

(Translation)

Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Community Affairs Committee of
Sham Shui Po District Council (6th Term)

Date : 26 November 2020 (Thursday)
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Conference Room, Sham Shui Po District Council

Present

Chairman

Ms NG Mei, Carman

Members

Ms CHAU Yuen-man, Eunice

Mr CHUM Tak-shing (Arrived at 11:40 a.m.)

Mr HO Kai-ming, Calvin

Mr HO Kwan-chau, Leo (Left at 1:35 p.m.)

Mr KONG Kwai-sang

Mr LAO Ka-hang, Andy (Arrived at 9:35 a.m.)

Ms LAU Pui-yuk, MH (Left at 1:35 p.m.)

Mr LEE Hon-ting, Howard

Mr LEE Man-ho, Leos (Arrived at 10 a.m.)

Mr LI Chun-hei, Joshua

Mr LI Kwing, Richard (Arrived at 10:15 a.m.; left at 12:30 p.m.)

Mr LI Ting-fung, Jay

Mr MAK Wai-ming (Left at 12:50 p.m.)

Ms NG Yuet-lan, Janet (Left at 2:08 p.m.)

Mr SIN Kam-ho, Jeffrey

Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, MH, JP (Arrived at 9:52 a.m.)

Mr TSUI Yat-hin, Ronald (Arrived at 10:26 a.m.; left at 1:53 p.m.)

Mr WAI Woon-nam

Mr WONG Kit-long

Mr YEUNG Yuk

Co-opted Members

Mr LEUNG Man-ho (Arrived at 9:55 a.m.)

Mr TSUI Yip-chun (Arrived at 10:10 a.m.)

In Attendance

Mr LEE Wai-yin, Brett	Assistant District Officer (Sham Shui Po) 1
Miss CHIN Wai-sheung, Doris	Senior Liaison Officer 1, Sham Shui Po District Office
Ms LAM Suk-wah, Amy	Senior Community Relations Officer, Kowloon West Regional Office, Independent Commission Against Corruption
Ms KAN Hoi-yan, Amanda	Chief School Development Officer (Sham Shui Po), Education Bureau
Ms LEUNG Wai-ling, Betty	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po) 2, Social Welfare Department
Mr LOK Man-kwong	Acting Housing Manager (Kowloon West and Sai Kung 6), Housing Department
Ms HO Wing-sze, Marianna	Senior Manager (Kowloon West/Cultural Services), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms CHAN Pik-mei, Meimei	Manager (Kowloon West) Marketing, Programme and District Activities, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms TSENG Chieh, Elsa	Deputy District Leisure Manager (Sham Shui Po) District Support, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr CHAN Kwok-pui, Louis	Assistant District Leisure Manager (Sham Shui Po) District Support, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms YEUNG Siu-ping, Grace	Senior Librarian (Sham Shui Po), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms WONG Sau-ching, Agnes	Librarian (Po On Road Public Library), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr CHAN Chi-suen, Rex	Police Community Relations Officer (Sham Shui Po District), Hong Kong Police Force
Ms IP Tsz-wai, Joyce	Assistant Police Community Relations Officer (Sham Shui Po District), Hong Kong Police Force
Mr CHENG Kam-hung	Neighbourhood Police Co-ordinator, Police Community Relations Office, Sham Shui Po District, Hong Kong Police Force
Mr LEUNG Kin-ip	Chief Superintendent (Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre), Correctional Services Department
Mr CHAN Tai-yin, Daniel	Senior Superintendent (Works and Planning), Correctional Services Department
Mr KO Hin-man, Lawrence	Senior Project Manager 230, Architectural Services Department
Mr HON Shiu-heng, Edward	Project Manager 294, Architectural Services Department

Secretary

Miss CHU Lok-yin, Lorin

Executive Officer (District Council) 2, Sham Shui Po
District Office

Absent

Member

Mr LAU Wai-chung, Lawrence

Co-opted Member

Mr FUNG Kin-wai, Patrick

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the meeting. She also welcomed Ms Amanda KAN, Chief School Development Officer (Sham Shui Po) of the Education Bureau (“EDB”) to attend this meeting in place of Ms LO Ying-yue, Anna and Mr LOK Man-kwong, Acting Housing Manager (Kowloon West and Sai Kung 6) of the Housing Department (“HD”) to attend this meeting in place of Miss CHAN Shuk-yu, Sylvia.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of minutes of the 5th meeting held on 24 September 2020

2. The Committee confirmed the above minutes without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters for discussion

(a) Redevelopment plan of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre (CAC Paper 101/20)

3. Mr LEUNG Kin-ip and Mr Lawrence KO introduced Paper 101/20 with the aid of PowerPoint.

4. Mr Kalvin HO said that he was dissatisfied with the earlier suspension of all official visits by the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”) and opined that CSD failed to treat persons in custody and members of the public properly. Also, he opposed the redevelopment plan of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre and opined that no redevelopment works for the reception centre should be carried out before the rights of persons in custody were improved.

5. Mr Jeffrey SIN enquired whether the Department would remove the trees on slopes for the construction of new building and whether it would arrange activity spaces for persons in custody or relocate all persons in custody to the same place during the second stage of the works. He then said that there were people selling items for persons in custody at the visitors’ area of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre according to online sources and enquired how the Department would handle the situation.

6. Mr Jay LI said that although the custody capacity would increase from 1 484 persons to 1 894 persons after the redevelopment, the overcrowding situation in the reception centre still could not be solved if the Department did not put a limit on the number of persons in custody received. He then enquired if the Department would introduce a maximum limit. Also, he opined that if law enforcement departments made “indiscriminate arrests”, it would cause the reception centre to be overcrowded.

7. Mr Joshua LI said that to collect the views of persons in custody on the redevelopment plan, he had applied to CSD for official visits earlier but had been rejected. He agreed with Mr Jay LI's views and enquired how the Department would solve the overcrowding situation in the reception centre. Also, he enquired why the Department chose to demolish the annex instead of the old wing, where the facilities were more dilapidated, for redevelopment. He said that the hygiene of other buildings in Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre was also undesirable and enquired about the Department's suggestions on improvement.

8. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that members were welcome to raise enquiries about the redevelopment plan with CSD. He also expressed concern over official visits and pointed out that the Department used to allow Members to apply for official visits but refused such applications in recent months due to the epidemic.

