

Sha Tin District Council
Minutes of the 4th Meeting of
the Education and Welfare Committee in 2019

Date : 11 July 2019 (Thursday)
Time : 10:00 am
Venue : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Ms LAM Chung-yan (Chairman)	DC Member	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger (Vice-Chairman)	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr HO Hau-cheung, SBS, MH	DC Chairman	10:06 am	11:41 am
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	10:01 am	10:43 am
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	”	10:36 am	11:23 am
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	”	10:19 am	11:10 am
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	”	10:06 am	11:41 am
Mr CHIU Man-leong	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick	”	10:03 am	10:28 am
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	”	10:11 am	11:12 am
Mr LI Sai-hung	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr LI Sai-wing	”	10:01 am	11:08 am
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	”	10:02 am	11:41 am
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	”	10:14 am	11:12 am
Mr NG Kam-hung	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH, JP	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr SIU Hin-hong	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	”	10:11 am	11:07 am
Mr TONG Hok-leung	”	10:10 am	11:41 am
Ms TSANG So-lai	”	10:01 am	11:07 am
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr WONG Hok-lai	”	10:05 am	11:18 am
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr WONG Yue-hon	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr YAU Man-chun	”	10:02 am	11:18 am
Mr YIP Wing	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	”	10:01 am	11:41 am
Ms YU Wai-ting, Amy (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Sha Tin District Office		

In Attendance

Ms CHAN Lai-na, Laura	Housing Manager (Tai Po, North District and Sha Tin 1), Housing Department
Mr CHAN Ping-ching, Roy	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 1, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHAN Yee-chi, Elaine	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 2, Social Welfare Department
Ms CHENG Siu-ling, Katy	Chief Liaison Officer, Sha Tin District Office
Ms NG Suk-min	Senior Liaison Officer (East), Sha Tin District Office
Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Sha Tin District Office

In Attendance by Invitation

Ms YIP Sau-mei, Joyce	Chief School Development Officer (Sha Tin), Education Bureau
Mr WONG Tsz-hei	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 2, Education Bureau
Ms CHIANG Lam	Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 5, Education Bureau
Mr LAM Chi-chung	Station Sergeant, Sha Tin Police District Traffic Team, Hong Kong Police Force
Mr LO Hoi-wing, Jeff	Engineer/Shan Tin 3, Transport Department
Ms SIN Kwai-lan, Sandy	Senior Estate Surveyor/North West, Sha Tin District Lands Office
Ms Vivian CHEUNG	Chief Financial Officer, The English Schools Foundation
Mr John Stewart	Director of Facilities, The English Schools Foundation
Rob Shorthouse	Director of Communications, The English Schools Foundation

Absent

Mr CHAN Nok-hang	DC Member	(Application for leave of absence received)
Mr YIU Ka-chun, MH	”	(”)
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	”	(No application for leave of absence received)
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	”	(”)

Action

The Chairman welcomed members and representatives of government departments to the fourth meeting of the Education and Welfare Committee (EWC) of the year.

Applications for Leave of Absence

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had received the applications for leave of absence in writing from the following members:

Mr CHAN Nok-hang	Sickness
Mr YIU Ka-chun	Official commitment (other meetings)

3. Members unanimously approved the applications for leave of absence submitted by the members above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9 May 2019
(EWC Minutes 3/2019)

4. Members unanimously confirmed the above minutes of the meeting.
5. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to provide a supplementary response to members regarding the said paper.
6. Ms Amy YU, Executive Officer (District Council)1 of the Sha Tin District Office (STDO), gave a consolidated supplementary response as follows:

