing land and housing supply. If the land lots were to be sold with neighbouring lands for construction of private houses, transportation of building materials would be problematic as roads leading to the site were narrow. As such, he objected to the three amendments mentioned above.

A member criticized that the designation of Tai Ho as a “Site of Special Scientific Interest” (“SSSI”) was tantamount to robbing personal land and property. He thus strongly objected to the Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan.

A member read out a submission from villagers of Pak Mong, Ngau Kwu Long and Tai Ho, stating their objection to the Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan. The villagers were not satisfied that the Plan had not taken into account their needs, and that very little land was designated for small houses. Villagers were also dissatisfied that Wong Kung Tin was not designated as “Village Type Development”. They opined that designation of “SSSI” would deprive land owners of the right to develop and use their land. The “Notes” stated that the villagers did not object to

protection of environment, but their expectation for development and improvement of livelihood should also be taken into account.

The member further enquired whether the Planning Department had designated some enclaves in Tai Ho as green zones in 1999, and why these lands were designated as “SSSI” in the current planning exercise.

The representative of the Planning Department responded as follows:

- a. Tai Ho “enclaves” referred to lands not covered by any town plans and also not located within the country park areas. The Government designated Tai Ho Stream, its tributaries and estuaries as “SSSI” in 1999 based on the assessment of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. It was not related to any town plans or country park areas. In recent years, some enclaves had been used for illegal purposes and the Government thus incorporated these enclaves into country park areas or town plans so that these lands would be regulated. The Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan provided temporary planning guide for use of lands it covered. It would be replaced by an outline zoning plan within three years of its promulgation. The Planning Department would continue to discuss planning details with villagers, the local people and the District Council.
- b. For the Amendment Items B1, B3 and C in Cheung Chau OZP, the Transport Department had been consulted and it did not raise any objection. The Planning Department hoped to provide more suitable land for housing through planning and amendment of plans, and it was too early at the current stage for the concern that the flats would become holiday houses.

A member said that there were not many small houses in Pak Mong, Ngau Kwu Long and Tai Ho currently, and there were lands that could be used for building houses. He hoped that the Planning Department would consider the demand of villagers for building small houses. The designation of Tai Ho as “SSSI” would restrict development in the area, and without land resumption such acts would be tantamount to robbing private properties. It would also affect the construction of infrastructure in the future.

A member hoped that the Planning Department would provide more information on certain species in its designation of Tai Ho as “SSSI”. He said that conservation should be conducted by way of land exchange. In balancing development and conservation, he believed that the Government had slanted towards the latter. In sustainable development, the needs of the society and economic development were also important. The conservation of human culture, he believed, should be as important as the protection of horseshoe crabs. He pointed out that the Planning Department was authorized by the Town Planning Ordinance to formulate town plans, but had no power to dispense compensation. He said that private land should not be included in planning unless compensation was made first.

The Vice-chairlady also criticized the planning of Tai Ho because private land owners were not provided with compensation. She urged for a review of animal and plant species in Tai Ho for its designation of “SSSI”.

With reference to the Planning Department’s response that the Transport Department had been consulted on the amendments, a member criticized the communication between the two departments. He stressed that there were only three households who usually resided in the area. At most a little more than forty flats could be built which could hardly solve the need for housing. He said that there were more urgent tasks to be dealt with on Cheung Chau instead of “grabbing land blindly”.

A member hoped that the Planning Department would continue to conduct meeting with villagers through Mui Wo Rural Committee. He said that Tai Ho was far from the city and there was no illegal development. He further hoped that the Planning Department would conduct field visit before planning was done.

A member proposed that the three villages (of Pak Mong, Ngau Kwu Long and Tai Ho) be included in the second and third phases of Improvement Works for Mui Wo Facelift.

With reference to Amendment Items B1 and B3 in the Cheung Chau OZP, a member enquired whether the Planning Department had considered if the facilities in the vicinity were adequate. She was concerned about the inadequacy of roads in particular. She also criticized the planning conducted in respect of the three villages.

