

(Translation)

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

Date : 9 September 2020 (Wednesday)
Time : 10:30 a.m.
Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room

Present

Mr WONG Man-hon (Chairman)
Ms LAU Shun-ting (Vice-Chairman)
Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP
Mr YUNG Chi-ming, BBS, MH (Left at around 1:05 p.m.)
Mr CHAN Lin-wai, MH
Mr HO Chun-fai
Mr HO Siu-kei
Ms WONG Chau-ping
Ms TSANG Sau-ho, Josephine
Ms YUNG Wing-sheung, Amy
Mr KWOK Ping, Eric
Mr TSUI Sang-hung, Sammy
Mr FONG Lung-fei
Mr LEE Ka-ho
Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho
Mr WONG Chun-yeung

Attendance by Invitation

Mr LIU Hon-wah, Andy	Chief Executive Officer (Planning)1, Social Welfare Department
Ms LAI Wai-man, Irene	Senior Executive Officer (Planning) Management, Social Welfare Department
Ms LAU Hoi-shan, Nelly	Deputy District Leisure Manager (Islands)2, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr TSANG Wai-man	Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Islands), Lands Department
Mr IP Cheuk-yan	Senior Land Executive/Tenancy (District Lands Office, Islands), Lands Department
Mr YAN Man-chi, Robin	Property Service Manager/Service (Hong Kong Island & Islands)3, Housing Department
Mr LEONG Seong-iam, Sammy	Police Community Relations Officer (Marine Port District), Hong Kong Police Force

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas	Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Ms CHAN Siu-yan, Ruby	Assistant District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Miss CHU Po-ye, Polly	Senior Librarian (Islands), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms WONG Fan-ni, Jasmine	Senior Manager (New Territories South)Promotion, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr WONG Kin-sun	Senior Community Relations Officer (Hong Kong West/Islands), Independent Commission Against Corruption
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 YUEN Wai-kwan	Representative, Association of School Heads of Islands District
Mr LAM Kit-sing	Representative, Islands District Sports Association
Ms CHOI Kwok-por	Representative, Hong Kong Islands Cultural & Art Association

Secretary

Miss LAM Po-yan, Eloisa	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Islands District Office
Mr YEUNG Chiu-cheong, Mark	Designate Executive Officer (District Council)1, Islands District Office

Absent with Apologies

Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH
Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken

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**Welcoming remarks**

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the government departments, organisations as well as Members to the meeting and introduced the following departmental representatives who attended the meeting:

- (a) Mr YEUNG Chiu-cheong, Mark, Designate Executive Officer (District Council)1 of Islands District Office (IsDO) who would succeed Miss LAM Po-yan, Eloisa as the Secretary of the Committee;
- (b) Ms CHAN Siu-yan, Ruby, Assistant District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) who stood in for Ms CHOW Yuen-on, Alice; and

- (c) Ms LAM Fong-shing, Florence, Senior School Development Officer (Wanchai & Islands) of the Education Bureau who stood in for Ms KWAN Wai-yin, Katy.

2. Members noted that Mr CHOW Yuk-tong and Mr Ken WONG were unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

I. Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting held on 6.7.2020

3. The Chairman said that the captioned minutes had incorporated the amendments proposed by government departments and organisations and had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

4. The captioned minutes were confirmed unanimously without amendments.

5. The Chairman said that the Committee had endorsed at the previous meeting the formation of the Islands District Council (IDC) Delegation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Games (HKG) and Islands District HKG Working Group. The relevant lists were confirmed and submitted to Members for perusal at the meeting.

II. Purchase of Premises for the Provision of Welfare Facilities (CACRC 48/2020)

6. The Chairman welcomed Mr WONG Chi-leung, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Central Western/Southern/Islands)<sup>2</sup>, Mr LIU Hon-wah, Andy, Chief Executive Officer (Planning)<sup>1</sup> and Ms LAI Wai-man, Irene, Senior Executive Officer (Planning) Management of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to the meeting to present the paper.

7. Mr Andy LIU briefly presented the paper.

8. Ms Josephine TSANG said that she was a District Council (DC) Member of Peng Chau. Peng Chau had a population of more than 7 000, one third of which was elders and around half (more than 50) were singletons. As there were no services for the elderly in Peng Chau, they had to live in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE) outside the area. She pointed out that if there were elderly services in Peng Chau, such as day respite or night elderly services, residents could bring their parents to RCHE before going to work and take them home after work in the evening. In that way, residents could make a living without worrying that their parents were not taken care of, and the elders would not feel abandoned. She pointed out that if elderly services were to be provided according to population size as SWD mentioned, Peng Chau would have no elderly services. She hoped that the Government would extend the services to Peng Chau as soon as possible. Even if there were only 50 or 60 hostel places, it would be better than none. As residents were born and grew up in Peng Chau, they hoped that they could continue to live there even if they resided in

elderly homes and did not want to feel abandoned. A few years ago, she discussed with the District Officer (DO) whether RCHE could be built in Peng Chau, maybe by cooperating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). However, the discussion had not come to fruition. She urged SWD to provide elderly services in Peng Chau as soon as possible.

9. Mr FONG Lung-fei was concerned about autistic persons, special children and persons with special needs. He found that every month or week, there were one or two social workers walking around in Yat Tung Estate accompanying persons with special needs, but they had nowhere to go. He enquired of SWD whether there were suitable facilities for them. As far as he understood, there were at least 70 to 80 families with special children in Yat Tung Estate, and most of them lacked support. Some parents had to work overnight and could only take a rest after bringing their children to school in the morning. He hoped that SWD would take note of the issue. He learnt that ex-mentally ill persons would recover better if they had something to focus on. He also found that there were some deserted farmlands in the rural areas of Yat Tung Estate and enquired whether SWD could rent these lands to allow NGOs to provide farming therapy to ex-mentally ill persons to improve their conditions and help them reintegrate into society.

10. Mr Randy YU noted that SWD would establish two child care centres (CCCs) and two neighbourhood elderly centres (NECs) in Islands District under the scheme. He also agreed that residents urgently needed these services. However, no premises were purchased under the scheme to provide other important services, such as youth services and services for persons with disabilities. He enquired whether there was no need to purchase premises because there were suitable ones in Tung Chung North and Tung Chung West Extension Area to provide adequate services for residents of Tung Chung and other islands, or whether there were no suitable premises in the area to purchase. He also enquired about the progress and opening date of Tai O NEC.