- (a) Mr WAI Hing-cheung raised a question on “Social Inclusion of New Arrivals” at the meeting on 9 May this year. That was the second question from a DC Member that she had handled since taking office as Secretary of the EWC of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) 5 months ago. She had solicited replies from relevant government departments in line with the duties of the Secretariat, upon receiving Mr WAI Hing-cheung’s question on 7 March this year. Later she received a call from Mr WAI Hing-cheung on 26 April, who requested that the Secretariat solicit a reply from the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) as well. She knew that the HKJC was not a government department and not a service provider for new arrivals. However, due to the lack of experience, she had not consulted her supervisor or the EWC Chairman in advance. Besides, there were only 7 working days before the meeting, and time was limited. Therefore, she contacted the HKJC to solicit a reply at Mr WAI Hing-cheung’s request;
- (b) she further pointed out that the HKJC provided a reply on 6 May. As seen in the paper issued by the Secretariat to all members on 17 May, the HKJC’s reply mainly introduced the contributions of the “Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust” and the “CARE@hkjc Volunteer Team” to the community. The only information relevant to the question was that the “Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust” had sponsored 2 programmes which would benefit cross-boundary school children and their families as well as new arrivals. But the related programmes were not limited to beneficiaries in Sha Tin. The HKJC’s reply failed to answer Mr WAI Hing-cheung’s question directly and was suspected of excessive advertising. But again, due to the lack of experience, she did not timely consult her supervisor or the EWC Chairman and she was only busy preparing the related discussion paper;
- (c) when there was little time left for the internal processing of the discussion paper, the District Officer of Sha Tin noticed the paper and identified inadequacies in the HKJC’s reply. The HKJC had to attend meetings like government departments. But the related discussion paper was suspected of excessive advertising of the HKJC. Since there was very limited time before the meeting

began, the HKJC's reply was omitted in the related discussion paper upon the District Officer's approval; and

- (d) she said that she should have sought instructions from the EWC Chairman after receiving Mr WAI Hing-cheung's request for a reply from the HKJC and after receiving such a reply, so as to avoid the said unsatisfactory situation. She hereby apologised for any inadequacy and inconvenience caused by her handling of the relevant question due to her lack of experience. She added that the District Officer had indicated that, in order to avoid similar incidents in future, the Secretariat should seek instructions from the relevant Committee Chairman before handling similar requests from DC Members in future.

7. Mr Michael YUNG said that he would like to know how the committee secretaries handle papers and whether they would be educated on the related process by their supervisors. He also enquired about the role of the Senior Executive Officer (District Council) and the effective monitoring by the District Officer. In addition, he enquired about the criteria for determining excessive advertising, as well as whether the Secretariat would prepare a training manual for newly appointed Executive Officers.

8. Ms Amy YU said that after receiving questions from DC Members, the Secretariat would solicit replies from relevant government departments or individual organisations. In the case of Mr WAI Hing-cheung's question, for example, she should have sought the advice of her supervisor or the EWC Chairman on any issue arising in the process. In order to avoid similar incidents in future, the Secretariat would firstly seek instructions from the relevant Committee Chairman before handling similar requests from DC Members in future.

9. Mr Derek YUEN, Senior Executive Officer (District Council) of the STDO, said that before staff of the Secretariat left office, they would explain their work and related cautions to their successors during the handover, and they would record the same in relevant documents. He would also inform and remind colleagues of the details and special notes at work.

10. Mr Michael YUNG asked whether the Secretariat would prepare a training manual for newly appointed Committee Secretaries in order to unify the handling of documents of different committees. Besides, he would like to know the role of the Assistant District Officer (Sha Tin) in the internal handling of discussion papers for meetings.

11. Mr WAI Hing-cheung said that it was a subjective matter to determine whether a paper submitted by a non-governmental organisation to the STDC contained excessive advertising. He opined that the appropriateness of the contents of meeting papers should be a topic of discussion at the STDC instead of being decided by any representative of the STDO.

12. Ms Amy YU said that in order to avoid similar incidents in future, the Secretariat would firstly seek instructions from the relevant Committee Chairman before handling similar matters in future.

13. Ms Katy CHENG, Chief Liaison Officer of the STDO, said that the District Officer and her relevant colleagues had reviewed the incident and agreed that in such a situation in future, the Secretariat should firstly seek instructions from the relevant Committee Chairman. Besides, the Secretariat would also consider preparing a training manual in view of work transfers from time to time.

14. Mr WONG Yue-hon pointed out that the STDO should develop a set of objective criteria for meeting papers as well as promotional materials of DC Members and the STDC, so that DC Members would understand what qualified as excessive advertising.

15. The Chairman said that upon review, the Secretariat would have more appropriate arrangements for handling STDC papers in future. She also asked the Secretariat to note Mr WONG Yue-hon's suggestion.

16. Mr Michael YUNG asked whether the HKJC's reply to Mr WAI Hing-cheung's question was uploaded to the STDC's website for public inspection.