9. Mr KONG Kwai-sang opined that Members served the public and should not refuse to provide services when the target was not a resident under their respective constituencies. Therefore, he hoped that the Department would allow Members to make official visits.

10. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that he hoped the Department could understand that Members would provide assistance to the public regardless of their residential addresses. He then said that consultations with district councils, or even their approval, had always been required for all public works before applications could be made to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") for funding. He enquired why the redevelopment plan was submitted only for members' information and whether the Department's procedures for funding application had been changed.

11. Mr LEUNG Kin-ip thanked members for raising enquiries and said that enquiries about slopes would be addressed by representatives of the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD"). He clarified that CSD did not suspend any official visits due to the epidemic, including those by Members. According to the law, visits could be made by lawyers, police officers and officers of the Court, while Members were not included. However, the Department exercised the discretion to make arrangements based on the actual circumstances to facilitate official visits by Members of the concerned constituencies. Also, if necessary, the Department would provide support to persons in custody, such as helping them to contact relevant organisations. Regarding the overcrowding issue, the Department could not choose who to be placed in the custody of the reception centre but would make arrangements according to the actual situation. As mentioned in the paper, at the current stage, the Department would make full use of the activity rooms and adopt the approach of "setting up in the daytime and dismantling at night" to provide sufficient resting areas to persons in custody. As for the reason that the annex was chosen for the redevelopment, it was difficult to carry out conversion at the

other buildings due to their designs. To prevent the spread of the epidemic, the Department had strictly implemented relevant hygienic measures for prevention of infectious diseases in accordance with the established mechanism and put in place a series of disease prevention and disinfection measures, including introducing anti-epidemic technology and equipment. The Department would also follow the suggestion of the Centre for Health Protection to carry out virus tests on newly-received persons in custody and as required by the actual circumstances. Regarding the illegal acts in visit rooms of the reception centre, the Department had passed the case to law enforcement departments for handling and as the investigation was still underway, no response could be provided. However, the Department had implemented measures to avoid similar situations from occurring.

12. Mr Lawrence KO responded that as the redevelopment plan was still at the preliminary design stage, the final proposal for the construction of new buildings was not available yet. ArchSD would keep the trees within the site area as far as practical; if removal of trees could not be avoided, the Department would carry out compensatory planting according to the existing mechanism. Also, the Department had engaged a professional consultant to carry out a preliminary tree study and conclusions were not yet available at the moment.

13. Mr YEUNG Yuk enquired whether CSD would still follow the established practice of obtaining the support of district councils before applying to LegCo for funding.

14. Mr WAI Woon-nam said that the current redevelopment plan included formation works at nearby slopes and the plan was estimated to take 11 years. He suggested demolishing the existing staff quarters and staff club instead for constructing the new buildings so as to shorten the required time.

15. Mr Jay LI enquired whether the Department would set a limit on the number of persons in custody received by the reception centre and opined that it would be meaningless to carry out the redevelopment if such a limit was not introduced. He said that the Department should submit applications for planning permission to the Town Planning Board on the redevelopment plan and enquired whether the Department would consult the District Council (“DC”) on the plan.

16. Mr Kalvin HO said that official visits had been conducted smoothly in the past but in recent months, the Department required that official visits by Members could only be made to persons in custody who were residents in the constituencies of those Members. Therefore, he disagreed with the Department’s response that it did not suspend any official visits.

17. Mr Andy LAO said that at the early stage of the epidemic, he had been to Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre to make official visits numerous times and glass panels were installed at visit booths to separate persons in custody and their visitors in the visit room. Therefore, he opined that the epidemic prevention measures in the Official Visit Room were as effective as those in the Social Visit Room. Currently, no large outbreak was found in the reception centre so he had reservations about the Department's statement that official visits were reduced due to the epidemic.

18. Mr Joshua LI said that official visits allow persons in custody to voice out the unfair treatment in the reception centre. He opined that the Department's refusal to allow Members to make official visits deprived persons in custody of the right to complain. Therefore, he did not support the redevelopment plan.

19. Mr LEUNG Kin-ip responded that the redevelopment plan was drawn up based on the feasibility report and the aim of this meeting was to brief the Committee about the redevelopment plan and collect their views.

20. Mr Rex CHAN said that three members had mentioned that "indiscriminate arrests" were made by law enforcement departments. He also said that as a law enforcement agency, the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") was authorised by the law and had the responsibility to arrest any person suspected to have committed offences, which had always been the principle and objective of HKPF. He hoped the Chairman would rule those three members' remarks that "indiscriminate arrests" were made by law enforcement departments was appropriate or not.

21. The Chairman enquired about those three members' responses on the remarks of HKPF.

22. Mr Joshua LI said that a number of judges had suspected in trials the authenticity of police officers' statements or that their statements did not concur with the grounds for arrest, thus his remark was based on the above suspicions.

23. Mr Andy LAO said that the High Court had ruled earlier that police officers' failure to display their identification numbers contravened the Bill of Rights and therefore he opined that the police officers were "illegal" and making "indiscriminate arrests" when they "broke the law" and then "enforced the law".

24. Mr Leos LEE said that some magistrates had regarded the verbal statements given by police officers in courts as unreliable and therefore he opined that making "indiscriminate arrests" was common among the Police.

25. Mr Jeffrey SIN said that he was puzzled that he and Ms Janet NG had been arrested by the Police during the New Year's Day march earlier this year but they had not been prosecuted so far.

26. Ms LAU Pui-yuk said that she supported the Government and the Police to enforce the law rigorously to protect Hong Kong's core values of rule of law and believed that the Police would prosecute according to the law if there was any illegal act. She also gave the example that even though over 60 district council members had been prosecuted, it did not mean that all district council members would knowingly break the law.

27. The Chairman responded that as said by members, their remarks were based on court rulings.

28. Mr Rex CHAN said that those members made the mistake of generalising hastily in terms of thinking and logic based on their remarks on the cases mentioned. HKPF did not agree with their remarks and expressed regret at that, and representatives of the Police would walk out in protest.

[Some members present at the meeting expressed their views loudly and the Chairman signalled them not to affect the proceeding of the meeting.]

29. Mr Kalvin HO said that he did not understand the Department's arrangements for official visits by Members and opined that the Department should have the residential addresses of persons in custody. He pointed out that in the past, Members was able to apply to make official visits smoothly, but currently, the Department used all sorts of reasons to obstruct the visits.