11. Mr Eric KWOK expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He said that he supported the scheme, but he still thought that Islands District was being neglected by the Government. He had pointed out many times in the previous term of DC that Islands District, neglected by the Government, was the district given the least resources and facilities. There was no infrastructure such as flyovers in Cheung Chau and Lamma Island and that had saved much public fund. There were neither child care services nor elderly centres. There were also no elderly centres in Peng Chau and Lamma Island. He opined that the relevant bureaux had totally ignored the residents of outlying islands and hoped that the Government would take the opportunity to listen to Members.
- (b) He said that he was the DC Member of Yat Tung Estate and Mun Tung Estate. He had mentioned to SWD many times in the previous term of

DC that child care services in the district was inadequate. Taking Yat Tung Estate as an example, it had a population of about 45 000. Many young parents were forced to stay home to take care of their children. Their income was therefore affected and the quality of living lowered. Some even had to apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) from SWD. He was very concerned about the operating hours of the CCC to be provided under the purchase scheme (half day or full day) and its location. He pointed out that there would be four large estates, which would commence population intake five or six years later, in Areas 99, 100, 103 and 109 opposite Ying Tung Estate in Tung Chung North. The population would be around 50 000 in total. He enquired whether SWD had considered the increasing demand.

- (c) He considered it inappropriate that there were only NECs but no day care centres for the elderly. He pointed out that elders often gathered at the pavilions in Yat Tung Estate and Mun Tung Estate, chatting, smoking and gambling. Residents lodged complaints about the nuisance they caused. Some elders said to him that they were ignored by the Government and had nowhere to go. He opined that SWD should provide care centres and medical services for the elderly to suit their needs. He noted that the Food and Health Bureau implemented a scheme to provide services such as free medical check-up for elders aged 65 or above. However, the scheme did not cover Tung Chung. He proposed that SWD should provide such services in Islands District (including South Lantau).
- (d) He agreed with Mr FONG Lung-fei that special child education centres should be provided in the district. He opined that both Tung Chung and South Lantau had such need. He knew that there was a couple in South Lantau who had to travel a long way to Tseung Kwan O because there were no such services in the district.
- (e) He said that mental rehabilitation was an important issue and pointed out that there were many suicide cases in Yat Tung Estate. He opined that the Government did not provide enough support to help ex-mentally ill persons reintegrate into the community. Many parents did not know how to take care of their children with mental illnesses, which led to the problem of suicide. He proposed setting up relevant centres in Tung Chung.
- (f) He pointed out that juvenile issues were serious but there were not enough facilities and services provided to help cater to young people's ways of thinking and doing things. Currently, only Wong Tai Sin District had an integrated children and youth services centre (ICYSC), so he hoped SWD would set up an ICYSC in every district.

12. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho said that the biggest difference between Islands District and the other 17 districts was that Islands District consisted of many islands far apart from each other. SWD mentioned that two CCCs and two elderly centres would be set up in Islands District under the scheme, but he opined that the facilities should be provided on every island. If the services were only provided in Tung Chung, Cheung Chau residents would have to spend around an hour to travel to Tung Chung. Considering the geography of Islands District, he opined that the matters in Islands District should not be dealt with in the same manner as other districts. Special arrangements should be made instead, such as setting up CCC in Tung Chung and then gradually in other areas. He agreed that SWD's scheme was intended to benefit Hong Kong, but it should be implemented in a more "down-to-earth" manner and SWD should understand and consider the special situation of Islands District.

13. Mr LEE Ka-ho opined that Members all agreed that the increase in SWD's resources might not be adequate. He agreed with Mr LEUNG that Islands District had special needs. If facilities were provided only in Tung Chung, residents of other islands would not be benefited. He agreed with Mr Eric KWOK that the Government had all along ignored the need for resources in Islands District. According to the Annex of the Paper, SWD planned to provide 158 facilities of various types in Hong Kong. However, only four of them were in Islands District, which was far fewer than the average across Hong Kong. He agreed with SWD about establishing a full-day CCC, but what Tung Chung needed most at present was occasional child care service. He queried that the installation of two CCCs would not meet the demand. He also noted that one of the CCCs only provided three quotas of occasional child care service, which would not be adequate if doubled. He suggested that SWD should seriously review whether the services provided in each district were adequate.

14. Mr HO Chun-fai agreed with the views of Mr Eric KWOK and Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho and opined that Islands District was not comparable with other districts. He pointed out that most villagers were not willing to leave their homes and many of them would not go to Hong Kong Island unless they needed to see the doctor. He hoped that SWD would seriously consider Members' views instead of conducting fake consultation.

15. Mr Andy LIU made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) With regard to the CCCs, the two CCCs being proposed would both provide full-day CCC service. As the property market was fast-changing, the disclosure of the location before purchase might affect the purchase price.
- (b) With regard to whether the facilities to be purchased were adequate, as mentioned in the Paper, while SWD would use every means possible to secure and look for premises, it would implement the purchase scheme concurrently as a short-term measure to purchase premises in the private property market as soon as possible for early provision of welfare

facilities to meet the urgent demand. The Paper also mentioned that the demand for welfare facilities was driven by many factors. Apart from purchasing premises, SWD would continue to implement the measures mentioned in the Paper at the same time, including using “Government, Institution or Community (G/IC)” sites and identifying suitable land sale sites to construct welfare facilities so that suitable welfare facilities could be provided as soon as possible.

- (c) With regard to rehabilitation services, as mentioned previously, SWD adopted a multi-pronged approach to carry out the relevant work. Apart from the facilities mentioned in the scheme, SWD also planned to provide facilities for rehabilitation and other welfare services in the Tung Chung New Town Extension Area, which had been briefly presented to IDC earlier. If Members wanted to know more details, enquiries were welcome.
- (d) Regarding child care services, apart from setting up two CCCs for provision of full-day services under the purchase scheme, SWD was operating the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project in Islands District to provide flexible child care services for families in need, targeting children under 9. There was no restriction on the place of residence for the above project and the CCC services, which allowed parents in need to choose the CCC services near their workplace.
- (e) Regarding the unique situation of Islands District mentioned by Members, apart from providing services through service centres, service units would also serve and support elders in need on the islands through case counselling and outreaching work.
- (f) The purchase scheme did not cover RCHE because RCHE required a larger floor area and had stricter requirements in terms of technicality and layout. SWD would continue to provide purpose-built RCHE under development projects of various types by adopting a multi-pronged approach with long and mid-term strategies.

16. Mr WONG Chi-leung made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) With regard to the services of Tai O, the site of former RCHE in Lung Tin Estate had been handed over to the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council to set up the Tai O sub-office of Tung Chung Integrated Services Centre. Due to the epidemic, the centre would not be open to the public for the meantime. When the epidemic subsided, the centre would organise group activities and provide fitness equipment for the public.
- (b) He noted Members’ concern about the provision of social welfare facilities. In June, the District Social Welfare Officer of SWD and

other departments introduced to Members the planning of Tung Chung District, including the welfare service provision of elderly, rehabilitation, youth and family service facilities in the new town extension area. He said that the purchase scheme was only the beginning. Taking child care services as an example, SWD would purchase premises for two CCCs and planned to set up a CCC in Tung Chung Area 107. Elderly and rehabilitation service facilities would also be provided in the area. He expected that the planned services could meet the local demand.

