

(Translation)

Islands District Council
Minutes of Meeting of the
Community Affairs, Culture and Recreation Committee

Date : 6 March 2023 (Monday)
Time : 2:00 p.m.
Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room,
14/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present

Mr WONG Man-hon, MH (Chairman)
Ms LAU Shun-ting (Vice-Chairman)
Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP
Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH
Mr YUNG Chi-ming, BBS, MH
Mr CHAN Lin-wai, MH
Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken (Arrived at around 2:06 p.m.)
Mr HO Chun-fai
Mr HO Siu-kei
Ms WONG Chau-ping
Mr KWOK Ping, Eric
Mr FONG Lung-fei

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas	Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Ms CHOW Yuen-on, Alice	Deputy District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms CHU Po-yee, Polly	Senior Librarian (Islands), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms Merry LIM	Senior Manager (New Territories South) Promotion (Acting), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms LAM Fong-shing, Florence	Senior School Development Officer (Wanchai & Islands), Education Bureau
Mr WONG Chi-leung	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western/ Southern/Islands)2, Social Welfare Department
Ms KWOK Man-lai	Representative, Association of School Heads of Islands District
Mr WONG King-chuen	Chairman, Islands District Sports Association
Ms CHOI Kwok-por	Chairman, Hong Kong Islands Cultural & Art Association

Secretary

Mr YEUNG Chiu-cheong, Mark	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Islands District Office
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Welcoming Remarks

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the government departments and organisations as well as Members to the meeting.

I. Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 7 November 2022

2. The Chairman said that the captioned minutes had incorporated the amendments proposed by the government departments and organisations and been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting. No further amendments had been proposed and the minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Proposed Social Welfare Facilities at the Public Housing Development at Tung Chung Areas 42, 46, 114 and 117 (Paper CACRC 5/2023)

3. The Chairman welcomed the following guest who attended the meeting to present the paper: Mr WONG Chi-leung, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western/Southern/Islands)2, Social Welfare Department (“SWD”).

4. Mr WONG Chi-leung briefly presented the paper.

5. Mr Eric KWOK made the following comments:

- (a) He appreciated that the SWD had planned to provide additional social welfare facilities prior to the construction of public housing estates, including hostels for physically handicapped persons, hostels for moderately mentally handicapped persons and day activity centres. Past experience indicated that it would be difficult to add such facilities to public housing estates after flat in-take, as residents tended to object to such proposals. For instance, the launching of the Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (“ICCMW”) at Yat Tung Estate had encountered many difficulties. Much liaison work had to be carried out to convince the mutual aid committees before it could finally be implemented. He considered such facility important as some residents of Yat Tung Estate were persons in mental recovery. The current policy aimed to help them integrate into the community and adapt to normal life as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the relevant follow-up work was far from adequate. He had drawn Members’ attention at a council meeting to the undesirable situation, pointing out some tragic incidents in which mental patients had committed suicide by jumping off buildings from their homes. Two weeks earlier, an elderly singleton with mental health problem suffered from a stroke at home in Yung Yat

House. Fortunately, the elderly's friend happened to visit at that time, and the patient had been sent to the hospital promptly for treatment. He asked why the department did not have any plan to provide an ICCMW in Area 42, and hoped that the department would provide such facility to serve the mental patients.

- (b) The SWD had set up child care centres at Areas 42 and 46 in Tung Chung, but the service places were limited to 100 only. According to the paper of the department, the population of the two areas was 25 000. If children aged one to six accounted for 1% of the population, there would be 2 500 children in the areas. It was apparent that the service places were unable to meet the demand. He pointed out that the government encouraged childbirth but failed to provide sufficient related support services. For instance, many parents in Yat Tung Estate needed to go out for work, the elderly members in the families could help to take care of the children. However, not many families had elderly members.
- (c) Support services for ethnic minority children were severely inadequate. Owing to language barriers and different lifestyle habits, ethnic minorities often faced many challenges and difficulties. He asked whether the SWD had monitored the services provided by child care centres to ensure that ethnic minority children received appropriate care.
- (d) The provision of child care services was not mentioned in the paper of SWD, he pointed out that such services were essential for many dual or single-earner families.
- (e) He asked why the Education Bureau ("EDB") had not provided any kindergarten in Tung Chung Areas 42 and 46. He pointed out that the existing kindergarten places in Yat Tung Estate and Yu Tai Court were close to full capacity. The same situation also applied to Areas 100, 101 and 107 in the vicinity of Ying Tung Estate. He considered that the EDB should discuss with the Housing Department ("HD") and the SWD on the provision of additional kindergartens.
- (f) The number of elderly people aged 65 or above in Hong Kong was on the rise gradually. Statistics indicated that, on average, about one-third of public housing households had a member aged 65 or above. Noting that the number of elderly singletons would increase year by year, he considered that the provision of just 100 places in the residential care homes for the elderly was insufficient to meet the demand. He had an 89-year-old relative who had been applying for admission to a government residential care home for the elderly in Tung Chung, and the waiting time was estimated to be five to six years. He considered that the residential care services for the elderly provided by the

government were seriously inadequate and hoped that the SWD could uphold the principle of “Caring for the Elderly”.