30. Mr Leos LEE said that detainees were temporarily detained in Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre before their trials and it was indeed reasonable for Members to apply for official visits. Therefore, he opined that the Department's arrangements deprived them of the right to be visited.

31. Ms Janet NG enquired why the Department chose to construct new buildings instead of improving the undesirable environment in the old wing. She also did not understand why the Department refused the applications made by Members of this district to make official visits for the purpose of understanding the accommodation conditions of persons in custody. Therefore, she could not support the Department's redevelopment plan.

32. Mr Andy LAO said that he hoped the Department would resume official visits by Members again as early as possible.

33. Mr LEUNG Kin-ip responded that the Department had always arranged official visits to persons in custody based on the actual circumstances. He pointed out that Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre was a maximum security prison and detainees needed to be transferred to different courts for trial. Therefore, it was not possible to suspend the operation of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre for carrying out renovation works, and improvement works had been carried out frequently in the old wing.

34. The Chairman said that a provisional motion was received and asked the mover, Mr Calvin HO, to introduce that motion.

35. Mr Calvin HO said that the motion was moved by him and seconded by Mr Howard LEE. It read as follows:

“As CSD fails to respond to Members’ questions on the rights of persons in custody, official visits, the planning after the redevelopment, etc., this Committee opposes the redevelopment plan of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre.”

36. The Chairman announced that the meeting would be adjourned for five minutes to allow the Secretariat to prepare provisional motion documents.

[The meeting was adjourned for five minutes.]

37. The Chairman announced that the meeting was resumed.

38. The Committee voted on the motion by open ballot.

39. The voting result was as follows:

For: Ms Eunice CHAU, Mr Calvin HO, Mr KONG Kwai-sang, Mr Andy LAO, Mr Howard LEE, Mr Leos LEE, Mr Joshua LI, Mr Richard LI, Mr Jay LI, Mr MAK Wai-Ming, Ms Janet NG, Mr Jeffrey SIN, Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, Mr Ronald TSUI, Mr WAI Woon-nam, Mr WONG Kit-long, Mr YEUNG Yuk, Mr LEUNG Man-ho, Mr TSUI Yip-chun (19)

Against: Mr Leo HO, Ms LAU Pui-yuk (2)

Abstain: Ms Carman NG (1)

40. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried. She concluded that the Committee was concerned about the redevelopment plan of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, hoped that CSD and ArchSD would take note of members' views, and requested the Department to report the concerned progress to members in due course.

(b) Strong request for the Community Care Fund to strengthen the supervision of subsidy programmes and shoulder social responsibility without shirking by employing and deploying more staff to help members of the public with their applications (CAC Paper 102/20)

41. Mr Jeffrey SIN introduced Paper 102/20.

42. The Chairman said that before the meeting, the Secretariat had invited the Community Care Fund ("CCF") Secretariat to attend the meeting, yet the CCF Secretariat could not send representatives to attend the meeting. She asked members to refer to the relevant written response (Paper 121/20).

43. Mr WAI Woon-nam agreed with the content of the paper. He said that the Bank of China ("BOC") received hefty administrative fees from the One-off Allowance for New Arrivals from Low-income Families Programme and enquired why CCF Secretariat did not task BOC with helping members of the public to fill in application forms, but instead allowing Members to handle the concerned work.

44. Ms Eunice CHAU opined that application details of the above programme were not clear while some elderlies were not familiar with computers and sought Members' assistance. She hoped that the Government would accept both written and online applications and the applications would be processed by the bank uniformly when a similar programme was launched again.

45. Mr WONG Kit-long opined that the Government did not consult DC on implementation details when launching welfare policies and therefore Members did not know much about the concerned programmes and could not answer enquiries from the public. He took the distribution of CuMask+ and supermarket coupons as examples, pointing out that the implementation of many policies were hasty.

46. Mr Jay LI said that as the exclusive agent of the programme, BOC charged an

administrative fee of \$150 for every application processed but did not help the public to fill in forms and shifted the responsibility to Members. He expressed dissatisfaction at that.

47. Mr Leos LEE opined that the Sham Shui Po District Office (“SSPDO”) had the responsibility to convey public views to the Government.

48. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that SSPDO noted members’ views.

49. The Chairman asked Mr Jeffrey SIN to introduce the motion in Paper 102/20.

50. Mr Jeffrey SIN said that the Implementation Office of One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA (2020) of CCF only handled public enquiries. He then said that the motion was moved by him and seconded by Mr WONG Kit-long. It read as follows:

“Strongly request CCF to strengthen the supervision of subsidy programmes and shoulder social responsibility without shirking by employing and deploying more staff to help members of the public with their applications.”

51. The Committee voted on the motion by open ballot.

52. The voting result was as follows:

For: Ms Eunice CHAU, Mr Calvin HO, Mr Leo HO, Mr Andy LAO,
Ms LAU Pui-yuk, Mr Leos LEE, Mr Joshua LI, Mr Jay LI,
Ms Carman NG, Ms Janet NG, Mr Jeffrey SIN,
Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, Mr WAI Woon-nam, Mr WONG Kit-long,
Mr LEUNG Man-ho, Mr TSUI Yip-chun (16)

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

53. The Chairman concluded that the motion was carried unanimously by the Committee.

(c) Concern over the demographic structure and the rising trend of suicide cases in Sham Shui Po District in recent years (CAC Paper 103/20)

54. Mr Jeffrey SIN introduced Paper 103/20.

55. The Chairman said that since the representatives of HKPF had left the meeting, she asked members to refer to the relevant written response (Paper 128/20). She then said that the Secretariat had invited the Census and Statistics Department to attend the meeting yet the Department could not send representatives to attend the meeting. She asked members to refer to the relevant written response (Paper 123/20).

56. Ms Amanda KAN introduced Response Paper 119/20.

57. Ms Betty LEUNG introduced Response Paper 124/20.

58. Mr WONG Kit-long opined that the social atmosphere and mentality were becoming more conservative, and enquired how EDB could enable students to adapt to social changes and facilitate parents to know more about the needs of young people. He then said that students committed suicide for different reasons such as family and academic issues which could not be solved immediately.

59. Ms Janet NG recognised the efforts of EDB and the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) and said that young people were less resilient nowadays. When having communication problems with their families, young people did not know how to seek help from others and committed suicide as a way of revenge. She hoped that the frontline staff could heighten vigilance, pay more attention to self-harm behaviours of young people and provide support.