- (c) He understood that residents of outlying islands had demands for welfare services. Presently, the elderly centres would provide outreaching services to the elderly living in outlying islands. The Integrated Home Care Services would also render care and support to the frail elderly living in the community. Regarding residential care services, he was aware that the elders would like to reside in their home districts. However, if the premises were too small in size, there would be difficulties in operation. SWD would plan residential care services on a cluster basis so that elders could choose suitable institutions according to their needs.
- (d) Regarding mental health rehabilitation services, as previously mentioned to Members at meetings, the service units would step up the service promotion to enhance the community's concern about mental health and encourage more persons in need to seek assistance as early as possible. He supplemented that a residential care home for persons with disabilities and a special child care centre in Mun Tung Estate and Ying Tung Estate would be put into service in the current year.

17. The Chairman said that Members had spent 45 minutes discussing the issue and he asked them to speak concisely.

18. Mr HO Siu-kei said that the scheme was a long-term plan that lasted for more than a dozen years. It could not respond to the urgent needs for facilities of outlying islands residents. He also opined that it was inappropriate for SWD to apply the concept of the scheme on Islands District. The residents hoped to have access to elderly services and child services in the area they resided in and did not want to travel to urban areas specially for the purpose. He said that since the Government allocated \$20 billion for welfare services, more proper arrangements should be made for Hong Kong citizens. He opined that SWD should take into account the situation in Islands District instead of applying the criteria and strategies suitable for urban areas to Islands District. He also pointed out that the properties in Islands District were mostly residences, so there were not many properties available for purchase, whether on the outlying islands or in Tung Chung New Development Area. As such, it was difficult for the scheme to be implemented in Islands District. He proposed that the Government should make use of the existing government properties and facilities in Islands District to implement the scheme within a year or



two. He stressed that the direction of planning and context of urban areas should not be applied to Islands District.

19. Ms LAU Shun-ting agreed with Ms Josephine TSANG's view and opined that it was not possible to purchase premises within a short time. She proposed that SWD should enhance the services Members mentioned, such as child care services which were badly needed by many parents. She understood that it was not possible to increase the number of elderly centres immediately and enquired of SWD whether services could be enhanced by other means, such as provision of day respite services. She said that some NGOs provided day respite services for the elderly at various places in Islands District and proposed that SWD should endeavor to enhance relevant services. In addition, she noticed that many foreigners (youths in particular) lingered at night on streets or in ball courts in various areas of Islands District. She hoped that SWD would pay attention to the situation.

20. Mr WONG Chun-yeung said that while the purchase scheme looked good, he opposed it on grounds that its direction was not right. He opined that if SWD wanted to deal with livelihood issues at their sources, then the Urban Council (UC) should be established, rather than taking a wrong direction by wasting \$20 billion to purchase lands or old buildings and tenement buildings in the urban areas from developers and using them as social welfare facilities. The practice was not cost-effective. Some members proposed the planning of relevant facilities in Tung Chung, but many private buildings in Tung Chung cost as much as those in the urban areas and that was one of his reasons for objecting to the proposal. He opined that the Government should re-establish UC rather than making some bundled proposals to set up special schools, care and attention homes and rehabilitation centres for the elderly and forcing the public to accept them. He said that if the Director of Social Welfare wanted to develop facilities in a multi-pronged approach, as claimed in his blog, the issue should be tackled at its roots. Otherwise, it would only be a waste of public fund to purchase properties.

21. Mr Sammy TSUI said that he supported the scheme to purchase private premises to expedite the provision of relevant services and understood that SWD encountered difficulties in finding sites and properties. He said that more new development plans would be implemented in Tung Chung in the next several years, such as the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) and public rental housing (PRH) projects, so SWD could be more ambitious by planning before the commencement of such development plans. For example, two additional storeys could be built for use by SWD and other government departments in HOS and PRH developments. He pointed out that at present, the Government did not set aside spaces in housing construction for use by social welfare organisations, leading to a lack of spaces. Taking Ying Tung Estate as an example, there were four blocks in the estate but only very limited spaces were set aside for shops and other uses. Even banks had difficulties in finding shop spaces for provision of financial services, so only one automatic teller machine was installed instead. The Government was the largest property developer in Hong Kong, owning so many lands and the right to carry out development. He did not see why it was not possible to add two more storeys to the

buildings for social services or social welfare organisations to use as libraries or CCCs etc. He said that the situation was the same in every housing estate. It would certainly be difficult for the Government to look for lands and spaces after construction were completed. Even if organisations wanted to provide services in the housing estates, they had to give up because there were no shop spaces available. He pointed out that private buildings could be built up to 40 or 50 storeys, whereas PRH buildings were only 20 or 30-storey tall. The number of storeys and plot ratio should be increased to make proper use of space and provide more social resources. He opined that the Government should formulate long-term policies. For example, as many PRH and HOS buildings would continue to be constructed in Tung Chung reclamation area, relevant departments should conduct proper planning in advance.

22. Ms Josephine TSANG was not satisfied that the representatives of SWD would purchase lands for provision of child care service and elderly service but had no plans to build RCHE. She reiterated that Peng Chau had a great demand for RCHE and day respite services for the elderly. There were instances where elders staying at home alone could not be reached by their family members at work and she was asked to visit them. There were also cases where some elders wandered around because they did not know their way home. She hoped the Government would address the community's pressing needs, make special arrangements in special circumstances and follow up the issue as soon as possible. She hoped that the Government would provide day care centres or night hostels for the elderly in Peng Chau, offering 20 to 30 hostel places for elders to pass their twilight years peacefully, instead of simply claiming that the scheme would not be able to benefit them.

23. Mr WONG Chun-yeung expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He previously proposed the re-establishment of UC because it had the land use right. Apart from conducting a holistic consultation, it could also monitor the occupation of lands by developers. In other words, with the re-establishment of UC, the \$20 billion fund, which was only sufficient to purchase 160 flats originally, could provide 10 to 20 times more flats, thus enhancing cost effectiveness.
- (b) He opined that there were many grey areas in SWD's multi-pronged approach. He queried that SWD would find it almost impossible to negotiate with private owners if it continued to adopt the same approach. In addition, the public might not believe that the deal was fair and just.
- (c) While there were urgent demands on elderly services, rehabilitation facilities and special schools in all 18 districts of Hong Kong, SWD on many occasions failed to complete projects on time after securing funds. As such, he objected to the scheme.
- (d) He worried that after the completion of the above-mentioned RCHE or community centres, social welfare organisations would roll out service

programmes only to bid for funds and the real needs of the elders might not be met.

24. Mr Eric Kwok said that geographical issue was the main reason for the inadequate facilities in Islands District. SWD should not follow the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) to plan for facilities in the district according to the population. He requested that “we have reinstated ‘population-based planning ratios for elderly services’ in the HKPSG” as contained in paragraph 3 of the Paper be altered into “we have reinstated ‘planning ratios for elderly services based on population and geographical factors’ in the HKPSG” so that the geographical features of Islands District would be taken into account.

