

**Summary of the Minutes of  
the 3rd Meeting of the Sha Tin District Council (2012 Session)**

The 3rd meeting of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) (2012 session) was held on 16 February 2012. The major issues discussed are summarised below:

**Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meetings held on 4 January 2012 and 13 January 2012**

2. The minutes of the above meetings were confirmed without amendment.

**Visit of Permanent Secretary for Education**

3. Permanent Secretary for Education briefed the members on the work of the Education Bureau. In response to the members' views and questions, Permanent Secretary for Education and Deputy Secretary for Education replied as follows.

4. Regarding national education, Permanent Secretary for Education assured the members that various stakeholders would be consulted when reviewing the syllabus.

5. Regarding 15-year free education, Permanent Secretary for Education pointed out that besides financial and technical issues, other implications of providing free pre-school education had to be prudently considered, and various stakeholders would be consulted. She added that at present, parents could resort to the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme and the Fee Remission Scheme for fee subsidy.

6. Regarding the support rendered to teachers, Permanent Secretary for Education said that in recent years, various financial, administrative and manpower measures had been implemented to help teachers cope with the pressure exerted by educational reform.

7. Regarding the financial management of post-secondary institutions, Permanent Secretary for Education believed that most post-secondary institutions were prudent in financial matters.

8. Regarding the issue of insufficient university places, Permanent Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau encouraged the development of self-financing post-secondary institutions as a complement to publicly-funded ones. She added that the Matching Grant Scheme was also applicable to self-financing post-secondary institutions.

9. Regarding the proposal of encouraging mainland students to study in Hong Kong,

Permanent Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau had to consider the ancillary facilities required and draw up a more detailed plan.

10. Regarding children born in Hong Kong to “doubly non-permanent resident pregnant women”, Permanent Secretary for Education explained that whether school places would be increased to accommodate these children had to be carefully considered in light of the projected increase of their number in the future.

11. Regarding students holding two-way permits, Permanent Secretary for Education explained that all legal residents in Hong Kong had the right to receive education in Hong Kong, but only those who possessed the Hong Kong Birth Certificate, Hong Kong Identity Card and special travel documents were eligible for admission to local public schools.

12. Regarding the medium of instruction, Permanent Secretary for Education pointed out that the objective was to uphold mother-tongue teaching while enhancing students’ proficiency in both Chinese and English. She added that under the policy of fine-tuning the medium of instruction for secondary schools, flexibility in choosing the appropriate medium of instruction was allowed.

13. Regarding vacant school premises, Permanent Secretary for Education explained that they would be reallocated for education purposes if appropriate. Deputy Secretary for Education added that those that were not reallocated for education purposes would be returned to the relevant government department.

14. Regarding the establishment of a self-financing post-secondary institution above the MTR Tai Wai Station, Permanent Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau was still working with the MTR Corporation Limited on the mode of development.

15. Regarding the support offering to non-Chinese speaking students, Permanent Secretary for Education indicated that the Education Bureau was actively increasing resources for curriculum adjustment and was providing various kinds of support for these students. She added that a harmonious learning environment had successfully been cultivated in the school.

16. Regarding special education, Permanent Secretary for Education explained that under the current policy of inclusive education, students with severe or multiple disabilities would be referred to special schools. Other students with special educational needs would be allocated to ordinary schools, which were given extra resources and support. Regarding the allocation of students, she explained that it was based on the principle of ease of access to the school, but the Education Bureau would not set up a special school in every district

because the students were not evenly distributed among all districts.

17. Regarding School-based Assessment, Permanent Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau had been providing additional allowances for teachers to cope with extra workload, and would review the situation with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority regularly.

18. Regarding the 5 billion dollars earmarked for research projects in 2012/2013, Permanent Secretary for Education said that it was open for application by both the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary institutions. She added that professors from various post-secondary institutions would be involved in the screening of applications.

19. Regarding Project Yi Jin, Permanent Secretary for Education explained that with the launching of the new academic structure for senior secondary education, the new targets would be for six school leavers and adult learners. She added that the qualification of a Project Yi Jin graduate would be equivalent to obtaining level 2 in five subjects (including Chinese Language and English Language) in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, and the Project Yi Jin courses could be registered under the Qualifications Framework.

20. Regarding the decreasing number of secondary school students, Deputy Secretary for Education said that the number of students allocated to each form one class as well as the threshold for operating a class had gradually been reduced. She added that secondary schools were invited to optimise their class structure through a voluntary class-size reduction scheme, and about 90% of eligible schools took part in the scheme. Furthermore, for the sake of sustainable development of schools, the Education Bureau had been putting forward various development options since the 2006/2007 academic year.

21. Regarding the decreasing population of school-age children, Deputy Secretary for Education said that the decreasing trend had stabilised and the number was slightly increasing. The Education Bureau would continue to monitor the situation and decide whether it would be necessary to build new schools.

22. Regarding cross-border students, Deputy Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau had coordinated with relevant departments regarding transport arrangements.

23. Regarding anti-drug education, Deputy Secretary for Education said that along with anti-drug education, the Healthy School Policy was launched, which involved parents in the promotion of drug-free school premises.

24. Regarding after-school activities, Deputy Secretary for Education said that School-based After-School Learning and Support Programmes, which were in the form of School-based Grant or Community-based Projects, had been implemented.