60. Mr Leos LEE said that the social turmoil last year had profound implications on students, yet the Government had not provided emotional support services. Therefore, he hoped that EDB could provide more emotional support and counselling services to the students.

61. Mr Jeffrey SIN opined that the “Understanding the Adolescent Project” could not solve the issue of students committing suicide. The limited quotas for the “Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme” might not be able to help young people with employment difficulties. Hence, he hoped that EDB and SWD could pay more attention to the students.

62. Mr LEUNG Man-ho said that the Government could not use resources effectively to solve the problems. He pointed out that as mentioned in the Policy Address 2020, the “Beat Drugs Fund” would allocate an additional funding of \$300 million to provide emotional support services to the public who was affected by the social incidents last year and the epidemic situation of the Coronavirus Disease 2019, yet the details of the support programme remained unknown. He said that social welfare organisations provided support services to the arrested youth, for instance the “Touch Point” programme of

Caritas, yet most of the adolescents were unaware of these programmes; he enquired how SWD promoted these programmes to local residents. He opined that EDB and SWD should keep abreast with the times and identify adolescents with suicidal risks or hidden emotional problems proactively.

63. Mr MAK Wai-ming expressed concern over the situation of schools suspending activities due to the epidemic. He said that since face-to-face classes were currently held on a half-day basis in all primary and secondary schools, school social workers and teachers had less time to communicate with students and could not handle the problems of all students. He also said that as the income of some parents was reduced and they could not participate in the activities of social welfare organisations, they did not have a channel to vent their frustration and might need to face all these stresses by themselves. He hoped that EDB and SWD would provide support to these families to prevent recurrence of the tragedy in So Uk Estate.

64. Mr Richard LI said that the suicide rate announced by The Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong recently was 13.25 (i.e. 13.25 deaths per 100 000 persons), indicating an increase as compared to last year; the highest suicide rate for the age above 60 years old was 19.58. However, the number of help seekers had decreased. He enquired whether SWD had carried out preventive or remedial work with reference to the above study and whether it would carry out publicity work through media to reduce the number of suicide cases of elderly people.

65. Ms Amanda KAN thanked members for their views and enquiries. She responded that apart from implementing programmes to promote mental health of students at the Universal level, the Bureau would also enhance support for students with mental health needs at the Selective level and the Indicated level. At the Selective level, the Bureau would organise relevant workshops and training for teachers to facilitate the identification and support to students with mental health needs. At the Indicated level, the Learning Support Grant provided by EDB to public schools for supporting students with special educational needs also covered students with mental illness. The schools could use the grant flexibly for meeting various needs of these students, for instance hiring teaching assistants to assist teachers in designing activities or teaching materials, procuring outside professional support or counselling services, conducting teacher training or carrying out parent education work. Regarding members' views, the Bureau would review the support services provided amid the epidemic. Concerning the situation of the arrested students, the Bureau had also requested the schools to examine the overall situation of the students and formulate suitable support programmes. The Bureau would continue to provide information about life planning, studies and careers to schools, students and parents.

66. Ms Betty LEUNG responded that SWD provided emotional support and crisis

intervention services to people in need through the following services and arrangements:

- (a) The department had implemented a community support service scheme called “Youth Action Network” in West Kowloon area in order to provide individual and family counselling services, therapy groups, skill training and community services, etc. to children and juveniles issued with superintendents’ cautions as well as the arrested youth and their peers. The non-governmental organisation (“NGO”) operating this service would also provide relevant assistance to the arrested youth including giving an introduction of criminal prosecution procedures, accompanying them to meet the lawyers, handling family relationships and providing emotional support services to parents.
- (b) The department had worked with the Radio Television Hong Kong (“RTHK”). In the radio programme “Healthpedia”, clinical psychologists had educated the public on how to realize their emotional conditions and provided channels for them to seek help. In addition, the Clinical Psychological Service Branch of the Department had participated in the production of the RTHK programme “Happy Daily”. The information about ways to cope with adversities and enhance one’s resilience mentioned in the programme had also been uploaded to SWD’s website for public access.
- (c) Since October 2019, the coverage of service targets of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness had extended to secondary school students with mental health needs. The Sham Shui Po District Social Welfare Office (“SSPDSWO”) had arranged representatives of the centres to introduce relevant work to the School Liaison Committee in July 2020, it was hoped that the communication with schools could be strengthened at the district level to provide support to adolescents in need.
- (d) To improve the children-related social welfare service system, the Department had launched the “Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review” from 2008 to 2011 and reviewed cases of death of children aged below 18 which had taken place after 1 January 2008 and had been reported to the Coroner’s Court including cases of natural and unnatural death. The concerned mechanism had been regularised since 2011, the Child Fatality Review Panel conducted review on that kind of cases on a regular basis. In the past review, it was found that the death risk of infants would increase if they slept on the same bed with parents, and some cases revealed that adolescents had sent messages indicating suicide to their peers before committing suicide; the Department would formulate preventive strategies with reference to the review report.

- (e) At the district level, SSPDSWO had printed leaflets of its services with information about stress management and enhancement of resilience. HD had also assisted in distributing the leaflets to all public housing estates in Sham Shui Po so that residents could know more about resources available in the community. Besides, SSPDSWO had worked with 16 NGOs and district organisations to implement the “Life Education Programme”. Through public education and district activities, the department promoted mental health and encouraged adolescents to cope with adversities and challenges with a positive attitude.

67. The Chairman said that SWD was requested to submit supplementary documents about the details of the Life Education Programme after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: The Life Education Programme was jointly organised by SSPDSWO of SWD, 16 NGOs in the district and district organisations; various activities had been organised by three working groups. The theme of 2020-2021 was about ways to cope with problems arising from the epidemic or social incidents, including the trust issues between adolescents and their families, communication and emotional problems. The activities included seminars for parents, training for tertiary students, communication groups and staff training, etc. A photo-taking activity had also been held under the programme. Members of the public were invited to provide his/her own photos or photos with their families and friends which showed their smiles and give a cheering message so as to convey the positivity of coping with adversities.]

68. Mr WONG Kit-long opined that life planning could reflect the generation gap between students and parents. EDB treated students studying different subjects unfairly and did not attach much importance to arts subjects and social science subjects comparatively. He hoped that the Bureau would let the parents know that Applied Learning subjects were equally important.