A member objected to the Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan on grounds that inadequate land was assigned for village type development.

The Chairman asked members to vote by show of hands whether they objected to the Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan and Amendment Items B1, B3 and C in the Cheung Chau OZP. The results were as follows:

- a. no vote in support, 16 votes in objection to and two abstentions. The Islands District Council passed the resolution to object to Tai Ho Development Permission Area Plan.
- b. no vote in support, 16 votes in objection to and two abstentions. The Islands District Council passed the resolution to object to Amendment Items B1, B3 and C in Cheung Chau OZP.

III. Lantau District Action Plan 2014

The representative of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) said that the contents of the eight operational priorities were on the whole similar to those of the previous year. In order to combat burglaries in villages, the Police would roll out a new plan on Lantau Island and its contents would be related to the local people in due course. The Police would also enhance its strength to combat internet crimes and improve the quality of police officers. The Police was appreciative of the support given by members all along.

A member was concerned of the crime rate in Discovery Bay, which had been on the rise since the previous year, in particular burglaries of houses and thefts of bicycles. She was critical of the property management and the security personnel. Many burglaries occurred when owners were out and she thus suspected that some were inside jobs.

The representative of the HKPF said that the Police would continue to monitor the situation in Discovery Bay and would be pleased to discuss further with members.

IV. Marine Port District Action Plan 2014

The representative of the HKPF said that the Police would endeavour to enhance the public's knowledge in computer and internet safety, and heighten their alert of the risks of using social media. It would also enhance safety awareness of people engaged in marine recreational sports through education and enforcement.

A member urged the Police to strengthen its efforts to combat the trend of youth involving in drug crimes, which was on the rise. As there were more and more tourists visiting Cheung Chau, he hoped that more police officers would be deployed to patrol the island on weekends, holidays and during the summer vacations.

The representative of the HKPF said that more officers had been deployed to Cheung Chau already after typhoons, in the most recent Easter holidays and every Sundays. More manpower would also be deployed during summer holidays.

A member was appreciative of the work of the Marine Port District Police and she hoped that more police officers would be deployed to patrol the pier vicinity during festive occasions.

V. Question on Ambulance Service on Cheung Chau

The representative of the Fire Services Department (FSD) said that there was a team of ambulancemen on Cheung Chau specially dedicated to ambulance services. There were also two teams of first responders who had received advanced training, formed by firemen of Cheung Chau Fire Station and Cheung Chau Fireboat Station. If unfortunately numerous incidents occurred at the same time, ambulancemen would be first sent to respond and after that first responders.

Another representative of the FSD said that the average number of ambulance calls on Cheung Chau in the past six months were 9.7 cases from Mondays to Fridays and 10.2 during weekends and holidays. A three-month trial scheme was conducted in 2012 to provide an additional ambulance for Cheung Chau to see if services would be improved. The results showed that the level of service was more or less the same. The performance pledge of the FSD was to respond to emergency ambulance calls within 12 minutes from the time of call to the arrival of an ambulance,

and the target was to meet the response time in 92.5% of all emergency ambulance calls. Results showed that the rate of achieving target on Cheung Chau was higher than those of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. Generally speaking, if further calls were received when ambulancemen were already sent out, first responders who had received first-aid training would be deployed. On the whole, an ambulance would have to respond to nine to ten calls on average every day on Cheung Chau. There was a hospital on Cheung Chau and the injured could be sent to the hospital within a short period of time after being provided with first-aid at the scene. The FSD opined that the ambulance services on Cheung Chau were operating well, and there was no plan to increase the number of ambulances at the current stage.

A member enquired whether there was only one team of ambulancemen in other areas, and if the answer was negative, comparison should not be made in that connection. As far as he understood it, first responders could not provide medicines of heart diseases and bronchodilators. These medicines could only be provided by qualified ambulancemen. There were many elderly residents on Cheung Chau and many of whom suffered from heart diseases and bronchitis. He worried that if first responders were deployed to the scene only to find that they could not provide medicine to help the sick, delays might be caused.