25. Regarding electronic teaching, Permanent Secretary for Education said that the Education Bureau had been putting in plenty of resources to promote electronic teaching, and would actively encourage the use of electronic books.

### **Matters Discussed**

#### Consultation Paper on the Feasibility Study for Public Works Project Item 4379DS — Relocation of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works to Rock Cavern

26. Representative of the Drainage Services Department (DSD) briefed the members on the consultation paper. His replies in response to the members' views and questions were as follows.

27. Regarding the grounds of relocating Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works, he explained that the major purpose was to increase land supply.

28. Regarding the grounds of selecting only one site for feasibility study, he explained that Nui Po Shan was selected because it was the most suitable location according to an preliminary study conducted by DSD, and the entrance of the current sewage tunnel was beneath Nui Po Shan.

29. Regarding the duration of the relocation project, he said that if the feasibility study commenced in mid-2012, the relocation process would be completed in 2027 at the earliest.

30. Regarding the urgency of relocating Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works, he maintained that it was necessary to plan ahead because the treatment works would be over 40 years old by 2027. He added that relocating the treatment works to rock cavern would benefit the residents currently disturbed by the nuisance of effluvia.

31. Regarding the land use of the original site, he said that it would not be considered until after the feasibility study was completed.

32. Regarding the cost of the feasibility study, he replied that it would cost tens of millions of dollars. As for the scope of study, environmental impact would be covered in addition to technical issues.

33. Regarding the cost of the project, he replied that the cost was estimated at more than ten billion dollars, which would be reviewed in the course of the feasibility study.

34. Regarding the impact on residents in the vicinity, he said that a series of activities for public participation would be held to provide more information for the residents.

35. Regarding the grounds of relocating sewage treatment works instead of other public utilities to Nui Po Shan rock cavern, he said the Development Bureau would conduct public consultation on the feasibility of relocating other public utilities, and the focus of this meeting was on the feasibility study for the relocation of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works to Nui Po Shan.

36. He informed the meeting that the DSD was going to apply for a funding of about 50 million dollars, which included exploration and consultation fees, to conduct the feasibility study. The preliminary plan was to install sewage treatment facilities in caverns that were connected by tunnels. He said that the DSD would continue to collect views from various parties.

## **STDC Matters**

### **Amendment of the STDC Standing Orders**

37. Amendment to sections 7(5), 15(4), 39(6), 39(7), 39(8), 39(9), 40(6) and 42(1) of the STDC Standing Orders was proposed. There were disputes over sections 15(4), 39(7) and 39(8).

38. Regarding section 15(4), the original proposal of reducing the time allowed for the first round of speech from five minutes to four minutes was passed by a vote of 16 in favour, 8 against and 3 abstentions.

39. Regarding section 39(7), the original proposal of allowing each councillor or co-opted member to nominate five working group members was passed by a vote of 18 in favour.

40. Regarding section 39(8), the original proposal of allowing each non-councillor member to join a maximum of seven working groups earned no support, whereas the proposal of setting the maximum at five working groups was passed by a vote of 21 in favour.

41. The paper on the proposed amendments was passed by a vote of 21 in favour and 6 abstentions.

#### Arrangements for Appointment of the STDC Co-opted Members

42. The members discussed the proposals on:

- (a) the number of co-opted members of the STDC Committees;
- (b) the nomination arrangements for co-opted members;
- (c) the nomination period for co-opted members; and
- (d) the term of office of co-opted members.

43. The paper on the proposed arrangements was passed by a vote of 19 in favour and 5 abstentions.

#### The Regional Advisory Committee of the Hospital Authority — the STDC Representative

44. As Mr WONG Chak-piu, Philip was nominated unopposed, he would become a member of the Regional Advisory Committee of the Hospital Authority, representing the STDC, from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2014.

#### Tentative Ceiling for the STDC Expenditure Heads and Estimates in 2012-2013

45. It was suggested that the Council should continue to employ the existing 11 expenditure heads and the financial accounting system of the DC Reserve.

46. It was proposed that the budget for the coming year should exceed the estimated allocation by 18%.

47. In order to earmark \$2,500,000 for organising activities in celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival and the 15th anniversary of Hong Kong's reunification with China, it was proposed that the budget of the committees under the Sha Tin District Office and the working groups under the STDC for this financial year should be 18-20% less than that for 2011/2012.

48. The Council unanimously passed the above paper.

#### Reports of Committees

49. The Council noted the reports of the District Facilities Management Committee, the

Culture, Sports and Community Development Committee, the Education and Welfare Committee, the Development and Housing Committee, the Traffic and Transport Committee, the Health and Environment Committee, and the Finance and General Affairs Committee.

#### Updated Member Lists of the STDC Committees

50. The Council unanimously passed the above paper.

#### Financial Position of the STDC as at 31 January 2012

51. The Council noted the above paper.

#### **Report of the District Management Committee.**

52. A member gave suggestion on the increase of cycle parking space.

53. District Officer (Sha Tin) said that the Joint Offices for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints had been asked to explain the failure to identify the source of water seepage in more than 700 cases at the next meeting of the District Management Committee.

#### **Any Other Business**

54. The STDC was invited to be supporters of the following events:

- (a) Green and Organic Health Run 2012 jointly organised by Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre; and
- (b) Drug Free Community organised by the Hong Kong Medical Association.

55. The Council unanimously endorsed the acceptance of invitation to be supporters of the above two events.

#### **Next Meeting**

56. The next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 22 March 2012.