69. Mr MAK Wai-ming said that regarding the support at the Indicated level, the Bureau should specify the guidelines that schools could only use the concerned grant for providing emotional support to students; otherwise, the schools would only hire teaching assistants to address the learning needs of students. Besides, he was appreciative for the television programmes jointly produced by SWD and RTHK, and hoped that RTHK could allocate more resources and strive to broadcast these television programmes during prime time.

70. Ms Amanda KAN responded that the Bureau noted members’ views. Concerning the support at the Indicated level, the Bureau had already reminded the schools to use the grant for providing assistance to address students’ needs at different aspects, for instance hiring additional manpower or producing teaching materials to support students in need.

71. The Chairman concluded that the Committee suggested Working Group on Children and Youth Affairs continue to discuss this item and invite SWD to introduce the details of the emotional support services to members at the working group meetings.

(d) Cordially invite the Police to give the Sham Shui Po District Council an introduction to the latest arrest and law enforcement processes (CAC Paper 104/20)

72. The Chairman said that as representatives of HKPF had left the meeting, they could not give any responses to Paper 104/20. She asked Mr Jeffrey SIN if he would proceed to introduce the paper.

73. Mr Jeffrey SIN suggested discussing this item in the next meeting and hoped that the Police would explain the latest law enforcement actions to members.

74. The Chairman agreed with the suggestion above.

(e) Concern over problems faced by mobility handicapped persons in stair climbing in Sham Shui Po District (CAC Paper 105/20)

75. Mr Jay LI introduced Paper 105/20.

76. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had invited the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (“EMSD”) and The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (“HKCSS”) to attend the meeting yet the concerned parties could not send representatives to attend the meeting. She asked members to refer to the relevant written responses (Papers 122/20 and 127/20).

77. Ms Betty LEUNG introduced Response Paper 118/20.

78. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that as shown in Paper 127/20, the pilot scheme on stair climbing services was effective and could help social workers contact elderly persons who were mobility handicapped. He hoped that SWD would regularise the pilot scheme and carry out promotional campaigns in district elderly community centres or large-scale elderly organisations to help elderly persons who were mobility handicapped. He pointed out that there were relatively more elderly residents in the old buildings in Sham Shui Po District (“SSP District”) and Yau Tsim Mong District and therefore the demands for stair climbing services were high in those two districts.

79. Mr Kalvin HO agreed with Mr TAM Kwok-kiu’s views and said that lifts were not

available in some old buildings, causing difficulty for elderly residents who were mobility handicapped. Therefore, he opined that it was necessary to continue the pilot scheme. He then said that with the aid of stair climbers, some residents had been able to go out more, otherwise going out was only possible with the assistance of their family members. Therefore, he hoped relevant departments would regularise the pilot scheme.

80. Mr MAK Wai-ming said that the Urban Renewal Authority had launched the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme to help owners of old buildings to replace lifts in the next five years while lift services would be suspended for three months to half a year during the replacement works. He pointed out that many old buildings in the district had only one lift, and even though some had two lifts, they served odd- and even-numbered floors respectively so the implementation of lift replacement works would affect the residents much, especially the elderly. Therefore, he opined that there was a pressing need to continue the pilot scheme so as to help residents of the old buildings where replacement of lifts was required.

81. Mr CHUM Tak-shing agreed with Mr MAK Wai-ming's views and said that many elderly persons in Hong Kong lived in single-block old buildings and they might choose not to apply for the above subsidy scheme because stair climbers were not available for easy access. Therefore, he hoped that relevant departments would explore how to continue the pilot scheme.

82. Mr TSUI Yip-chun said that according to Paper 127/20, structural problems existed in some old buildings that would affect the operation of stair climbers. He enquired whether SSPDO would help the "three-nil buildings" that had applied for the above subsidy scheme to carry out simple repairs works so that stair climbers would be able to operate in those buildings smoothly.

83. Mr Jay LI said that there were buildings in which the lift lobby and the ground floor were separated by a one-storey staircase and 300 buildings with only one lift also showing residents' demands for stair climbers.

84. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that SSPDO mainly provided services to "three-nil buildings" to support their cleansing and did not have information regarding lifts and stair climbing services.

85. Ms Betty LEUNG responded that the Department had set up the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care to subsidise elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure, rent and trial use technology products, but some

service units did not use the fund to procure stair climbers, mainly because old buildings were not located within their service areas, or the designs of the buildings were not suitable for the operation of stair climbers. As some organisations which used the stair climbers before had indicated that the devices had a high attrition rate, she opined that it was necessary to improve the design of stair climbers to make them compatible with different buildings. She then added that the Labour and Welfare Bureau (“LWB”) would carry out a study on support to carers in order to understand the needs of carers of the elderly and the disabled as well as their service expectations.

86. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that the operation of stair climbers was not complicated but it required two security guards to help with the operation every time. Therefore, he opined that the Government should think about the manpower arrangements when formulating relevant policies and provide additional resources to support “three-nil buildings”.

87. Mr MAK Wai-ming suggested the discussion on the issue of stair climbers be continued by the Working Group on Private Premises and Urban Revitalisation (“WGPPUR”).

88. The Chairman asked members about their views on passing Paper 105/20 to the Housing Affairs Committee (“HAC”) for discussion.

89. Mr CHUM Tak-shing suggested that relevant members pass Paper 105/20 to HAC for further discussion and invite different stakeholders, such as the Home Affairs Bureau (“HAB”) and URA, to attend the meetings.

90. The Chairman asked Mr Jay LI to introduce the motion in Paper 105/20.

91. Mr Jay LI said that the motion was moved by him and seconded by Mr Howard LEE. It read as follows:

“The Committee urges the Government to subsidise social welfare organisations to provide stair climbing services to help mobility handicapped persons living in residential buildings where lifts are not available or being repaired in SSP District to climb stairs, get assistance in going out or participate in the community to satisfy their daily needs.”

92. The Committee voted on the motion by open ballot.

93. The voting result was as follows:

For: Ms Eunice CHAU, Mr CHUM Tak-shing, Mr Calvin HO, Mr KONG Kwai-sang, Mr Andy LAO, Ms LAU Pui-yuk, Mr Howard LEE, Mr Leos LEE, Mr Joshua LI, Mr Richard LI, Mr Jay LI, Mr MAK Wai-Ming, Ms Carman NG, Ms Janet NG, Mr Jeffrey SIN, Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, Mr Ronald TSUI, Mr WAI Woon-nam, Mr WONG Kit-long, Mr YEUNG Yuk, Mr LEUNG Man-ho, Mr TSUI Yip-chun (22)

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

94. The Chairman concluded that the responses of LWB, SWD, EMSD and HKCSS were noted and the motion was carried unanimously by the Committee.