17. Ms Amy YU responded that according to the discussion at the last EWC meeting, the Secretariat had sent the HKJC's relevant reply to members by email on 17 May this year.

18. Mr Michael YUNG said that the HKJC's reply was part of the paper on Mr WAI Hing-cheung's relevant question and therefore should be uploaded to the STDC's website for public inspection.

19. The Chairman asked whether the Secretariat could handle Mr Michael YUNG's request.

20. Ms Amy YU said that the Secretariat would follow up on the matter after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat uploaded the relevant reply of the HKJC to the STDC's website on 14 August.)

21. The Chairman declared the end of the discussion on this item on the agenda.

Matters Arising

Responses of the Relevant Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

(Paper No. EW 19/2019)

22. Mr WAI Hing-cheung said that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) mentioned in the paper that Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) in the district did not organise any Cantonese-learning activities. He hoped that the SWD would consider organising such activities for new arrivals. And he urged other voluntary organisations in the district to provide relevant services to help new arrivals integrate into the community.

23. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) according to the reply of the Security Bureau (SB), the quota for Permits for Proceeding to Hong Kong and Macao (One-way Permits, or OWPs) was capped at 150 per day. And the average number of Mainland residents entering the territory on OWPs was 129 and 116 persons on average over the past 2 years, respectively. He said that those figures did not include people settling in Hong Kong via various talent admission schemes, such as the "Quality Migrant Admission Scheme", over the past 2 years; and

- (b) reviewing new arrival cases he had recently handled, he found that the inadequacy of school places was not unique to Sha Tin. He cited an example, where a resident recently moving from Sha Tin to Sham Shui Po complained about the difficulty of getting enrolled in schools in the latter district. Apart from Mainland residents settling in Hong Kong on OWPs, there were also those coming to the territory on talent admission schemes. He opined that the SWD, the Housing Department (HD) and the Education Bureau (EDB) had underestimated the various needs of those new arrivals. At present, the insufficiencies in school places, housing and related supporting facilities had caused a lot of grievances in the community. He hoped that various departments would learn a lesson and provide proper community support for the new population, so that they could integrate into the community.

24. The views of Mr Wilson LI were summarised below:

- (a) the SB pointed out in its reply in the paper that the daily quota of 150 OWPs was the cap, which was not exceeded in 2017 or 2018. But the SB did not provide the relevant figure for 2016. He cited a news report of “HK01” on 29 November 2017 as saying that the average number of Mainland residents coming to Hong Kong on OWPs reached 157 persons per day, exceeding the said cap; and
- (b) although the cap for new arrivals on OWPs was not exceeded every year, he hoped that the Government would pay serious attention to the population carrying capacity of Hong Kong. Housing, medical services and transport facilities were seriously inadequate. He opined that the Hong Kong Government should have the same approving authority for applications for settlement in the territory under the OWP scheme or the talent admission scheme; otherwise it would be unfair to Hong Kong. He hoped that the Hong Kong Government could defend the rights of the Hong Kong people and negotiate with the Mainland authorities for equal power to approve such applications. He also hoped that the Government review the local long-term population policy and reduce the quota for OWPs.

25. Mr Roy CHAN, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 1 of the SWD, said that IFSCs under the SWD would consider adding language-learning elements in future activities for new arrivals, so as to help them integrate into the community.

26. The Chairman suggested that the SWD inform members of its routine activities by means of e-mails or regular newsletters in future. He also asked the Secretariat to convey to the SB and solicit further reply from the SB regarding members’ enquiries about the number of new arrivals and their views on the approval of OWP applications.

27. Members noted the above paper.

Question

Question to be Raised by Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas on the Issues Arising from Sha Tin College and Sha Tin Junior School
(Paper No. EW 20/2019)

28. The views of Mr Thomas PANG were summarised below:

- (a) he expressed appreciation for the fact that the English Schools Foundation (ESF) had offered to implement the “zero car policy” in the 2018/19 school year at the EWC meeting on 4 July 2017. He had also promptly notified the policy to local residents. However, as the “zero car policy” was postponed to the 2019/20 school year, he hoped that there would be sufficient facilities to support the implementation in order to avoid any further delay;
- (b) he pointed out that the ESF had engaged traffic co-ordinators and had contacted the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) in March this year on the establishment of a Road Safety Patrol. However, the HKPF did not explain in the paper whether it could provide related assistance; and
- (c) Green Minibus (GMB) Route No. 69K was highly utilised during the student commuting hours of the ESF schools. As a result, many residents of Sha Tin 33, Scenery Garden and Sui Wo Court could not board the minibus. He asked whether the Transport Department (TD) would increase the frequency of the minibuses during said period.

