

(Translation)

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Housing, Planning and Social Welfare Committee of
Sham Shui Po District Council (7th Term)

Date: 25 April 2024 (Thursday)

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Sham Shui Po District Council

Present

Chairman

Mr LAM Ka-fai, Aaron, BBS, JP

Vice-Chairman

Mr LAM Wai-man, Raymond

Members

Mr HO Kwan-chau

Ms WU Wanqiu

Mr LEE Wing-man, MH

Ms WU Sze-wan

Mr CHEUNG Tak-wai

Mr LEUNG Ping-kin

Mr CHAN Wai-ming, BBS, MH, JP

Mr CHAN Kwok-wai, MH

Mr CHAN Lung-kit

Ms CHEN Lihong

Ms CHUM Pik-wa

Ms LAU Pui-yuk, MH

Ms CHUNG Ching-may, MH

Dr PONG Chiu-fai, MH

In Attendance

Miss LAI Ho-ting, Ally

Assistant District Officer (Sham Shui Po) 1

Mr KWONG Ka-kuen

Senior Liaison Officer 4, Sham Shui Po District Office

Mr LAI Wing-hong, Mark

Senior Building Surveyor/D2, Buildings Department

Mr CHAN Wai-wa

Senior Housing Manager/Kowloon West and Sai Kung 1,
Housing Department

Mr KOON Sing-kim

Housing Manager/Kowloon West and Sai Kung 8,
Housing Department

Miss CHOW Mei-yee	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po) 2, Social Welfare Department
Mr YEUNG Yun-wing, Ringo	Senior Town Planner (Acting)/Sham Shui Po, Planning Department
Mr LII Kin-chiu	Engineer/Kowloon 7, Drainage Services Department

Secretary

Miss CHUNG Keng-chin, Vivian	Executive Officer (District Council) 1, Sham Shui Po District Office
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Absent with Apologies

In Attendance

Mr SIU Kin-keung	Engineer/Kowloon (Distribution 2), Water Supplies Department
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Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the second meeting of the Housing, Planning and Social Welfare Committee (“HPSWC”) of the 7th term of the Sham Shui Po District Council (“SSPDC”).

Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Housing, Planning and Social Welfare Committee

2. Members confirmed the above minutes.

Item 2: Proposal to Enhance Smart Estate Management in Sham Shui Po District (HPSWC Paper No. 2/2024)

3. A member introduced Paper No. 2/2024.
4. Mr KOON Sing-kim introduced Response Paper No. 2a/2024.
5. The enquiries and views of members were consolidated as follows: (i) suggested relaxing the eligibility criteria for applicants of the “iHousing” app (“iHousing”) to relatives of public housing tenants to address the issue of elderly residents not knowing how to use mobile phones; (ii) suggested adding functions to “iHousing”, such as having a section of policies and guidelines of the Housing Department (“HD”), providing building information such as suspension of water or electricity supply, providing the number of remaining parking spaces in the carpark and payment function for parking fees, enquiry function for the progress of public housing application and unit information, etc; (iii) suggested using the usage rate and situation of “iHousing” as reference data to improve and strengthen the system; (iv) suggested using “iHousing” to improve the management of electronic record systems, such as recording cases of citizens’ requests for help and complaints, for follow-up purposes; (v) enquired whether “iHousing” only provided information or whether it also provided a channel for users to express their opinions; (vi) suggested the Department strengthen the promotion of “iHousing”; (vii) suggested the Department consider gradually improving the management system of old public housing estates; (viii) suggested the Department use new data to evaluate the trial results of the smart card access control system; (ix) believed that the population structure of different public housing estates could affect the trial results; (x) believed that the Department should re-evaluate whether smart door cards should still be adopted given the popularity of smart phones; (xi) suggested that the Department actively consider implementing arrangements for residents of public housing estates to use smart cards or “Octopus cards” for entry and exit; (xii) suggested that the Department install electronic screens in the lobby of buildings to facilitate residents (especially the elderly) to access information; (xiii) enquired if smart robots or other