(f) Request for provision of venues for Muslims' religious activities in Sham Shui Po District (CAC Paper 106/20)

95. Mr KONG Kwai-sang introduced Paper 106/20.

96. Mr LOK Man-kwong introduced Response Paper 125/20.

97. Mr Jay LI said that there was a lack of suitable venues for ethnic minority groups in the district to hold religious activities now and he hoped the Government would put forward concrete solutions.

98. Mr Howard LEE said that the population of ethnic minorities in the district was growing rapidly but the community venues and facilities for worshipping did not increase accordingly. He hoped that the Government could face their religious needs squarely and urged SSPDO to coordinate with departments to provide idle sites which they could apply to use.

99. Mr Calvin HO enquired about the respective numbers of ethnic minority residents in different housing estates so as to search for suitable venues for religious activities. He pointed out that ethnic minority groups were willing to adjust the frequency of religious activities to comply with the usage requirements of venues. He hoped SSPDO would provide support proactively and promote an inclusive culture.

100. Mr YEUNG Yuk expressed dissatisfaction on HD's response and pointed out that the Department should provide special support to ethnic minorities with special needs. He suggested that SSPDO consider providing the idle space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre for ethnic minority groups to hold religious activities and enquired whether the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") could lease its activity venues with lower usage rates to those groups.

101. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu agreed with Mr Calvin HO's views and hoped that SSPDO would help recommend relevant ethnic minority groups to apply for renting vacant welfare facility premises in areas managed by HD in the capacity of eligible non-government organisations. He also requested HAB to consider providing the idle properties and sites in the district to ethnic minority groups as venues for religious activities.

102. Mr MAK Wai-ming said that suitable ancillary facilities were available for other religions for holding religious activities, while the general public lacked an understanding of ethnic minorities and their religions. He requested relevant departments to provide concrete support to address ethnic minorities' religious needs so as to promote inclusiveness, peace, etc. in the community.

103. Mr CHUM Tak-shing suggested that LCSD lease squash courts with lower usage rates to ethnic minorities for holding religious activities.

104. Mr KONG Kwai-sang enquired about the Government's procedures for granting sites and subsidies to religious groups to construct suitable venues for religious activities. He opined that SSPDO should coordinate with other departments more proactively on the basis of the existing services to respond to ethnic minorities' religious needs.

105. Mr TSUI Yip-chun requested relevant departments to consider leasing the idle space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre through short-term tenancies to groups with religious needs proactively.

106. Assistant District Officer 1 gave a consolidated response saying that district groups were welcome to provide their views on the use of vacant government sites in the district to relevant bureaux and departments, and departments would handle the views according to the established mechanisms. Regarding the idle space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre, SSPDO needed to handle it in accordance with the requirements of the Government Property Agency and would provide relevant details to members in due course.

107. Ms Elsa TSENG noted members' views on usage rates of squash courts of LCSD and said that some squash courts had been opened up for use as table tennis rooms or multi-purpose activity rooms. The Department welcomed applications from ethnic minorities for the use of LCSD venues to hold activities and would handle the applications according to the established procedures. The Department would give a response on whether the building near Lei Cheng Uk Swimming Pool belonged to LCSD later.

108. Mr CHUM Tak-shing enquired the conditions and restrictions for ethnic minorities to rent the LCSD venues to hold religious activities.

109. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that the space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre had been idled for a long time and enquired SSPDO's plans for that space.

110. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu suggested providing the space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre to ethnic minorities for temporary use, allowing them to have a place for holding religious activities so as to respond to their religious needs.

111. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that members' views and concerns on idle government sites were noted. He pointed out that HAB had submitted an application to the District Facilities Committee last year about the future use of the space on the ground floor of Nam Cheong District Community Centre and the Bureau was still processing the application.

112. Ms Elsa TSENG responded that activity rooms of LCSD were mainly used for sport purposes, while members of the public could also apply to use them for other activities and the Department would handle the applications according to the established procedures.

113. The Chairman asked Mr KONG Kwai-sang to introduce the motion in Paper 106/20.

114. Mr KONG Kwai-sang said that the motion was moved by him and seconded by Mr Jay LI. It read as follows:

“Request SSPDO to take a leading role in coordinating with government departments to find venues of HD or SSPDO for Muslims to use as fixed and long-term venues for religious activities.”

115. Mr CHUM Tak-shing proposed an amended motion and said that the motion was moved by him and seconded by Mr TAM Kwok-kiu. It read as follows:

“Request SSPDO to take a leading role in coordinating with government departments to find venues, including but not limited to venues of HD, SSPDO and LCSD that are vacant, idle or with lower usage rates, for Muslims to use as fixed and long-term venues for religious activities.”

116. The Committee voted on the motion by open ballot.

117. The voting result was as follows:

For: Ms Eunice CHAU, Mr CHUM Tak-shing, Mr Calvin HO, Mr Leo HO, Mr KONG Kwai-sang, Mr Andy LAO, Ms LAU Pui-yuk, Mr Howard LEE, Mr Jay LI, Mr MAK Wai-Ming, Ms Carman NG, Ms Janet NG, Mr Jeffrey SIN, Mr TAM Kwok-kiu, Mr Ronald TSUI, Mr WAI Woon-nam, Mr WONG Kit-long, Mr YEUNG Yuk, Mr LEUNG Man-ho, Mr TSUI Yip-chun (20)

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

118. The Chairman concluded that it was hoped that SSPDO, HD and LCSD would collaborate to find suitable venues for religious activities for Muslims groups in the district.

(g) Explore the situation concerning “the use of Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject” in Sham Shui Po District How the Government defend the passing on of Cantonese in Hong Kong (CAC Paper 107/20)

119. Mr WONG Kit-long introduced Paper 107/20.

120. Mr Jeffrey SIN added that Putonghua was a language used by Jurchens of Mongolia, while Cantonese retained and incorporated ancient Chinese. Therefore, he opined that Putonghua was a foreign language.