29. Ms Scarlett PONG said that the ESF had schools in Fo Tan, and as a stakeholder, it should make efforts to improve traffic conditions in the area. She continued to point out that, according to a survey by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, more than 90% of primary and secondary school students lacked exercise. She knew that some ESF students went to school in private cars, although they lived near the campus, such as in Greenwood Terrace. She suggested that the related schools promote the benefits of commuting by public transport or on foot, so as to help them exercise and to protect the environment. The schools should also encourage existing students to follow the “zero car policy” as their newly enrolled peers.

30. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) as the current school bus service providers failed to cooperate, the ESF could not implement the “zero car policy” until next year. He asked when and how the Sha Tin District Lands Office (DLO/ST) had become aware of the ESF’s violation of land grant conditions. He also asked whether the DLO/ST would regularly inspect the circumstances of land use if there were similar problems at other Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools;
- (b) the HKPF mentioned in the paper that there was congestion on the road near Sha Tin College and Sha Tin Junior School for some hours in the morning and in the afternoon. He opined that the congestion was more serious at the end of school hours in the afternoon, because many private cars and school buses would arrive at the schools in advance to pick up students. He asked whether the ESF had a way to deal with the above situation;
- (c) the school bus routes were different for Sha Tin College and Sha Tin Junior School. He wanted to know the details and the number of users after the integration of related routes. He also enquired about the arrangements of the newly engaged service providers for the said integration; and

- (d) he asked whether the EDB would include a similar “zero car policy” in its new service contracts with other DSS schools.

31. The views of Mr SIU Hin-hong were summarised below:

- (a) he asked whether the “zero car policy” was proposed by the ESF or was it a department-led policy. He also asked whether the ESF had consulted with relevant departments for a solution when it encountered any difficulties and failed to implement the policy as scheduled; and
- (b) he opined that the congestion on the road near Sha Tin College and Sha Tin Junior School during peak hours might be caused by the prolonged parking of vehicles. Therefore, he suggested that the schools consider postponing the beginning and the end of schools hours by about 1 hour, similar to the practice of other DSS schools in the district, so that parents would not use the road during peak hours and thus obstructing commuters in the neighbourhood.

32. Ms Iris WONG enquired about the difference between the “no car policy” and the “zero car policy”. She asked which schools were required by the EDB to implement the relevant transport policy, what the criteria were, and why international and DSS schools in Shek Mun Estate did not implement the policy. Besides, the EDB had joined DC Members to inspect the situation of illegal parking at On Muk Street near Shek Mun Estate on 17 May this year. She enquired about the follow-up work and wondered whether the “no car policy” could solve the problem of illegal parking at Shek Mun Estate.

33. Mr Wilson LI said that school bus services were critical to the full implementation of the “no car policy”. He asked whether different government departments had policies to facilitate the implementation of the initiative, to improve school bus services, or to encourage students to use related services.

34. The Chairman said that some parents of ESF students had expressed their concerns about the implementation of the “no car policy”. They said that they had the actual need to take their children to extracurricular activities in private cars. She asked whether the ESF would implement the “no car policy” in a “one-size-fits-all” manner. She pointed out that inadequate transport facilities might prevent many parents from embracing the policy. She enquired about related measures to be taken by government departments in that regard.

35. Ms Joyce YIP, Chief School Development Officer (Sha Tin) of the EDB, said that she would explain the EDB’s support for the ESF’s “zero car policy” and the follow-up work after the inspection at Shek Mun Estate.