25. Mr Andy LIU made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) With regard to planning, SWD was planning more than 100 projects and 360 welfare facilities were expected to be provided as of 2028. As mentioned previously, SWD would continue to implement long and medium term strategies under a multi-pronged approach to provide welfare facilities through different development projects, including Government, institutions or community development projects, public housing projects, urban redevelopment projects, vacant school premises (VSP), etc. At the same time, the Government would endeavor to suitably increase the supply of welfare facilities through the Land Sales Programme and the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses.
- (b) The Planning Department (PlanD) would review VSP sites under the Central Clearing House Mechanism. If there were VSP sites suitable for G/IC uses in the long-term, depending on the priority of Government uses, SWD would proactively review whether relevant VSP sites were suitable to be converted into welfare facilities. Factors to be taken into account included site location, accessibility, usable floor area and whether the site could meet the need of the proposed welfare facilities, etc. At present, there were no suitable VSP in the district for conversion into welfare facilities.
- (c) With regard to the planning of public housing projects, SWD all along maintained closely liaison with the Housing Department (HD). At the preliminary planning stage of new development projects or public housing reconstruction projects, SWD would study holistically the feasibility of providing suitable welfare facilities in the development projects. It would also ensure that spaces would be set aside for provision of suitable welfare facilities in the project as far as possible. Apart from welfare facilities, HD and other relevant departments would also consider providing other community facilities.

- (d) With regard to the operation of the purchase scheme, the Government had set up a Steering Committee and two Working Groups. The two Working Groups provided advice and make recommendations in respect of their areas of responsibility and the Steering Committee would make a final collective decision on each deal. All along, the Government had established procedures to handle purchases of premises for providing public services, which would be implemented by the Government Property Agency (GPA) and relevant government departments in order to ensure the entire purchase process was fair and just. GPA would look for suitable premises through various means according to SWD's requirements in respect of premises type, quantity, floor area, operation, construction technology and equipment, etc. Professional surveyors of various ranks of GPA would form a working group to determine the highest acceptable price for the suitable premises according to established mechanism. The price of the premises purchased must not exceed the highest acceptable price to ensure that the property price was reasonable and commensurate with the prevailing market value.

26. Mr WONG Chi-leung made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) In outlying islands, there were welfare facilities including a Neighbourhood Elderly cum Children/Youth Centre in Peng Chau while the Integrated Home Care Services Team would also provide support to the needy elderly living in the community.
- (b) Regarding child care services, Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project of SWD was providing home-based child care services for families in need. Starting from January 2020, SWD had allocated additional resources to the service operators to increase professional and support staff to strengthen the training and monitoring of home-based child carers, and raise the level of incentive payment for home-based child carers in order to encourage more volunteers to serve as child carers.
- (c) Regarding youth services, the Integrated Youth Services Centre of SWD was providing support for youths in need in the district.
- (d) He noted Members' concern about the residential care services for the elderly.

27. Mr Eric KWOK said that the geographical conditions of Islands District was unique. If facilities were planned only according to population, areas such as Lamma Island and Peng Chau would never have CCCs and RCHE. He opined that SWD should be flexible in handling relevant matters.

28. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho said that Islands District was different from the other 17 districts and planning should not be made basing on population. Taking Po Toi Island as an example, despite having only ten residents, it still needed ferry services. The distances between islands were far away, and ferry was the only means of transport. It was very inconvenient for residents to travel to other islands to use the facilities. He hoped SWD would take into consideration other factors.

29. Ms Amy YUNG said that she as an IDC Member had said many times that the circumstances of Islands District was special. However, she had to explain it once again each time department representatives were substituted. If planning was based only on population, islands with a smaller population would not be allocated with any resources and elders on the islands would not be taken care of. She opined that the Government should not just stick to the old ways of formulating policies. She hoped that SWD would be mindful of the special circumstances of Islands District and requested the Assistant District Officer (ADO) to relay the views to the Heads of Departments' meeting.

30. Mr Andy LIU noted Members' concern about planning according to population. The departments concerned would be consulted to consider Members' views.

31. Ms Amy YUNG asked the ADO to respond to the request of conveying the special circumstances of Islands District to the Heads of Departments' meeting.

32. Mr Thomas LI said that he was not sure what Ms Amy YUNG meant by Heads of Departments' meeting. However, there were many channels for Members to express their opinions to government departments, such as inviting the government departments to IDC meetings.

33. Ms Amy YUNG learnt that some ex-officio Members had to attend a special meeting to give a briefing on the situation of their constituencies. Whenever IDC meetings were held, IsDO had to submit reports and hold meetings with Chairmen of Committees and heads of departments. She had made a request to attend the meeting to the former DO who said that he would relay the request to the Home Affairs Department (HAD), and the ADO was present too. She requested the ADO to examine the minutes of past meetings and reflect the special circumstances of Islands District to department representatives at the relevant meetings, so that she would not have to explain the matter over and over again at DC meetings. She had no intention of finding out how often the departments held meetings. However, since Islands District was remote and faced issues relating to water resources and information communication, etc., she requested the ADO to follow up on the issues seriously.

34. Mr WONG Chun-yeung opined that the responses of the department representatives were not proactive and he felt helpless about it. He gave the imposition of speed limit as an example, saying that department representatives had responded that they were only responsible for enforcing law but not enacting legislations and had indicated that the issue did not belong to their areas of

responsibility. He said that since June of the previous year, there had been a series of social incidents. While the Government was determined to enhance the credibility of its governance, the programmes launched were not satisfactory. He hoped that the authorities would consider his proposal of re-establishing UC to improve welfare policies. He believed that the proposals then raised by the Government would have a greater chance of approval by DCs. The differences between departments and Members of the opposition could then be narrowed and public grievances could be alleviated.

35. The Chairman said that the agenda item had been discussed for one and a half hours and he requested Members to speak concisely for the remaining items.

III. Question on improvement of Tung Chung North Park Facilities  
(Paper CACRC 49/2020)

36. The Chairman welcomed Ms LAU Hoi-shan, Nelly, Deputy District Leisure Manager (Islands)2 of LCSD to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of LCSD was tabled at the meeting for Members' perusal.

37. Mr LEE Ka-ho briefly presented the question.

38. Ms Nelly LAU briefly presented the written reply.

39. Mr LEE Ka-ho was pleased to learn that LCSD would consider the provision of more facilities. However, LCSD did not respond to most of his enquiries, such as whether the provision of facilities at pet gardens was related to site constraints and usage rate, and whether LCSD had compiled statistics on the usage rate of Tung Chung North Pet Garden. He had raised the enquiries through various channels, yet LCSD had only replied that they did not know the answer. That was why he enquired of LCSD again at the meeting. He also enquired the usage rates of multiple facilities and venues in Tung Chung North Park (such as the Chinese Herb Garden nearby). He hoped that the Park would be put to proper use and that the representative of LCSD would respond to the above enquiries.

40. Mr WONG Chun-yeung expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He said that he had resided in the area for more than 20 years. He learnt that the Park was not being used as pet playground at present, but for practising Tai Chi, social dancing, street dancing or line dancing, etc. Users might not be aware of the purposes of the facilities in the Park and would not pay attention to the descriptions on the signs. Even if they knew that the Park was meant for use by pets and their owners, they would probably ignore it. They thought that as long as they did not damage the facilities, they could use the Pet Garden in any way they liked.