6. The Chairman commented that the provision of only 150 residential care places for the elderly in Tung Chung Area 42 by the SWD was far from sufficient. The total population of Tung Chung Areas 42 and 46 was expected to exceed 20 000, and the population was aging rapidly. He hoped that the department could explain how the quota was determined and consider increasing the quota, so that more elderly people could be benefited.

7. Mr Randy YU opined that if the SWD had set the quota for residential care services for the elderly solely in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (“HKPSG”), the arrangement would not be humane. Many years ago, a residential care home for the elderly in Tai O had been forced to close permanently for failure to employ enough care workers. Since then, the elderly people in Tai O had to seek services in other districts, such as Tsuen Wan. If the department planned to build a residential care home for the elderly in Tung Chung, he believed that it would attract not only elderly residents in Tung Chung West and the neighbouring villages, but also those living in other areas of Lantau Island, given the convenient transport facilities. Therefore, the existing quota would not be sufficient to meet the demand. He hoped that the department would increase the quota.

8. Mr WONG Chi-leung gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the support services for persons in mental recovery, the department had reserved a site at Area 100 in Tung Chung East for the provision of an ICCMW to provide support for residents in need.
- (b) As for the planning of child care services, in addition to the services provided in Tung Chung Area 42, the department would provide 100 child care service places at Area 107 in Tung Chung West and would also set up new child care centres in Tung Chung East.
- (c) The department had adopted an outreach strategy and established an outreaching team for ethnic minorities to provide support for ethnic minorities in the district. The outreaching team would work with various services providers in the district, including support service centre for the ethnic minorities, to provide support for those in need.
- (d) Regarding residential care services for the elderly, apart from the 150 service places for Tung Chung Area 42, the department would also provide 200 service places for Tung Chung Area 107. To serve the elderly residents who were in need, some sites had already been reserved in Tung Chung East for the provision of residential care homes for the elderly.

9. Mr Eric KWOK made the following comments:

- (a) The existing services provided by the SWD were insufficient. He hoped that the department could increase its support. Currently, the Wellness Centre(Islands) was the only support centre for persons in mental recovery in Tung Chung. However, with only a few social workers at the centre, it was unable to serve a large number of residents in Tung Chung, including the 45 000 residents of Yat Tung Estate, the 12 000 residents of Mun Tung Estate and the 6 700 residents of Yu Tai Court. He stressed that there had been a number of suicide cases among residents with mental health issues in Yat Tung Estate. The shortage of social workers in the district was one of the attributable causes. Therefore, in addition to an increase in the number of social workers, the department should also set up additional psychiatric rehabilitation centres before the completion of public housing developments, since it would be difficult for the government to add such facilities after the residents had moved in.
- (b) Although the department had planned to provide a total of 200 child care service places for Tung Chung Areas 117 and 42, the quota would still be unable to meet the demand, since the total population of the two areas was expected to exceed 30 000. If children aged one to six accounted for 1% of the total population, there would be about 3 000 children. It was apparent that the services to be provided would be inadequate. He hoped that the department could draw the attention of the headquarters to this situation.
- (c) Even if there were non-government organisations providing services for ethnic minorities in the district, the services were still insufficient. He hoped that the department could draw the attention of the headquarters to this situation.
- (d) Noting that Tung Chung Areas 42 and 46 had a total population of 25 000, he enquired why the EDB had not provided additional kindergartens in the areas. As there was a serious shortage of kindergarten places in Yat Tung Estate, it was impossible for the kindergartens to cater for the needs of children from other areas. He hoped that the EDB, in collaboration with the SWD and the HD, would examine the need to provide a kindergarten in Tung Chung Areas 42 and 46.
- (e) He urged the department to review the insufficient child care services, as the inadequacy was not in line with the government's policy of encouraging childbirth.

10. Mr Randy YU reminded the SWD that they had not given him a response in respect of the query on how the quota for residential care homes for the elderly had

been determined. He further asked whether the department would consider the provision of residential care homes for the elderly in other areas of Tung Chung if the existing service quota could not be increased.

11. Mr WONG Chi-leung gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) As regards community support and social rehabilitation services, apart from reserving a site in Tung Chung Area 100 for the provision of an ICCMW, the SWD would also provide support for emotionally disturbed residents and persons in mental recovery by working with relevant service providers and referring the residents in need to the appropriate service units for support.
- (b) The child care centres subsidized by the department aimed to provide services for children aged from birth onwards.
- (c) The SWD planned residential care services on a five-cluster basis. The planning of residential care services for the Islands District was included in that for the Hong Kong Island. Additional places for residential care services and day care services for the elderly would be provided in both Tung Chung East and Tung Chung West. If necessary, the department would enhance the service provision to meet the demand.