A member enquired whether there was a back-up ambulance on Cheung Chau. She disagreed with the Department's saying that there were not many calls on Cheung Chau, because the general population of Cheung Chau was advanced in age and there was a strong demand for ambulance services. Recently a ship sank at Cheung Chau and all ambulances were deployed to the scene. At the same time, a call for ambulance was made when a resident lost consciousness. She enquired how the FSD would deal with such a situation.

A representative of the FSD said that the Department would deploy the resources of ambulances in accordance with the demand for services and the number of calls received. Some fire stations had two ambulances during daytime and one at nighttime. Generally speaking, when all ambulances of one area had been sent out and further calls were received, first responders would be deployed to stabilize the situation of the injured and ambulances from other areas would be deployed to respond simultaneously. The back-up ambulance of Islands District would be deployed alternately with other ambulances. He said that first responders of Cheung

Cheung Chau were very familiar with the island and were therefore able to provide efficient services.

A member said that the qualifications of ambulancemen were different from those of first responders. He enquired about the ratio of ambulancemen and first responders responding to calls on Cheung Chau, and that of other areas. If the ratio of ambulancemen was lower than that of first responders, he said that there was a need to enhance the establishment of the former.

A representative of the FSD responded that first responders on Cheung Chau responded to calls three times a day on average.

A member said that he personally regarded the figure acceptable.

A member enquired whether the figures of 9.7 and 10.2 cases mentioned previously had counted in first responders, or were they only figures of ambulancemen. He said that the crux of the issue was that firemen could not provide medicine and it would affect the quality of service. He was appreciative of the performance of the ambulancemen of Cheung Chau. However, there was only one team of ambulancemen and the manpower was not adequate, especially during holidays. He hoped that the Department would deploy more ambulancemen on duty during holidays.

A representative of the FSD said that the figures of 9.7 and 10.2 cases were the number in which ambulances were deployed. He supplemented that one more ambulance was added in 2012 as a trial and results showed that performance pledge remained more or less the same. With regard to the concern of firemen not allowed to provide medicine, he said that the personnel would take the most appropriate actions required and the injured would be sent to Cheung Chau Hospital immediately if the situation was serious.

A member said that there were more and more people on Cheung Chau during holidays and he hoped that the FSD would consider enhancing the ambulance service on the island in such periods.

VI. Motion on constitutional development of Hong Kong

An amended motion which proposed the so-called “three-track nomination” in the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017 was raised by a member and seconded by another. The Chairman asked members to vote on the amended motion by show of hands. Two members voted in favour of and fourteen voted against the amended motion. The amended motion was not adopted by the meeting.

Members then voted by show of hands on the original motion, which proposed that the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017 had to be based on the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Basic Law and candidates had to be nominated by the Nominating Committee in accordance with democratic procedures. Fourteen members voted in favour of and two against the motion. The Chairman concluded that the motion was adopted by Islands District Council (IDC).

A member said that she objected to a Nominating Committee with sifting mechanism.

VII. Question on ferry service of Islands District

A member amended the fourth point of her enquiry to requesting public tender be conducted for the proposed ferry route between Cheung Chau and Aberdeen.

The representative of the Transport Department responded to the enquiry as follows:

- a. At the February 24 meeting of IDC, the representative of the Transport Department had explained to members the reasons for fare increase and factors taken into account. After submitting the application for fare increase, ferry companies had been asked to provide detailed supporting data. In mid-February when the Transport Department opined that the fares of the six major ferry routes should be revised, consultation paper was immediately sent to members. At the February 24 meeting, members' opinions were collected.