technological tools would be used for cleaning and maintenance; (xiv) suggested the Department make good use of smart technology to establish an “e-community” and enhance interaction among residents; (xv) suggested that the Department refer to the practices in the mainland and adopt smart technology to observe elderly singletons and families of elderly doubletons, and visit them as appropriate; (xvi) suggested incorporating smart technology elements, such as automatic sensing systems, into the lighting systems of public housing estates; (xvii) suggested that the Department consider launching a mobile application to facilitate residents to seek help and make repair requests, and simplify the management and operation of estate offices; (xviii) suggested adding an online appointment system to handle various applications and shorten the waiting time for residents to submit forms; and (xix) suggested establishing a mobile instant messaging platform to allow residents to report problems, lodge complaints, obtain real-time information, and strengthen communication among residents.

6. Mr KOON Sing-kim gave a consolidated response: (i) the Department would pilot an access control system compatible with smartcards and contactless means in newly completed public housing estates; (ii) the Department had posted notices and promoted the “iHousing” through Estate Newsletter, and would continue to strengthen promotion to increase the awareness of the app among more residents aware; (iii) the various “iHousing” functions proposed by members would be reflected to the department; (iv) newly completed public housing estates would be equipped with smart lighting systems without automatic sensing functions and the opinions of members would be reflected to the department; and (v) members’ suggestion on introducing smart technology management elements in old public housing estates would be reflected to the headquarters.

7. The Chairman concluded that the Committee focused on discussing how to enhance the development of smart technology and the services provided in new and old housing estates. Regarding “iHousing”, the Committee hoped that HD would strengthen publicity to increase usage and gradually optimise its functions, and suggested that the Department establish a data centre. In addition, the Committee believed that the introduction of smart technology could alleviate the shortage of manpower, but it had to be done gradually to avoid causing the problem of unemployment.

Item 3: Proposal to Improve the Vacancy Rate of Shopping Centres under Housing Authority in Sham Shui Po District (HPSWC Paper No. 3/2024)

8. A member introduced Paper No. 3/2024.

9. Mr CHAN Wai-wa introduced Response Paper No. 3a/2024.

10. The enquiries and views of members were consolidated as follows: (i) believed that the Department should flexibly consider different methods to encourage and support commercial tenants, maintain foot traffic in shopping centres, and reduce cases of lease termination; (ii) enquired about the criteria, procedures, and the required time for planning the use of shopping centres in public housing estates, and believed that the Department should keep pace with the times, flexibly handle and accelerate assistance for cases involving changes to the planned use of commercial premises based on the latest business situation; (iii) reflected the high vacancy rate of markets in public housing estates, and residents often had to go to other places outside the estates to purchase daily necessities, causing inconvenience; (iv) suggested that the Department study how to utilise vacant premises from various aspects to avoid waste of resources, increase foot traffic, enrich product categories, and meet the needs of residents to purchase daily necessities. The suggested solutions included holding bazaars and organising economic boosting activities in commercial premises with SSPDC Members; providing workspace for Care Teams, non-governmental organisations, or social enterprises; letting commercial premises in the form of short-term letting to cultural and creative youth enterprises, youth start-ups and outlets, and introducing different types of trades, such as emerging trades like pick-up points for online shopping; (v) suggested considering different management methods to deal with changes in usage or rent issues, such as splitting up the premise for leasing, or reducing commercial premise occupancy by conglomerates to assist small and medium enterprises; (vi) suggested the Department meet and communicate with commercial tenants more frequently and conduct regular inspections to understand their opinions and needs; (vii) suggested strengthening the promotion of shopping centres and commercial premises; (viii) for some shopping centres in housing estates that lacked basic necessities for daily living facilities, members suggested adopting methods to attract enterprises and investments or providing concessionary rent to operators of supermarkets and convenience stores; (ix) enquired about the progress of attracting enterprises and investments in Hoi Lai Shopping Centre and the schedule for the entry of the supermarket; (x) suggested that the Department start lease renewal negotiation early with commercial tenants whose leases were about to expire to reduce the risk of lease termination; (xi) reflected that the rent determination mechanism had to be in line with the actual situation and consider the economic affordability of the public, and enquired whether the existing mechanism would be reviewed and optimised, and hoped that the adjustment of rent would be expedited; (xii) enquired whether the key performance indicators of the Department were linked to the utilisation rate of shopping centres; (xiii) enquired about activities held in shopping centres and festival lighting decoration activities held by the Department in Sham Shui Po district as well as their effectiveness in attracting foot traffic and driving consumption, and suggested contacting SSPDC Members to assist in promoting the activities; (xiv) enquired about the data on the vacancy period of commercial premises in public housing estates; (xv) suggested that the Department review the similarities and differences in the existing rental models of various markets and shopping centres, and