36. Ms CHIANG Lam, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 5 of the EDB, gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the EDB had always followed the school-based management system, so that schools could always make flexible and appropriate arrangements in operation based on their needs. However, it was opined that school operation should not have negative impacts on the neighbourhood. The EDB opined that the “one-size-fits-all” approach might not be ideal to address the problem of increasing traffic load near schools in different areas (including private independent schools and international ones) due to students commuting in private

cars. Instead, it would be more appropriate to take measures corresponding to the situation and actual needs of individual schools. The EDB would consult with relevant school sponsors and government departments (including the TD), so that schools could take practical measures to improve the situation. As far as she knew, the 2 ESF schools were the first ones to implement the “zero car policy” in Sha Tin. But she did not have detailed information about schools in other district for the time being; and

- (b) when handling applications for renewal of service contracts, the EDB would also consider the inclusion of appropriate and feasible clauses for improving the traffic conditions in line of the particular circumstances of related schools.

37. Mr WONG Tsz-hei, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 2 of the EDB, responded that both the “no car policy” and the “zero car policy” referred to the ESF’s proposal that their students should not travel to and from schools in private cars or taxis. He said that representatives of the EDB, the TD and the HKPF had jointly inspected schools near Shek Mun Estate on 3 June this year. And they had visited International Christian School (ICS) on 10 June to discuss with the management on improving the traffic conditions nearby during the student commuting hours. The schools expressed its willingness to cooperate. Among others, they would study the feasibility of arranging staggered school hours for primary and secondary students. They would also optimise school bus routes and further make good use of school space for parents escorting their children to and from school. In addition, the EDB would continue to follow up on the matter with the schools in July and August this year. Upon receiving data from the schools on students commuting by public transport, the EDB would consult with the schools, the TD and other government departments based on the actual situation and needs, so that the schools could make practical and feasible improvements. It would then report the related work progress to members.

38. Mr Jeff LO, Engineer/Sha Tin 3 of the TD, said that he would convey Mr Thomas PANG’s suggestion about increasing the frequency of GMB Route No. 69K to the relevant colleagues for follow-up. The TD would also propose relevant road design or traffic management ideas for improvements based on the actual traffic conditions across the territory, including in Fo Tan and Shek Mun areas.

39. Mr LAM Chi-chung, Station Sergeant of Sha Tin Police District Traffic Team of the HKPF, said that the Police had negotiated with the ESF to set up a Road Safety Patrol as early as in mid-2017. And they had contacted New Territories South Road Safety Patrol for an inspection along Sui Wo Road in 2018. However, in view of the ramps and blind spots at the site, the Police suspended the proposal due to safety concerns and inform the schools of the same. In view of the heavy traffic at the end of school hours, the Police would arrange manpower to control traffic and enforce the law as appropriate. Besides, in line with the ESF’s implementation of the “zero car policy” as from August this year, the Police had earlier conducted an on-site inspection with representatives of the EDB and the TD. It would deploy officers to monitor the traffic situation on the scene when the new school year began.

40. Ms Sandy SIN, Senior Estate Surveyor/North West of the DLO/ST, gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) she pointed out that there were a large number of private lots in Hong Kong. And it would be impossible for the DLO/ST to inspect every one of them. Therefore

the respective owners were obligated to comply with the lease conditions with self-discipline. Upon receipt of enquiries or complaints, the DLO/ST would conduct on-site inspections to see whether there were any violations; and

- (b) the DLO/ST had received an enquiry from Mr Thomas PANG a few months ago, who suspected that the ESF utilised pick-up/drop-off spaces for parking purposes. Staff of the DLO/ST promptly went to the campus for inspection. They noticed that, according to the lease conditions, the schools should provide at least the specified number of private car parking spaces and pick-up/drop-off spaces. But they found that the pick-up/drop-off spaces were used for parking purposes, which was a violation of the lease conditions. Subsequently, the DLO/ST issued a warning letter to the schools, specifying the locations of the pick-up/drop-off spaces. Later, it conducted an on-site inspection with the EDB and verified in late May that the violation had been corrected.