- b. The Transport Department currently monitored the services of New World First Ferry through two sets of data. One was the daily operational data provided by the company and the other was collected by the Transport Department. The two sets of data might differ as the time period they covered varied. He reiterated that according to data collected by the Transport Department, the average occupancy rate of the “Central-Cheung Chau” route was over 40%.
- c. After taking into consideration the data provided by New World First Ferry and Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Limited, the Transport Department opined that there was a need for fare increase of 5 to 6%, so as to ensure that the existing level of services could be maintained. The Transport Department would not defer the increase of fares.
- d. The Transport Department was open to the proposal of opening a ferry route between Cheung Chau and Aberdeen. The Civil and Engineering Development Department and the Marine Department had been consulted and no adverse comment had been received. The Transport Department had conducted on-site visit with the local people at Aberdeen to study possible places for ferries to berth.

A member criticized the Transport Department for revealing to the mass media of the news of fare increase before the February 24 meeting, and also for not listening to the opinions of the members. He also queried the vast discrepancies of the two sets of data, and said that it was unreasonable that the occupancy rate provided by the ferry company would be even higher than that provided by the Transport Department. He said that if the operation of Cheung Chau route was considered independently, then there should be no fare increase. Finally, he expressed appreciation to the Transport Department for pro-actively considering the proposal of new ferry route.

Another member was disappointed that the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) did not attend the meeting and did not follow up on the enquiry. He hoped that the Transport Department would step up supervision of ferry companies so as to improve the quality of service. He said that the Transport Department should separate the patronage of fast ferries and ordinary ferries in the paper it submitted to the Panel

on Transport of the Legislative Council. He requested the Transport Department to disclose the patronage of the Cheung Chau ferry route to the public.

A member was critical of the THB for not pro-actively responding to the Council's request for meeting. She also said that the information provided by the Transport Department was confusing. She requested the Chairman to strive for the meeting with Secretary for Transport and Housing.

The Chairman said that a letter was sent to the THB on April 1 requesting a meeting with the Secretary for Transport and Housing and no reply had yet been received. He would follow up on the matter.

The member expressed deep regret for the lack of positive response from the Bureau.

A member requested that further letters be sent until a reply was received.

A member said that there were other issues at Cheung Chau Pier and she requested a joint site visit be conducted by the Transport Department with District Council members of Cheung Chau. She also proposed the installation of fans on ordinary ferries.

The representative of the Transport Department said that preliminary design for improvement of Cheung Chau Pier was being conducted, and that meeting with members concerned would be arranged at mid-year.

VIII. Question on "Discovery Bay- Central" Ferry License and Fares

The representative of the Transport Department said that the Department conducted a one-month public consultation on the license renewal of the Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited in January of the current year. Eighteen submissions were received, and seventeen of which supported the application for license renewal. The Transport Department approved the application on January 30 of the current year, and the license would be effective through April 30, 2016. In submitting application for fare increase, the service contractor had to provide opinions of residents apart from relevant data. The contractor conducted surveys on Discovery

Bay City Owners Committee (Owners Committee) and Passenger Liaison Group on February 12 and March 27 of the current year respectively, and results in brief were related to the Department. The Department issued consultation paper on April 23 and requested Islands District Office (ISDO) to distribute the paper to residents, who were asked to respond on or before May 22. As at the day of the meeting, the Department received more than 160 emails issued by Discovery Bay residents, most of which objected to fare increase and some proposed to freeze the fare until the following year. The application for fare increase was being handled internally. The Department would take into account opinions of residents and data given by the contractor. It would also conduct negotiation with the contractor. The Department would take into consideration a number of factors, such as the financial situation of the contractor, its performance, increase in operational costs, affordability of the public and its acceptability of the level of increase, and measures of cost-cutting and revenue-increase. He said that subsidies were provided for six major islands ferry routes because the routes were the only means of transportation linking the islands with the other areas. The services would not be able to continue without government subsidy, which was provided also to maintain stability of fares. If other licensed ferry routes and kaito services met the requirements, application for subsidy would be handled appropriately.

The Assistant District Officer (ADO) said that ISDO received the consultation papers at the end of the previous week and district consultation would be conducted in accordance with normal procedures. The papers had been issued on the day of the meeting and opinions received would be related to the Transport Department.