12. Mr Randy YU reminded the SWD that they had not responded directly to his question. He requested the department to provide details on the provision of care services for the elderly in Tung Chung East and Tung Chung West after the meeting, including information on the places of residential care homes as well as those for day care services. A few years ago, a residential care home for the elderly in Tai O closed down when they had exhausted all options. As a result, the department had to relocate the affected residents. He understood the difficult situation. Owing to the current shortage of residential care home places for the elderly in the whole territory, residents on Lantau Island often needed to travel a long way to other districts to seek residential care home places. Now that there was an opportunity to provide residential care homes for the elderly in Tung Chung East and Tung Chung West, he hoped that the department would cut through the red tapes and adopt a more flexible approach in seizing the opportunity, so that more places could be provided in the district and the residents of Lantau Island could be relieved of the hardship of travelling long distances to the other districts for the services.

13. Ms Florence LAM said that school facilities were not mentioned in the paper as the agenda item focused on the discussion on social welfare facilities. For Tung Chung Areas 42, 46, 114 and 117, kindergartens had been planned for some areas. As regards the actual locations and the number of kindergartens to be provided, she would need to confirm with the HD and report back to Mr Eric KWOK after the meeting.

14. Mr Eric KWOK hoped that the SWD would provide data on child care centres after the meeting. Noting that child care service was also provided at child care centres,

he questioned the capability of the centres in providing such service, as they were required to provide child care services for the existing 200 places. He hoped that the representative of the department would take up the issue with the senior management and seize the opportunity to provide additional social welfare facilities. In addition, he pointed out that many organisations that intended to provide rehabilitation services for persons in mental recovery were unable to find suitable places to launch their services. Therefore, he hoped that the department could reserve sites in Areas 42 and 46 for the construction of psychiatric rehabilitation centres.

15. The Chairman said that since Tung Chung New Development Area had a large population, the department should increase the number of care service places for the elderly to meet the demand.

16. In response, Mr WONG Chi-leung said that the relevant quotas were determined in accordance with the guidelines of the HKPSG. Members' comments were noted by the department.

(Mr Ken WONG joined the meeting at about 2:06 p.m.)

(Post-meeting note: Regarding the actual locations and the number of kindergartens in the district, the EDB had provided the required information for Mr Eric KWOK after the meeting.)

III. Reports on the work of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in Islands District

(i) Cultural Activities (Paper CACRC 2/2023)

17. The Chairman welcomed the following guest who attended the meeting to present the paper: Ms Merry LIM, Senior Manager (New Territories South) Promotion (Acting), Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD").

18. Ms Merry LIM briefly presented the paper.

19. Members noted the content of the paper.

(ii) Extension Activities held in Public Libraries (Paper CACRC 3/2023)

20. The Chairman welcomed the following guest who attended the meeting to present the paper: Ms Polly CHU, Senior Librarian (Islands), LCSD.

21. Ms Polly CHU briefly presented the paper.

22. Members noted the content of the paper.

(iii) Sports and Recreational Activities
(Paper CACRC 4/2023)

23. The Chairman welcomed the following guest who attended the meeting to present the paper: Ms Alice CHOW, Deputy District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands, LCSD.

24. Ms Alice CHOW briefly presented the paper.

25. Mr Eric KWOK made the following comments:

- (a) Apart from organising Skateboarding Fun Days, he hoped that the LCSD could organise skateboarding training courses to enhance the skills of participants.
- (b) Mun Tung Estate used to have a small garden plot; but it had been closed due to the epidemic. He enquired whether the department could discuss with the HD to reinstate a garden plot in the estate. If it was not feasible, he would like to know if the department could identify another location nearby to set up a garden plot for the residents of Mun Tung Estate and Yat Tung Estate to organise family activities.

26. Ms Alice CHOW said that the LCSD noted Members' proposal of organising skateboarding training courses, and would explore with the relevant National Sports Association for the feasibility of enhancing skill level in the Fun Days. The department would continue to relay Members' proposal regarding the organisation of training courses to the headquarters. As regards the community gardens, the department did not have information on the gardens managed by the HD. However, the Tung Chung Community Garden at Tat Tung Road, which was managed by the LCSD, had been reopened after the epidemic and the planting plots had been allocated to the public by ballot.

27. Mr Eric KWOK hoped that the department could provide details about the ballots.

28. Ms Alice CHOW replied that the department would provide the required information for Mr Eric KWOK after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The LCSD had provided information about the community gardens in Tung Chung for Mr Eric KWOK after the meeting.)

IV. Any Other Business

29. No further issues were raised by Members.

V. Date of Next Meeting

30. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 2:00 p.m. on 8 May 2023 (Monday).

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