

**Summary of the Minutes of
the 5th Meeting of the Sha Tin District Council (2013 Session)**

The 5th meeting of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) (2013 session) was held on 26 September 2013. The major issues discussed are summarised below:

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 July 2013

2. Mr SIU Hin-hong proposed to amend paragraph 46.
3. The Hong Kong Police Force proposed to amend paragraph 62(d).
4. The amended minutes were confirmed unanimously.

Long Term Housing Strategy

5. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) cum Director of Housing briefed members on the paper, in which the proposals of the Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee were set out.
6. Members expressed their views on the long term housing strategy.
7. Replies of Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) cum Director of Housing to members' questions and proposals were as follows:
 - (a) No development plan would be carried out without thorough consultation, and the long term housing strategy applied to the entire Hong Kong, not any individual district or housing estate.
 - (b) The proposed release of sites in Green Belt areas for housing was a possible way of increasing land supply. Public consultation would be conducted to explore how housing projects could be developed in the face of land shortage.
 - (c) As mentioned in the paper, the new development project should undergo thorough planning, not only focusing on housing construction. Sha Tin was an example of thorough planning.
 - (d) The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee considered that in the face of inadequate housing supply, provision of rent assistance would only push property prices and rents up further.

- (e) The ratio of public housing and private housing was only a rough figure. The actual proportion of public housing depended on the actual demand.
- (f) Alteration of industrial flats to “partitioned flats” was not permitted. Regarding existing “partitioned flats” in residential buildings, the current priority of the government was to ensure compliance with the fire safety and building regulations. The government hoped that there would be sufficient public housing supply within the next ten years to accommodate the residents of “partitioned flats”.
- (g) In formulating the housing strategy, the government had taken the impact of population growth into consideration. Moreover, projection of housing demand was subject to yearly review.
- (h) The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee suggested increasing the average living space per person in the long run, but the current priority was to increase public housing supply. Provision of various supporting facilities was also the Committee’s concern.
- (i) The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee had also researched into policies related to public housing, such as transfer of tenants of under-occupation households to smaller units.
- (j) The aim of keeping the average waiting time at three years applied to family applicants and elderly one-person applicants only. Assistance for non-elderly one-person applicants above 35 years of age was suggested in the paper.
- (k) Redevelopment of a housing estate took about 15 years on average. The government was considering the redevelopment of public housing estates constructed in earlier years.
- (l) In formulating the long term housing strategy, collaboration of various government departments was essential. The aim of setting up the Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee was to facilitate the collection of views from various government departments.
- (m) The government would collect public views on development projects in Sha Tin through the STDC. Regarding barrier-free facilities, construction works were being carried out progressively in various public housing estates, and the

government would actively respond to the needs of the ageing population of public housing estates constructed in earlier years.

- (n) With the implementation of the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance, transparency of the transactions of first-hand residential properties had been enhanced. As for the measures taken to address the overheated property market, the government would not revoke these measures rashly.
- (o) Interim housing units were smaller in size because they were not for long-term residential purposes.

Visit of the Director of Social Welfare

8. Director of Social Welfare (D of SW) briefed members on the work of the Social Welfare Department (SWD).

9. Replies of D of SW to members' questions and proposals were as follows:

- (a) In the face of an ageing population, the government had been upholding the principle of supporting "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". Regarding the call for more places of residential care homes for the elderly, the SWD had been taking follow-up action. The SWD would continue to provide services for elderly people that required long-term care.
- (b) Implementation of the Health Care Vouchers was to encourage the elderly to acquire the services they needed. The "Money Follows Patients" principle served to inject competition in the market, thereby impelling service providers to provide value-added services.
- (c) Regarding the proposal of raising the asset limit of the Old Age Living Allowance, the government had to uphold the principle of prudent management of public finances and balance various needs in society. A review would be conducted some time after the implementation of the Old Age Living Allowance.
- (d) The government had no plans of extending the Guangdong Scheme to other provinces for the time being. A special one-off arrangement in the first year of implementation was in place to waive the need to satisfy the one-year continuous residence rule in Hong Kong. Regarding monitoring of the scheme, the SWD had appointed the International Social Service Hong Kong

Branch as the agent for the scheme.

- (e) Some child care services were available in the evening, some during Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Moreover, the After-school Care Pilot Scheme under the Community Care Fund was launched in the previous school year targeting at primary one to secondary three students.
- (f) Besides services for offenders, other supporting services for young people were available in various districts, for instance, provision of outreaching services in Sha Tin had been stepped up.
- (g) Regarding the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme under the Community Care Fund, it only benefited users of Integrated Home Care Services or Enhanced Home and Community Care Services. The SWD would reflect members' concern to the relevant department about the limitation of this programme. Certain non-governmental institutions would provide outreaching dental services for elderly people in need.
- (h) Under the Integrated Employment Assistance Programme for Self-reliance, a Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) targeting at recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) between 15 to 29 years of age was launched. The SWD would collaborate with the Labour Department in helping these young CSSA recipients seek employment. In considering whether the Disregarded Earnings arrangement should be applied to young people, prudent assessment of the views of various parties was necessary.
- (i) The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged aimed to incentivise the welfare sector to expand their network in seeking and securing corporate participation, and to encourage the business sector to take up more social responsibility for creating a cohesive, inclusive and caring society.
- (j) The SWD was trying to resolve the shortage of rehabilitation professionals by providing training courses in collaboration with the Hospital Authority and other relevant organisations.
- (k) The SWD had been providing one-stop integrated service for mental patients.

10. In response to the call for increased transparency of services for mental patients, District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin) supplemented that in Sha Tin, the two Integrated

Community Centres for Mental Wellness were already in service. During her visit, she found that the staff members were properly trained and were actively promoting their services in the community. As regards services for new arrivals and ethnic minorities, community-oriented services were provided by various kinds of Integrated Services Centres.

STDC Matters

Updated Member Lists of the STDC Committees

11. The Council endorsed the above paper unanimously.

STDC Meeting Schedule for 2014

12. The Council endorsed the above paper unanimously.

STDC to Serve as Supporter of Events

13. The Council unanimously endorsed the acceptance of invitation to be supporter of the following three events:

- (a) "Family-gathering Dinner" organised by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups;
- (b) "Rubber Ducks Competition 2014" organised by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and
- (c) "New Town Rider 2013" organised by the New Town Plaza.

Revised Funding Application for "Employment of Contract Staff by the STDC Secretariat"

14. The Council unanimously endorsed the revised funding application.

Reports of the STDC Committees

15. 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.

Financial Account of the STDC as at 17 September 2013

16. The Council noted the above paper.

Report of the District Management Committee

17. The Council noted the above paper.

Next Meeting

18. The next meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on 21 November 2013.