41. The Chairman reminded the meeting that some people observing the meeting were taking videos.

42. Ms Vivian CHEUNG, Chief Financial Officer of the ESF, gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) she said that ESF's promise included the full implementation of the "zero car policy" at all grades of the 3 schools in Sha Tin (Sha Tin Junior School, Sha Tin College and Renaissance College) starting from August 2020. However, she would like to stress that the implementation should not rely on the ESF alone. More importantly, it would require cooperation with other government departments for a long-term, secure and sustainable solution, so that students could travel to and from the campus safely;
- (b) she said that the ESF had received a written request from the ESF Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) of Sha Tin Junior School and Sha Tin College regarding the "zero car policy". The PTA stressed that student safety was the primary consideration for parents. There should be a safe environment before implementing the "zero car policy", so that parents did not have to worry about their children travelling to and from school;
- (c) the ESF was actively working with the Police and the TD to partially implement the "zero car policy" this year. Before enrolment, parents of new first-year students would need to sign a consent form indicating that they would not escort their children in private cars. The schools would also negotiate with the new contractors on the provision of adequate services, including "point-to-point" and school bus interchange services, for all students as from August. Starting as early as in last January, Sha Tin Junior School and Sha Tin College provided shuttle bus services for their students from MTR Fo Tan Station. The service had now even been extended to MTR Wu Kai Sha Station and University Station. The schools had informed parents of the new arrangements at the beginning of the new school year. It was expected that 70% of the students would use school bus services in the new school year; and

- (d) the ESF planned to promote the “zero car policy” among parents in the new school year, so that students and parents would understand the concept of sustainability and eco-friendly society behind the initiative. She further pointed out that the implementation of the “zero car policy” would require, more importantly, cooperation of government departments, such as deploying authorised personnel to direct traffic near the campus, relocating the stop of GMB Route No. 69K to a latter location on Sui Wo Road and enhancing its service. Other actions would include replacing some pavement railings with frangible bollards at Lai Wo Lane, and improving the pedestrian safety facilities on Sui Wo Road near Lai Wo Lane.

43. Mr Thomas PANG agreed that the traffic safety of school children was important. He hoped that the TD would try its best to cooperate and discuss the possibility of relocating the minibus stop. If the proposal was endorsed by nearby residents upon consultation, the TD should implement it as soon as possible. Besides, the ESF said that it had re-proposed to the HKPF the establishment of a Road Safety Patrol in March 2019. In view of the ramps and blind spots along Sui Wo Road, he asked whether the Police could assist the schools in any way to implement the proposal.

44. The views of Ms Iris WONG were summarised below:

- (a) she had reservations about the arrangement of staggered school hours for primary and secondary students as being considered by ICS. She pointed out that there should be many students attending the “through-train” schools together with their siblings. When children of the same family respectively went to the primary and the secondary schools, the arrangement would result in their vehicles staying longer nearby and affecting traffic;
- (b) as the schools were currently on summer holiday, she opined that the data on students’ means of transport would not be indicative if it was collected in July and August. She opined that the related survey should be conducted after the holiday; and
- (c) she enquired about the progress made by the schools in improving parking spaces and optimising school bus services.

45. The views of Mr Michael YUNG were summarised below:

- (a) the ESF failed to give an account of the arrangement of school bus routes for the following year, including whether the routes would be integrated. He said that it would have a major impact on the successful implementation of the “zero car policy”. In addition, he asked where else ESF students lived, apart from Kowloon and Sha Tin; and
- (b) he asked when the EDB would need to renew its contracts with different DSS schools in Sha Tin District. He also enquired about the service contract with Renaissance College in Ma On Shan. He said that there was serious illegal parking on the road near Renaissance College during the student commuting hours. Among others, one of the lanes on Sai Sha Road was used for pick-up/drop-off purposes.

46. Mr SIU Hin-hong said that many students needed to participate in extracurricular activities after school. He wondered how the school bus services could cater for their needs. Besides, he asked what the school management would do if parents of ESF students insisted on escorting their children in private cars. He also asked whether related schools had held meeting so that parents and local residents concerned about the “zero car policy” could express their opinions on the implementation of the policy and point out the related difficulties.

47. The Chairman cited ESF mentioning that 70% of the parents would follow the “zero car policy” in the new school year. She asked how the ESF would deal with the demand of the remaining 30% of the parents, understand their difficulties and offer solutions.

48. Ms CHIANG Lam responded that the EDB would renew the service contract with Renaissance College in 2019. Its service contract with ICS in Shek Mun Estate would expire in 2020, and that with Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School in 2021. The EDB would consider the inclusion of appropriate and feasible clauses for improving the traffic conditions in line of the particular circumstances of related schools.