- (b) He agreed with Mr LEE Ka-ho's proposal of installing recreational facilities which allowed interaction between pets and their owners, such as play tunnels made from pipes, agility ramps, hoops, weave poles and sand ponds, etc., so that users would have more choices.
- (c) He was surprised by LCSD's remark that the area of Tung Chung North Park Pet Garden was about 2 180 m<sup>2</sup> and enquired whether the pet garden adjacent to Ho Yu College was also counted.
- (d) He had received complaints from residents of Coastal Skyline in Tung Chung North that they found beer bottles and cans left around when bringing their pets to Tung Chung North Park. There was also spilled beer on the ground, which would make dogs feel sick if they lapped it. He said that while such cases were rare, he hoped to draw LCSD's attention to the issue.
- (e) He concluded by raising two proposals as follows: first, more facilities should be installed for the use by pets and owners, and dancing and other activities should be conducted at the Municipal Services Building; second, the hygienic conditions of the Park should be improved.

41. Mr Sammy TSUI said that many people kept dogs in Tung Chung North. Many residents walked their dogs behind Caribbean Coast and on Ying Hei Road every day. He therefore opined that it was inadequate to install pet latrines and dog excreta collection bins in Tung Chung North Pet Garden only, and LCSD should try to identify sites for construction of dog gardens. He pointed out that many expatriates walked their dogs on Saturdays and Sundays and hoped that LCSD would take care of their needs. He said that the relationship between dogs and human beings was very close and dogs could help their owners relieve stress. He opined that the grassland of the pet garden was not fully utilised and hoped that LCSD would consider providing additional facilities according to residents' needs.

42. Mr Eric KWOK supported Mr LEE Ka-ho's proposal of installing recreational facilities that would allow interaction between owners and their pets in Tung Chung North Park. Recently, he had a meeting with LCSD to discuss issues about Tung Chung North Park. Residents then had said that there were not enough pet gardens, so he appreciated LCSD for accepting residents' suggestion to provide a pet garden. He believed pets had beneficial effects on the mental health of human beings and opined that interactive play facilities should be added to the Park to make it a place where residents could enhance their relationships with their pets. He hoped that LCSD would accept his views.

43. Ms Nelly LAU said that LCSD noted Members' views and made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) As the Park was an opened and free facility, there was no records of number of people using the Park, but the usage rates of some fee

charging facilities were recorded. She would provide the usage rate of the activity room of Tung Chung North Park to Mr LEE Ka-ho for reference after the meeting. Regarding the works of the pet garden, LCSD would proactively consider Members' proposal of installing additional facilities. It would also work with the works department and commence the works as soon as possible.

(Post-meeting note: The usage rate of the activity room of Tung Chung North Park in 2019-20 was 78%.)

- (b) LCSD was very concerned about the hygienic conditions of the Park and would remind venue staff to step up cleaning and maintain environmental hygiene.

44. Mr LEE Ka-ho hoped that LCSD would record the usage rate of the parks under its purview. He believed that Members would also like to know the usage rate of the facilities so as to make improvements according to the data. He had read the records of number of people using the activity room mentioned by LCSD, but he opined that they could not be used as reference for the usage rate of the pet garden. LCSD said that the usage rate of the activity room was over 80% in the past few years. However, residents nearby all knew that the usage rate of the pet garden was definitely below 80%. He estimated its average annual usage rate to be around 20% due to the lack of facilities in the Park. People would go there only to do other activities. For instance, foreign domestic helpers would often go to the park to talk on the phone because it was quiet and no one would walk their dogs there. He said that it was a pity that there was a pet garden but it failed to attract dog owners because of its lack of facilities. The Park had been completed for ten years but LCSD still could not provide its usage rate. If relevant figures were obtained sooner, the issues could be resolved as early as possible. He urged LCSD to do its part.

45. Ms Nelly LAU said that she had nothing to add.

46. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho enquired whether LCSD would conduct an on-site inspection with the DC Members of Tung Chung district. He said that he had conducted an on-site inspection to Cheung Chau Park with LCSD staff of Cheung Chau. Affected by the epidemic, many people lingered at Cheung Chau Park at night, leaving food, beer bottles and cans behind. He took the initiative to inform LCSD, which cleared the rubbish swiftly. He commended the LCSD staff of Cheung Chau district for their performance and hoped that the LCSD staff of Tung Chung district would cooperate with the district's DC Members.

47. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that he was the DC Member of Yat Tung Estate North. He opined that the acute shortage of facilities for dogs in the housing estate was in stark contrast with the comprehensive facilities in Tung Chung North. He knew that it was legal to keep dogs in some public housing estates, so he enquired whether LCSD would consider providing pet gardens in other areas. He said that pet gardens did not have to be 2 180 m<sup>2</sup> big, even 218 m<sup>2</sup> would do as dog owners simply



wanted to have pet gardens. He said that he wrote to the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services on the relevant issue in September of the previous year. However, according to the reply, all facilities were in Tung Chung North, and Tung Chung West had none but only three facilities shared by three housing estates. He urged LCSD to pay attention to the needs of Tung Chung West, including Yat Tung Estate, Mun Tung Estate and Yu Tai Court which was to be completed. He did not know whether residents of Yu Tai Court would be allowed to keep dogs or not. If yes, there would be more dogs roaming around in the area in the future and he hoped that LCSD would pay attention to the matter.

48. Ms Nelly LAU said that LCSD noted and would consider Mr FONG's views if there were relevant works projects in the future.

49. Mr WONG Chun-yeung said that there were many LCSD sites along the promenade from Tung Chung New Development Ferry Pier to the area near the transformer station., where many police dogs were often seen. The sites were used by public housing residents who kept companion dogs, and residents of Tung Chung North, Yat Tung Estate and Fu Tung Estate would also take their dogs there for a walk. He therefore opined that LCSD could consider selecting the location as a pilot site for establishing pet gardens.

50. The Chairman requested LCSD to take note of Members' views.

IV. Question on Chinese chess promotion  
(Paper CACRC 50/2020)

51. The Chairman welcomed Ms CHAN Siu-yan, Ruby, Assistant District Leisure Manager (District Support) Islands of LCSD to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of LCSD was tabled at the meeting for Members' perusal.

52. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly presented the question.

53. Ms Ruby CHAN briefly presented the written reply.

54. Mr FONG Lung-fei enquired whether LCSD would consider organising community-driven activities, such as open competitions in schools or housing estates, in which members of the public, the elders in particular, could find spiritual sustenance.

55. Mr WONG Chun-yeung said that gambling on Chinese chess games was common in many districts. He enquired whether LCSD could allocate more resources to encourage the public to take part in Chinese chess activities. He pointed out that using Chinese chess to gamble went against its original purpose of intellectual enrichment. If LCSD did not impose regulation, the growing scale of gambling might lead to quarrels and fights among family members. Ever since he became a

DC Member, he would receive one or two such cases a day. He hoped that LCSD would organise Chinese chess competitions with prize money in the district. For the competition format, reference could be made to how the elders usually played. He opined that Chinese chess, like electronic sports and other games, involved psychological and physical elements, so it could be developed into a multifaceted activity in the long term. Gambling was a potential issue in many districts. In the past, UC issued licenses to members of the public to gamble legally. He hoped that LCSD would take note of the proposals and consider organising activities of the same nature.