A member queried the criterion of the only outward means of transportation mentioned by the representative of the Transport Department as grounds for subsidy. She said that Mui Wo ferry route was subsidized despite land transport was available. She also said that she had not received the consultation paper yet and three days had been wasted. She said that at least seven members of the Owners Committee had conflict of interests and she enquired ISDO whether these people had been asked to declare interests when they were consulted. She was very disappointed and regretful that ISDO did not provide relevant information showing there was conflict of interests for these people. She further said that the consultation conducted by the Transport Department at the beginning of the current year was not about the renewal of license, but about contracting-out of ferry service. She clarified that she had not given any

opinions on license renewal. She also urged the Department to make clarification on the consultation paper after the meeting. To her knowledge, residents objected to fare increase at the Owners Committee meeting held on February 12 and people who had conflict of interests did not give any opinions. The minutes of that meeting had yet been confirmed and she asked the Transport Department not to treat it as a conclusion. She had written to the Deputy Commissioner of the Transport Department providing the list of those people who objected to fare increase at the Passenger Liaison Group meeting. There were some people who entered the venue of the meeting after the discussions had been completed, and these people had not given their opinions. She hoped that ISDO would make public the names of the 160 people who had emailed the Transport Department to object the fare increase, so that the policy bureau would be able to know whether conflict of interests existed.

A member said that the stopping-over at Hei Ling Chau of the Central-Peng Chau ferries caused delay to Peng Chau residents. He said that the Government could make better use of the subsidy currently used on renting berthing barge at Hei Ling Chau for establishing a direct ferry route between Hei Ling Chau and Peng Chau. He also requested for an interpretation of “ferry is the only external mode of transport”.

A member said that the existing government policy of subsidizing the ferries was “rule of man”, and that there were no consistent criteria. He said that there were some places in Islands District relying on kaitos as the only means of transport. However, no subsidy was provided for them because the number of passengers was low. By the same token, it was unfair to residents of Discovery Bay that they were not afforded with subsidy, since policies had to be applied consistently.

The representative of the Transport Department responded as follows:

- a. “Ferry is the only external mode of transport” referred mainly to external transport. Bus service of Mui Wo was mainly internal transport. There was only one bus route to Tung Chung and its frequency was sparse. Residents mainly relied on ferry for external transport, and it was more remote than Discovery Bay. Thus Mui Wo route was provided with subsidy.
- b. In the previous year, the Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited submitted application for fare increase and license renewal for two years.

However, it later changed its application for license renewal to one year and said that if its application for fare increase was not approved, it would give up its application for license renewal. Under such circumstances, the Department did not have adequate time to consult members and residents again. To avoid the same from happening, the Department introduced new measures in the current year. Negotiations with service contractor had started in December of the previous year, and application for license renewal and that for fare increase would be separately handled. The application for license renewal would be dealt with first, then that for fare increase. The Department had consulted residents of Discovery Bay on whether to explore the introduction of new service contractor(s), or whether they supported the existing contractor. Many residents (including a member of IDC) said that they were satisfied with the performance of the existing contractor, and that they did not hope to have new contractor(s). As such, the application for license renewal of the Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited was approved in January of the current year and the application for fare increase was being handled.

- c. There was no subsidy for the journey between “Peng Chau-Hei Ling Chau” and thus the fare was rather expensive. The Transport Department had not violated the principle of providing subsidy, and costs of the above journey would not be taken into account.
- d. He would relate the opinion of consistency of policies to the THB.

A member said that the existing subsidy was mainly for maintenance of ferries. He enquired how the cost of maintenance for the “Peng Chau-Hei Ling Chau” route was calculated. He said that the stop-over at Hei Ling Chau was tantamount to providing subsidy as an extra fifteen minutes would be needed for each journey. The renting of berthing barge would cost the Government around \$1.2 million a year, which would be adequate for subsidizing a new and direct route between Peng Chau and Hei Ling Chau.

The representative of the Transport Department said that the cost of maintaining machinery was calculated in ratio of frequencies and time of journey needed. The opinion given in regard of “Peng Chau-Hei Ling Chau” route would be

related to the THB for consideration in the next review.