121. Ms Amanda KAN introduced Response Paper 120/20.

122. Mr Leos LEE said that study results showed that using Putonghua as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject (“PMIC”) was not as effective as using Cantonese as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject (“CMIC”), and therefore, as far as students’ well-being was concerned, schools should not implement PMIC. He then said that with the current turmoil and rifts in the society as well as Cantonese being the mainstream language of the society, he was worried that students would be discriminated against or insulted if they used Putonghua in daily life. He said that if the Government wanted to make Putonghua as the mainstream language, it should set an example by delivering policy addresses in Putonghua. He hoped that EDB would act in the best interest of students and solve the problem of students being discriminated when using Putonghua in daily life.

123. Mr Calvin HO said that PMIC could not help students learn Chinese, be it in terms of history or teaching effectiveness. He then explained the origin of Putonghua and why it was chosen as the official language. He opined that Putonghua was a foreigners’ language and therefore unable to pass on the Chinese culture and would even cause obstacles in reading Chinese words.

124. Ms Janet NG said that most of the Band One secondary schools placed more importance on “biliteracy and trilingualism”, and their senior classes mostly adopted CMIC. She pointed out that the Government was still using Cantonese as the official language. Therefore, she hoped that the Bureau would continue to implement CMIC to enhance the quality of teaching.

125. Mr WONG Kit-long enquired whether SSPDO would adopt the suggestion in Paper 107/20, which was to provide resources to implement activities promoting Cantonese in the district.

126. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that SSPDO understood members’ concerns over the policies on education and the promotion of “biliteracy and trilingualism”, and noted that members wished to promote Cantonese to new arrivals.

127. Mr Jeffrey SIN enquired whether the Bureau would issue guidelines to regulate students’ choice of Chinese words.

128. Mr Leos LEE said that the mainstream language in the society was Cantonese and government officials used Cantonese as well, while students might be chased away if they used Putonghua when shopping in markets. He reiterated that if the Government wanted to make Putonghua as the mainstream language, it should set an example by using

Putonghua itself and then gradually implement PMIC. He hoped that EDB would follow up on this issue.

129. Ms Amanda KAN responded that she agreed that Cantonese was the mainstream language in Hong Kong, the Bureau continued to implement the language policy of “bilingualism and trilingualism” currently, and members’ views on PMIC were noted.

130. The Chairman concluded that the Committee was concerned about the implementation of PMIC in SSP District and requested EDB to take note of members’ views.

(h) Concern over the occupational safety and health of staff of Sham Shui Po Sports Ground (CAC Paper 108/20)

131. Mr Ronald TSUI introduced Paper 108/20.

132. Ms Elsa TSENG introduced Response Paper 126/20.

133. Mr Howard LEE enquired whether the cleaning workers had all along been responsible for moving the bench seat boxes and whether the Departmental staff had offered assistance. He also asked whether the Department would consider acquiring ancillary equipment to assist workers in moving the seats.

134. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that the contract cleaning workers of the Department were of higher age. Although wheels were attached to the underside of the bench seat boxes, it was still rather difficult to move and work injuries or strain injuries might occur. He enquired why the Department required cleaning workers to move the bench seat boxes and whether the Department would consider acquiring additional equipment so that the cleaning workers did not have to assist in moving the seats.

135. Mr CHUM Tak-shing enquired about the number of cleaning workers required for moving each bench seat box and asked whether cleaning workers had been injured in the past due to the moving work. He also enquired whether the Department had taken into account the ratio of male to female workers, age, height, etc. when arranging cleaning workers to move the seats, and whether it had arranged occupational safety and health training for the workers.

136. Ms Elsa TSENG responded that LCSD was always concerned for the occupational safety and health of workers. Currently, four cleaning workers were arranged to be responsible for moving each bench seat box and the Departmental staff would also provide

assistance and monitor the process to ensure safety. The Department noted members' views. Apart from deploying additional staff to assist in moving the seats, the department would also explore ways to improve the arrangements for moving the seats proactively.

137. Mr Ronald TSUI enquired of the Department about the reasons for arranging cleaning workers to move the bench seat boxes, and doubted that the Department made such arrangements so as to take up fewer responsibilities in case of accidents. He then said that the duty of the cleaning workers was to maintain the environmental hygiene of sport venues. If the work of moving the seats was not included in the duties listed in the contract, the cleaning workers had the right to refuse.

138. Mr YEUNG Yuk thanked the Department for its response and suggested members inspect the process of workers moving the bench seat boxes at Sham Shui Po Sports Ground before the next Hong Kong Premier League.

139. Ms Elsa TSENG responded that members' views were noted. The Department would study the feasibility of rearranging the work of venue staff, arrange members to carry out site inspection as soon as possible and discuss ways to improve the work of moving bench seat boxes together.

[Post-meeting note: LCSD had arranged members to carry out site inspection on 4 December 2020.]

140. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu suggested the Department take into account the age and health conditions of the workers when arranging them to take up duties of moving objects and formulate guidelines on the concerned matter.

141. The Chairman concluded that LCSD was urged to arrange members to carry out site inspection at Sham Shui Po Sports Ground as soon as possible and carry out suitable deployment regarding the manpower arrangements for venue staff.

(i) Objection to the freezing of minimum wage

142. The Chairman said that as mentioned in the written notice which the Secretariat had given to her earlier, relevant departments considered that the above issue and the content of the relevant paper were not district affairs of Sham Shui Po, thus they were not compatible with the functions of DC stipulated in Section 61(a) of the District Council Ordinance ("DCO"). Therefore, the Secretariat would not provide support and all staff of government departments (including the staff of the Secretariat) would neither attend nor participate in the discussion about the concerned paper.

143. Assistant District Officer 1 responded on behalf of the Government that relevant departments considered that the concerned issue was not compatible with the functions of DC stipulated in Section 61(a) of DCO. The representatives of government departments present at the meeting would not participate in the discussion and would walk out from the meeting, the Secretariat would not provide support as well.

(j) Report by LCSD on recreational and sports activities organised in Sham Shui Po District (CAC Paper 109/20)

144. Ms Elsa TSENG introduced Paper 109/20.

145. The Chairman concluded that the Committee noted the content of the report.

(k) Report by LCSD on Tao Arts Sham Shui Po – Community Arts Scheme and other arts and cultural activities in Sham Shui Po District (CAC Paper 110/20)

146. Ms Marianna HO introduced Paper 110/20.

147. The Chairman enquired whether the Department would postpone the 19 arts and cultural activities.

148. Ms Marianna HO responded that the Department would arrange the above programmes to be postponed as far as possible and report the concerned details to members after the dates were confirmed.