56. Ms Amy YUNG agreed with Mr FONG Lung-fei's proposal of organising Chinese chess activities. DC of the last term had held relevant activities at Discovery Bay Community Hall, with souvenirs sponsored by organisations. After that, residents requested every year that the same activities be organised. However, since hiring of venue was difficult, she proposed that LCSD should consider organising competitions on various islands in the district and let the winners compete in the final. She hoped that organisations would sponsor souvenirs and opined that people would feel happy enough winning medals and souvenirs, so there was no need for prize money. She urged LCSD to consider Mr FONG Lung-fei's proposal.

57. Mr Eric KWOK also agreed with Mr FONG Lung-fei's proposal. He had discussed with SWD the issue of gambling in housing estates and hoped that LCSD would consider organising activities in housing estates regularly, such as puppet shows, orchestra performances and other regular shows. He also hoped that Chinese chess competitions would be included in the regular activities of housing estates.

58. Mr WONG Chun-yeung opined that it was necessary to hold competition with prize money. Entry fees should also be collected for providing prizes and prize money for the champion, first runner-up and second runner-up in order to resolve the issue of gambling in the district. He said that he was not opposing the arrangement of giving out souvenirs and certificates proposed by Ms Amy YUNG. It was just that after mixing with residents of the district for a long time, he believed that souvenirs and medals could only attract representatives of community centres, schools, churches and chess clubs and were not suitable for elders. He opined that the competition could be divided into two groups, one targeting those who gambled on the streets and another inviting students and members of chess clubs to exchange their chess skills.

59. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho opined that the discussion had strayed from the subject. He pointed out that if Members would like to discuss whether to provide prize money or whether to organise Chinese chess competitions to resolve the issue of gambling, gambling counselling organisations could be invited to join the discussion. Since there was only about a quarter of an hour left, he suggested that Members should not digress from the topic.

60. Ms Josephine TSANG said that she had served Yat Tung Estate for 14 years and opined that the issue of gambling could not be resolved solely by organising

Chinese chess competitions, unless they were held every day or chess gambling was legalised. She said that the root of the issue was that there were inadequate facilities in the housing estates. Since the elders had nowhere to hang around and could not find spiritual sustenance, they gathered to play chess, drawing onlookers who bet on the games. She supported the promotion of Chinese chess but was skeptical of whether it could eradicate gambling activities.

61. Mr WONG Chun-yeung hoped that Ms Josephine TSANG would accept his proposal of re-establishing UC. In the past, UC had handled the matter of mahjong parlours and gambling establishment concessions.

62. Mr HO Siu-kei agreed with the direction of Mr FONG Lung-fei's proposal. However, he pointed out that grassroots residents of housing estates made a living by being a bookmaker. He believed that the legalisation mentioned by Mr WONG Chun-yeung could be achieved only by The Hong Kong Jockey Club, not by simply relying on LCSD organising competitions. He said that gambling in housing estates and other places was like a "malignant tumour". It was difficult to eliminate and even the Police would find it hard to handle.

63. Ms Ruby CHAN made a consolidated response as follows:

(a) LCSD noted Members' views and said that LCSD would plan the recreation and sports programmes of the following year in around November and December. Factors such as demographic change in district, availability of facilities, direction of the Sports for All development and DCs' opinions would be taken into account. LCSD would consider Members' views when planning next year's programmes.

(b) Law enforcement operation against gambling activities in public housing estates was out of the LCSD's ambit and had to be considered by the departments concerned. LCSD was not in the position to provide assistance in this regard.

64. Mr FONG Lung-fei pointed out that his proposal never mentioned gambling. He opined that if open competitions and inter-school competitions were organised, there would be participants. Playing chess required thinking and certainly could involve gambling. He only hoped that community integration would be enhanced through playing chess and that LCSD would consider the proposal proactively.

65. The Chairman asked LCSD to take note of the views. He said that there were only five minutes left for the meeting, and the meeting would overrun if the discussion continued.

66. Mr Eric KWOK proposed extending the meeting by 30 minutes.

67. The Chairman asked Members to vote by a show of hands on whether the meeting should be extended by 30 minutes.

Members voted by a show of hands. The voting result was 12 in favour, with no votes against and 4 abstentions. The proposal was endorsed.

(Members voting in favour included: Mr WONG Man-hon (Chairman), Ms LAU Shun-ting (Vice-Chairman), Mr YUNG Chi-ming, Mr CHAN Lin-wai, Mr HO Chun-fai, Mr HO Siu-kei, Ms WONG Chau-ping, Ms Josephine TSANG, Mr Eric KWOK, Mr Sammy TSUI, Mr FONG Lung-fei and Mr LEE Ka-ho; Members abstaining included: Mr Randy YU, Ms Amy YUNG, Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho and Mr WONG Chun-yeung.)

V. Question on electricity supply to Masjid Ismail & Community Centre Complex in Yat Tung Estate  
(Paper CACRC 51/2020)

68. The Chairman welcomed Mr TSANG Wai-man, Administrative Assistant/Lands (District Lands Office, Islands) (DLO/Islands) and Mr IP Cheuk-yan, Senior Land Executive/Tenancy (DLO/Islands) of the Lands Department (LandsD) to the meeting to respond to the question. The written replies of the Highways Department (HyD) and the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) were tabled at the meeting for Members' perusal.

69. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly presented the question.

70. Mr TSANG Wai-man said that DLO/Islands noted CLP's reply and was also aware that CLP had proactively arranged electricity supply. DLO/Islands had nothing to add.

71. Mr FONG Lung-fei enquired of CLP whether a schedule could be provided. He said that more than 1 000 households of three buildings were affected and many residents asked him whether the problem could be solved within a month or two. He said that the generators would produce noise and smell when running every night, seriously affecting residents nearby. He therefore hoped that the works could be expedited. He had made an enquiry to CLP, which replied that works would be completed within two weeks of DLO/Islands' approval, so he enquired whether DLO/Islands could act accordingly.

72. Mr TSANG Wai-man said that Excavation Permits (XPs) were issued by HyD. The written reply of CLP stated that XP had been issued and it was anticipated that the electricity connection works would be completed in about two weeks. He said that DLO/Islands had nothing special to add because the matter involved communication between HyD, CLP and the groups concerned.

73. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho learnt that the Secretariat invited HyD, DLO/Islands, HAD and CLP to the meeting. He appreciated the representatives of DLO/Islands attending the meeting and informing Members about their communication with HyD, which did not send any representatives despite being the key department. Members had raised the issue many times at various IDC meetings. If the departments concerned did not attend meetings, the enquiries raised to other departments would become meaningless. He hoped the Secretariat would request that the departments concerned must attend meetings, otherwise communication would be difficult. Taking Mr FONG Lung-fei's question as an example, it was just a very simple enquiry about when works could be completed and how long it would take to supply electricity after the issuance of XP. However, since HyD did not attend the meeting to respond to the question and DLO/Islands could not answer on its behalf, the discussion was rendered meaningless and it was better to circulate the Paper. He opined that the Secretariat or ADO should handle the matter.