refer to the business models of other contractors, in order to improve foot traffic and reduce mutual comparison among commercial tenants; and (xvi) enquired about the tender process and suggested improving relevant procedures to increase flexibility in leasing, as well as providing a list of commercial premises available for leasing along with their layout plans.

11. Mr CHAN Wai-wa gave a consolidated response: (i) due to the involvement of public funds in the rent determination mechanism, a basket of factors had to be considered, and the Department would also try its best to determine the appropriate rent level based on the latest market conditions; (ii) the Department had been conducting reviews on changing the use of premises and would also consider forms such as short-term letting and splitting premises for rental; (iii) the Department had kept a list of premises and would adopt different leasing strategies, such as direct negotiations with commercial tenants and open tendering; (iv) commercial tenants would consider different factors such as business turnover and operation prospects when deciding whether to rent a premise, and the rise of going north to the mainland for spending and online shopping could affect the decision whether to rent a premise; (v) noted and would consider the types of commercial tenants mentioned by Members, such as cultural and creative youth enterprises, youth start-ups, and enterprises that met the needs of the people; (vi) the tendering process for premises usually took time. If no response was received, the Department would consider changing the use after consulting different stakeholders, in order to conduct a second tender and lease out the premises as soon as possible; (vii) if the intended use of a premise was to be changed, a technical feasibility study would generally be required; (viii) the Department had been conducting open tenders and directly contacting operators for the supermarket at Hoi Lai Estate hoping to provide shopping convenience for the residents as soon as possible; (ix) the change of use of old premises and market stalls required approval from the Commercial Properties Management Unit, and could also involve rent adjustments in response to changes in different trades. If commercial tenants wanted to change the purpose of their premises, they could first contact the estate offices; and (x) for some markets, the pricing of goods in premises was not the sole reason for insufficient foot traffic; the quality or variety of goods could also affect residents' choices.

12. The enquiries and views of members were consolidated as follows: (i) suggested that the Department should communicate with different stakeholders from multiple perspectives to increase tenant participation and understand the needs of the target group; (ii) suggested that the Department consider changes in target types in investigation and research, business attraction strategies, and short-term letting to meet the needs; and (iii) suggested conducting a feasibility study, including the possibility of different types of uses, before putting out premises for lease.

13. Mr CHAN Wai-wa gave a consolidated response: (i) the Department would consider different trades and purposes when leasing; and (ii) the Department would hold celebration activities on major festivals such as Mother's Day, Easter, and Christmas, and hoped to collaborate with SSPDC Members in the promotion to boost business for commercial tenants.

14. The Chairman concluded that members hoped to work together to assist in revitalising shopping centres and markets, in order to help commercial tenants continue to operate and meet the shopping needs of residents, and expected the Department to reflect the Committee's opinions to the Commercial Properties Management Unit. Members believed that when formulating market strategies, it was necessary to balance the use of public funds. Therefore, they hoped that the Commercial Properties Management Unit could develop a flexible and responsive strategy to meet future challenges. In addition, members pointed out that the situation varied in different districts and hoped that the Commercial Properties Management Unit could send representatives to the meeting to understand the actual situation, conduct analysis, and formulate appropriate market strategies.

Item 4: Information on Planning Applications of Sham Shui Po District (HPSWC Paper No. 4/2024)

15. The Chairman concluded that members noted the report.

Item 5: Any Other Business

16. Members did not raise any other business.

Item 6: Date of Next Meeting

17. The next meeting would be held at 9:30 a.m. on 13 June 2024 (Thursday).

18. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:03 a.m.

District Council Secretariat

Sham Shui Po District Office

May 2024