149. The Chairman concluded that the Committee noted the content of the report.

(l) Report by LCSD on the extension activities and utilisation of public libraries in Sham Shui Po District (CAC Paper 111/20)

150. Ms Grace YEUNG introduced Paper 111/20.

151. The Chairman concluded that the Committee noted the content of the report.

Agenda Item 3: Reports from Working Groups under the Committee

(a) Vetting Sub-Committee (CAC Paper 112/20)

(b) Working Group on Sports, Arts and Culture (CAC Paper 113/20)

(c) Working Group on Children and Youth Affairs (CAC Papers 114/20 and 115/20)

152. The Chairman concluded that the Committee noted and endorsed the above working group reports.

Agenda Item 4: Follow-up matter

(a) List of follow-up matters of the Community Affairs Committee (CAC Paper 116/20)

153. The Chairman asked members to refer to Paper 116/20 and enquired about members' views on the retention or removal of items on the list.

154. Mr WAI Woon-nam enquired whether SSPDO had provided children's toilet seats and children's toilets in the toilets of its eight community halls/centres.

155. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that as stated in Paper 116/20, SSPDO had provided the concerned facilities in the toilets of some community halls/centres and made a request to ArchSD for provision of the concerned facilities.

156. The Chairman concluded that the Committee agreed to continue to follow up on the matter of provision of children's toilet seats and children's toilets in the toilets of community halls/centres under SSPDO.

Agenda Item 5: Any other business

(a) Funding applications to the Vetting Sub-Committee (CAC Paper 117/20)

157. The Chairman stated that the Vetting Sub-Committee ("VSC"), at its meeting on 23 November this year, had vetted the funding applications for reserved funds and non-reserved funds for organising activities during the period from 1 January to 28 February 2021, and endorsed an allocation of \$728,107 of reserved funds for organising 11 activities and an allocation of \$779,009 of non-reserved funds for organising 35 activities. The applications for reserved funds and non-reserved funds were listed out in Annex A and Annex B respectively. She asked members to consider whether to endorse the above funding applications and reminded members to make declaration of interests in accordance with the Sham Shui Po District Council Standing Orders. She then said that the applicant organisations of Application Numbers 200280, 200285 and 200286 were registered outside the district, she asked the Chairman of VSC to give additional remarks.

158. Mr WAI Woon-nam said that VSC had endorsed the funding applications of Application Numbers 200280, 200285 and 200286 at the earlier meeting, yet it was found later that the concerned applicant organisations were registered outside the district.

Hence, he asked members present at the meeting to consider whether to endorse the above funding applications. He also said that when vetting the funding applications of the first and second quarters, VSC had rejected the funding applications submitted by organisations which were registered outside the district. Therefore, it was hoped that members present at the meeting would reject the above funding applications.

Application No: 200280, 200285 and 200286

159. Since no member voted for the funding applications, the Chairman declared that the above funding applications were rejected unanimously by members present at the meeting.

Application No: 200246 – 200253

160. The Committee endorsed the above funding applications.

Application No: 200254

161. The Committee endorsed the above funding application.

162. Ms Janet NG said that the above funding application needed to be submitted to DC for further vetting, she enquired whether the application would be arranged for vetting by circulation to save time.

163. The Chairman said that member's concerns were noted and the Secretariat was requested to follow up on the matter after the meeting.

Application No: 200256 – 200258, 200260 – 200267, 200269 – 200274, 200278, 200279, 200281 – 200284

164. The Committee endorsed the above funding applications.

Application No: 200287 – 200289, 200291 – 200294, 200296 – 200299

165. Mr CHUM Tak-shing said that community halls and public places were closed amid the epidemic, some activities organised by owners' corporations had been held in private places. He was concerned that the act of those applicant organisations not allowing the public to join the concerned activities might violate the Guidelines on the Use of Sham Shui Po District Council Funds for Community Involvement Projects. Therefore, he hoped that the applicant organisations would not refuse the public to participate in activities using DC Funds for the reason of the epidemic situation.

166. The Chairman said that member's views were noted, the organisations were reminded to comply with the prohibition on group gathering and allow the public to participate in the concerned activities.

167. The Committee endorsed the above funding applications.

168. Mr Jay LI said that some funding applications concerning the Working Group on Community Building and District Bazaars ("WGCBDDB") had not yet been processed, he enquired about the progress of processing the funding applications.

169. The Secretary responded that the Secretariat had finished processing the concerned funding applications, yet the relevant vetting process was still underway.

170. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that the Secretariat was requested to consolidate all funding applications which had been endorsed by working groups but were still waiting for vetting after the meeting, and make public the vetting procedures as well as the time required.

171. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that since the content of each application was different, it was necessary for the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") to consider each application on an individual basis. Therefore, the time required for processing each application was different and it was not suitable to set a uniform time frame for vetting.

172. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu said that HAD should establish a performance pledge of the time used for vetting funding applications.

173. Mr YEUNG Yuk said that many funding applications had already been endorsed by working groups, committees or even DC, yet the approval letters had still not yet been issued; he was disappointed about that. He opined that the applicant organisations needed time to organise the activities, HAD was stalling on funding approval and rendered the applicant organisations unable to prepare for the activities. Besides, he would continue to follow up on the situation of funding approval with the Department and hoped to obtain information about the latest development as soon as possible.

174. Assistant District Officer 1 responded that members' views were noted.

175. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu suggested DC seek help from the Office of The Ombudsman so that the funding applications of DC would be processed more effectively.

176. The Chairman said that the Secretary was requested to inform the Chairman of WGCBDDB of the situation of funding applications as soon as possible.

177. Mr Jeffrey SIN said that he frequently received emails concerning territory-wide issues from the Legislative Council, he was disappointed about HAD's ruling that the Committee could not discuss the issue on minimum wage.

178. Mr TAM Kwok-kiu and Mr CHUM Tak-shing said that they agreed with the views of Mr Jeffrey SIN.

179. The Chairman said that SSPDO was requested to note members' views, and suggested members submit discussion papers regarding the concerned issue.

Agenda Item 6: Date of next meeting

180. The next meeting would be held at 9:30 a.m. on 28 January 2021 (Thursday).

181. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 2:40 p.m.

District Council Secretariat
Sham Shui Po District Office
April 2021