74. The Chairman said that the written reply of CLP mentioned that the relevant government department had issued the XP recently.

75. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho said that he noted the written reply. However, he opined that discussion was rendered meaningless without direct communication with the department. If every department responded to enquiries by providing written replies, there would be no need to hold meetings. He stressed that the issue was very important.

76. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to take note of Mr LEUNG's views.

VI. Question on Housing Department giving out face masks to housing estates with a number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reported  
(Paper CACRC 52/2020)

77. The Chairman welcomed Mr YAN Man-chi, Robin, Property Service Manager/Service (Hong Kong Island & Islands)<sup>3</sup> of HD to the meeting to respond to the question.

78. Mr Eric KWOK briefly presented the question.

79. Mr Robin YAN responded as follows:

- (a) The epidemic in Hong Kong became serious in early July. The Government then immediately allocated more resources to strengthen various anti-epidemic measures, including distribution of face masks to community groups with urgent needs, such as RCHE and public housing estates with more confirmed cases. The Housing Authority all along cooperated with the Government's infection prevention and control measures and arranged for estate offices to help distribute face

masks to residents. He added that the face masks were not provided by HD.

- (b) Regarding the number of confirmed cases, Mr YAN added that after checking the records, it was found that case no. 753 was not from Mun Tung Estate. HD would distribute face masks based on the number of households with confirmed case. During the third wave of the epidemic, the seven cases in Mun Tung Estate (nos. 1867 to 4078) involved two households; case nos. 2932 and 3454 in Yat Tung (I) Estate involved two households; and case nos. 3042 to 4090 in Yat Tung (II) Estate involved four households. HD would distribute face masks to housing estates with more confirmed cases, taking into account both the spread of cases and urgency.

80. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that he was an IDC Member of the Yat Tung Estate North constituency, which included Yat Tung (II) Estate, Hong Yat House and Ching Yat House of Yat Tung (I) Estate. There were cases of infection in both Hong Yat House and Ching Yat House, but HD did not distribute face masks to these buildings. How would HD differentiate Yat Tung (I) and (II) Estates which were adjoined to each other? If residents of Yat Tung (II) Estate were infected, could residents of Yat Tung (I) Estate possibly avoid infection? He was puzzled because infection would spread among residents of both estates sharing the same shopping centre and market. If HD treated the two housing estates separately, why was their management outsourced to the same management company instead of being tendered separately? He did not understand the logic and hoped that HD would explain.

81. Mr Eric KWOK pointed out that HD was moving the goalposts. The Chief Executive (CE) mentioned “multiple confirmed cases” but did not say anything about using household as the unit on 12 July. He opined that HD was deceiving its superiors and subordinates and did not implement CE’s order faithfully. As a result, he was wrongly criticised by residents of Yat Tung (I) Estate and Mun Tung Estate for failing in his duty and colluding with HD. He agreed with Mr FONG Lung-fei that Yat Tung (I) and (II) Estates were closely connected and queried why face masks were distributed only to residents of Yat Tung (II) Estate. He suspected that HD deliberately divided the two estates. If HD did not provide an explanation, he would complain to CE in writing that HD did not follow instructions, exacerbating public grievances and undermining public confidence in the Government. In addition, HD said that case no. 753 was from Mun Tung Estate, but his records showed that it actually was from Mun Tai House. Case nos. 371, 3951, 4077 and 4078 were from the same household, while case nos. 1867, 1882, 1994 and 1995 were from a household in Mun Wo House. There was one confirmed case (no. 4866) in Mun Hong House on 6 September. Hence, there were already four households with confirmed cases in Mun Tung Estate. HD included Yat Tung (I) Estate in the Mun Yat constituency but excluded Hong Yat House and Ching Yat House. Thus, there were 11 cases in total, 10 in Mun Tung Estate and one in Yung Yat House, which reached the threshold of four households. He hoped that HD would give a definite

response to the question at the meeting, otherwise he would write to CE to complain that HD deceived Yat Tung Estate residents and did not implement CE's order.

82. Ms Amy YUNG disagreed with how HD handled the matter. She opined that the definition of high risk should be based on the number of confirmed cases, not on the number of households with confirmed cases. The explanation given by HD was hardly convincing and also unfair. She pointed out that confirmed COVID-19 patients would move around, so it was baffling that HD distributed face masks selectively. Since the Government had spent hundreds of million dollars to conduct universal testing, it should distribute face masks to all residents of Yat Tung Estate and Fu Tung Estate, rather than distributing them selectively. The Government already had very low credibility, so it was inappropriate for HD to commit acts that would further undermine its credibility. She opined that HD should apply for additional funds and distribute 50 face masks to every household to ease public resentment and avoid creating conflicts, otherwise money would be wasted and residents would feel discontented. She proposed that HD should distribute face masks as compensation to residents who had not been given any.

83. Ms Josephine TSANG hoped that Mr YAN would review the guidelines for distributing face masks after the meeting. She pointed out that On Tat Estate was the first housing estate with confirmed cases, but HD did not distribute face masks to all the buildings. Face masks were distributed by security staff only to the two buildings with the most confirmed cases. She understood that the face masks did not belong to HD, which was only responsible for their distribution. However, she still hoped that HD would review the guidelines for distributing face masks and inform Members whether there were special guidelines stipulating the number of confirmed cases in a housing estate required for distribution of face masks, or a list of housing estates to be provided with face masks would be given to HD by the Department of Health. She stressed that the responsibility did not rest with HD as CE failed to do what she was supposed to do. It was difficult for Members to explain to residents the selective distribution of face masks.

84. Mr Sammy TSUI opined that HD should amend the criteria and guidelines for distributing face masks. Having only one or two cases did not mean that the cases were few. Residents also queried the arrangement for distributing face masks. Some housing estates with confirmed cases were not given face masks while others were. Residents found it difficult to understand the criteria and the scientific grounds. He opined that since the Government had spent more than 2 billion dollars to manufacture face masks, each household of every estate should be given one box of face masks. The Government should avoid favouritism in order to establish a good image. Selective distribution would only lead to aversion towards the Government. He hoped that the representatives of HD would reflect his views to the department. As the Government had devoted substantial resources to conduct universal testing, it was evident that money was not its biggest concern. The Government raised the number of persons allowed in group gatherings to four, and the third wave of the epidemic was caused by the exemption from quarantine for sea crew. Should there be a fourth wave of infection, the Government should be blamed. If the Government

did not distribute face masks, there might even be a fifth wave. He accused the Government of mismanagement.