A member did not agree with the explanation for providing subsidy for Mui Wo ferry. She criticized the Transport Department as using double standards with regard to Mui Wo and Discovery Bay. She also asked the representative of the Lands Department to be mindful of a provision in land grant requiring the developer of Discovery Bay to provide ferry service, and that the Government could re-enter upon Discovery Bay. She hoped that the Lands Department would provide opinions to the Transport Department in that regard.

A member said that he supported the provision of subsidy to the six major ferry routes and that the Government should review the need of providing the same to other routes.

IX. Question on request to relocate HKJC Off-course Betting Centre in Yat Tung Estate

The ADO requested members to refer to the written reply of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and that of the LINK. ISDO had on many occasions liaised and contacted the LINK and the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) on the matter. A letter was issued to the LINK the previous month relating to its opinions of members and the local people. ISDO would closely monitor the local situation, opinions of IDC and the HKJC's endeavor in looking for alternative locations. If application for alternative site was received, the Bureau would take into account various factors in its consideration. Relevant stakeholders would be consulted if there was such a need.

A member said that the Association of School Heads of Islands District and the education sector were very concerned of the matter. He opined that the attempt to look for another site and whether to approve the establishment of off-course betting centre at the existing location were two separate issues. He said that the HKJC should look for another location for its off-course betting centre if the existing location was not suitable. The responsibility should not fall on the Government or the society. The education sector, schools in the district and the Association of School Heads of Islands District were very dissatisfied that the matter had been dragged on for such a long time. He stressed that there were many schools in the vicinity of the off-course betting centre and that its existing location was very unsatisfactory.

A member said that the education sector and the religious sector were very concerned about aggravating of the gambling trend. He said that sanitation issues had been bred by the off-course betting centre at Yat Tung Estate and thus the centre had to relocate. He also agreed that there were adverse effects on the younger generation. He enquired whether ISDO had discussed with the HKJC in relocating the betting centre, or did it only write to the HKJC requesting it to follow up. As the existing tenancy agreement would expire in the following year, he enquired whether the HAB would renew its license to the HKJC. He also asked whether the HKJC would have to apply to the HAB for license renewal if it continued to establish its off-course betting centre at the existing site. If there was no suitable site in Yat Tung Estate, would the authorities allow the setting-up of temporary “betting-sites” for the HKJC.

The Chairman asked ISDO to relate to the HKJC the opinions raised by the two members. He said that the community had been concerned of the influence of the existing betting centre on students and hoped that a new site acceptable to all would be found.

The District Officer said that HKJC had been endeavouring to look for more suitable locations for relocating the off-course betting centre. The HKJC had also liaised with a member and followed up on the matter but no suitable site could be identified. The HKJC had implemented some short-term measures to strengthen the management and to improve environmental hygiene. ISDO had also written to the LINK to reflect that there was an urgent need to resolve the matter. The proposal of relocating the betting centre to the car park was a complicated issue as it involved change of land lease provisions. ISDO would follow up on the matter with the HKJC and the LINK.

A member said that the crux of the issue was whether the Bureau would renew its license to the HKJC. If relocation was not required, the HKJC would surely continue to rent the existing site. The issue had been raised for many years and so far there was no change. He reiterated that the existing site was not suitable.

A member enquired if the HKJC decided to maintain the existing betting centre in September 2015, would it require the approval of license from the HAB. He said that new public housing blocks would be completed in Area 56 of Tung Chung in 2016 and he proposed looking for a site there for relocating the off-course betting centre.

The District Officer said that ISDO would clarify with the HAB on whether the approval from the latter would be required. ISDO would discuss with the Housing Department for the proposal of relocating the betting centre to the public housing area in Tung Chung Area 56.

X. Question on request to install additional HSBC automatic teller machine in Yat Tung Estate

The member who raised the enquiry said that the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation mentioned in its written reply that the bank would timely review the use of automatic teller services in various areas. He would follow up on the matter through different channels in due course.

Islands District Council Secretariat

June 2014