85. Mr WONG Chun-yeung enquired whether it was HD's decision to purchase face masks or it simply decided not to distribute them despite having them in stock. He said that distribution of face masks by constituency was unjustifiable. The community planning in Tung Chung led to close contacts among residents. The residents of Fu Tung Estate and Yat Tung Estate had close relationships even if they did not share the same facilities. People could get infected through having meals, taking part in community activities or attending church gatherings together. He hoped that if there were not enough face masks to distribute next time, HD would place 100 boxes of face masks in the lobbies of housing estates so that each resident would get five face masks. He raised this proposal to HD in the middle of the year. He then said that if there was a third wave of infection, he hoped that face masks would be distributed to residents evenly and placed in common areas for them to take. He believed that people would not take away 50 boxes each and that they would understand the arrangement made by the Government under shortage of resources.

86. Mr Robin YAN made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the question Mr Eric KWOK raised, the arrangements for distribution of anti-epidemic items such as face masks mentioned by CE on social media on 12 July were also applicable to other public housing estates with multiple confirmed cases. In order to make effective use of resources, HD would distribute face masks to estates with more cases. Since one single household would have multiple cases very often, if HD distributed face masks to a housing estate only because there was one household with multiple cases, it might not have adequate resources to distribute face masks to those estates with many infected households or signs of spread of infection. HD therefore used household as the threshold of cases.
- (b) Regarding the question about Yat Tung (I) and (II) Estates, face masks were not distributed by constituency. If decisions of distributing face masks were made based on constituency, other factors would be taken into account. Therefore, housing estate was used as the basis. He understood Members' ideas, but for proper use of resources, HD could not distribute face masks to an estate simply because another related estate was given face masks.

87. Mr Eric KWOK said that if the Director of Housing had attended the meeting, he would have been fiercely scolded. He hoped that the representatives of HD would convey Members' views to HD. He opined that even though many of the cases were from the same household, it did not mean that the possibility of infection would be lower. He criticized HD's consideration for having no scientific basis. In addition, he did not understand why the threshold was set at four households and requested HD to explain whether it had any scientific basis. He pointed out that



there were 13 confirmed cases in Yat Tung (I) Estate and Mun Tung Estate in total. Including the 5 cases in Yat Tung (II) Estate and the new case identified on 6 September, there were 19 cases in total. It could be said that there was a community outbreak, but HD did not implement any anti-epidemic measures. Not only did it fail to plan ahead, it was downright slow to react. He hoped that the representative of HD would reflect his views to the Department.

88. Mr LEUNG Kwok-ho enquired about the amount of face masks in stock prepared by CE for the distribution exercise. He opined that HD assumed there would be an outbreak in housing estates and therefore did not consider the estates with fewer cases. He opined the issue was that HD appeared to be waiting for the number of confirmed cases in an estate to reach a certain level before distributing face masks. He advised HD to redefine “outbreak of epidemic”. He pointed out that the population density of Tung Chung was higher than that of other districts and so was the possibility of outbreak. The district also had a substantially aging population. Past figures showed that the elderly were relatively less mindful of wearing face masks. If HD did not distribute face masks to them, the consequences would be disastrous. He opined that the situation was urgent as there was still a possibility of spreading the virus even if the cases were from the same household.

89. Mr LEE Ka-ho said that Tung Chung residents were very concerned about the development of the epidemic. Residents of Yat Tung Estate would go to Fu Tung Estate, and residents of Tung Chung North would also go to Yat Tung Estate. Therefore, he opined that it was ridiculous to distribute face masks to Yat Tung Estate but not to the public housing estates on the other side. HD mentioned that it would assess the situation of the housing estates across the territory. If there was an outbreak in the housing estates on one side but not on the other, then face masks would not be distributed. However, the current situation of Yat Tung Estate was different as there were many cases on both sides of the estate. He learnt that HD used household as the unit because of resource allocation. The practice was hardly reassuring to the citizens of Hong Kong. Individual instead of household was used as the unit around the world. In addition, everyone had a different social circle, so it was not impossible to get infected. He did not understand the scientific basis HD used and opined that its aim was to save face masks. In addition, some people said that the quality of the face masks was not satisfactory, so he hoped that HD would be mindful of the quality when purchasing face masks. The face masks being distributed were not surgical masks, so they could not be used for anti-epidemic purposes. Members pointed out many times at meetings that face masks purchased with public fund had to meet the standard of surgical masks in order to have anti-epidemic effect.

90. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that there were more than 6 000 households in Yat Tung (II) Estate and HD provided 10 000 boxes of face masks. He asked if there were 12 000 households, why HD did not allocate 2 000 more boxes of face masks for the remaining households. He opined that HD should have the say on distributing face masks and enquired about its decision-making criteria. He also enquired the reason for distributing face masks only to Yat Tung (II) Estate and whether it was

HD's decision. He considered the arrangement improper and hoped that HD would take remedial action.

91. Mr WONG Chun-yeung suggested that HD explain by email or mail whether it would discuss with Members in advance about distribution of face masks in case of future community outbreak.

92. Mr Robin YAN made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) With regard to the question Mr Eric KWOK raised, he personally was not aware of the uniform threshold of four households for distributing face masks. The criteria would be based on whether the housing estate had more confirmed cases.
- (b) It was almost inevitable that confirmed COVID-19 patients would infect family members of in their households due to environmental factors. HD would also keep an eye on the development of the individual cases from households with multiple confirmed cases. HD used the number of household as the threshold of confirmed cases because the situation took on greater urgency when the infection spread to different blocks or residences.
- (c) The face masks in question did not belong to HD. They were supplied by the Government Logistics Department to HD for distribution to residents of housing estates.
- (d) Regarding the question Mr FONG Lung-fei raised, HD distributed masks to residents of Yat Tung (II) Estate according to the number of households. There were about 6 400 households in the estate and they were each given one box of face masks. He reiterated that face masks were distributed by housing estate and not by constituency, so Hong Yat House and Ching Yat House were not included.

93. Mr Eric KWOK hoped that HD would handle the matter properly. Regarding the definition of "more" confirmed cases, he considered three cases to be many. HD should therefore distribute face masks to Yat Tung (I) Estate and Mun Tung Estate to ease public resentment.

94. Mr Robin YAN said that with the epidemic gradually subsiding, confirmed cases in public housing estates had decreased. In order to make effective use of resources, HD would distribute anti-epidemic items to residents of individual housing estates with urgent needs, depending on whether there were more confirmed cases within two weeks.

95. Mr Eric KWOK enquired whether only the cases occurred within two weeks after 9 September would be counted and those before 9 September would not. If so,

maladministration was involved and he would lodge a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.

96. Mr WONG Chun-yeung opined that HD should discuss any new arrangements with Members in advance to allow flexibility in handling the matter and make proper use of the limited resources.

97. The Chairman asked the representatives of HD to take note of Members' proposals and respond to Members later.

(Mr YUNG Chi-ming left the meeting at around 1:05 p.m.)

## VII. Date of Next Meeting

98. The Chairman said that Members could request to discuss the remaining agenda in the next meeting. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 10:30 a.m. on 2 November 2020 (Monday).

- End -