49. Mr Jeff LO said that the TD would work closely with the EDB and the schools to review potential safety hazards and implement corresponding safety measures in the district, so as to provide a safe learning environment for school children. Besides, he reiterated that he would convey the suggestion about increasing the frequency of GMB Route No. 69K to relevant colleagues for follow-up.

50. The Chairman hoped that the TD would provide supplementary information after the meeting for members’ reference.

51. Mr LAM Chi-chung said that the Sha Tin Police District began coordinating with the ESF in 2017 about the establishment of a Road Safety Patrol. However, the scheme was put on hold in March 2018 because of the geographical constraints on Sui Wo Road. The Police had always maintained contacts with the New Territories South Road Safety Patrol through the Police Community Relations Office. However, due to the inadequate road conditions and safety concerns, the proposal to set up a Road Safety Patrol was not implemented. If the TD or the DLO/ST carried out improvement works at the relevant road section, the Police would review the situation again and provide assistance as much as possible.

52. Mr WONG Tsz-hei said that regarding staggered school hours for primary and secondary students, ICS, which had proposed the practice, would undertake studies and solicit opinions from stakeholders. Besides, after the new school year began, the EDB would follow up with ICS on the data of students commuting by public transport.

53. Mr Rob Shorthouse, Director of Communications of the ESF, gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the ESF had always maintained communication with parents, but it was very difficult to dissuade parents from escorting their children in private cars. Parents even questioned the legitimacy of the “zero car policy”. Guaranteeing students’ safety would be the prerequisite for the implementation of the “zero car policy”. The ESF alone could not do it. The cooperation of government departments

would be more important. The ESF would start implementing the “zero car policy” in August this year, so that students and parents would understand the concept of sustainability and eco-friendly society behind the initiative as well as its benefits. They would be informed that the school bus services already covered all ESF students, and they would be encouraged to take school buses or other means of public transport. The ESF would also conduct a comprehensive survey in January 2020 to understand why some parents refuse to choose school bus services or other means of public transport. It would seek further assistance from relevant government departments if necessary; and

- (b) as for parents who continued to escort their children in private cars, he said that the ESF was an educational institution with no law enforcement powers and could not punish any parents or students commuting to and from school by using a public road. The ESF would resort to publicity campaigns and try to persuade parents to make the right decision.

54. Mr John Stewart, Director of Facilities of the ESF, said that the newly engaged service providers would operate routes covering all students. And such routes were developed based on actual data. Apart from school bus interchange services at 3 MTR stations, Sha Tin College and Sha Tin Junior School also operated 8 and 10 school bus routes for their students, respectively, covering areas such as Sha Tin, Tai Po, Sheung Shui and Tsing Yi. However, it would take time to integrate the routes serving primary and secondary students.

55. Ms Vivian CHEUNG said that Renaissance College admitted students from across the territory. According to a survey last year, currently less than 10% of Renaissance College students travel to and from school by a means other than school buses or public transport. The College would actively persuade the parents of those students to stop escorting their children in private cars. And the “zero car policy” to be implemented as from August 2020 would cover all grades in all ESF schools, including Renaissance College. She pointed out that the management and students of the ESF were keen on promoting environmental protection for sustainable development. And the “zero car policy” was one of the goals in that regard.

56. Mr Michael YUNG said that the EDB’s service contract with Renaissance College would expire in August 2019. However, the College would not start implementing the “no car policy” in August 2020. He wondered whether it meant a delay in the implementation. He asked whether the data of the 2 schools mentioned in the paper were the latest in terms of the school bus routes and the number of students. He hoped that the ESF would provide the latest information for members after the new school year began in September. Besides, he asked when the EDB’s service contracts with other schools in the district, such as Pui Kui College, would expire.

57. Ms CHIANG Lam responded that the EDB was negotiating with Renaissance College on drafting new terms of the service contract. The EDB would consider the inclusion of appropriate and feasible clauses for improving the traffic conditions. The service contract with Pui Kui College would expire in 2020.

58. Ms Vivian CHEUNG said that the ESF would submit the latest information about the school bus routes and the number of students to the EWC in September.

59. The Chairman said that the “no car policy” would start in August. She believed that the EDB and the ESF would have a lot of work to do and would need to review the relevant arrangements from time to time. She hoped that the ESF could successfully allay parents’ concerns. She also welcomed the EDB to share with members the progress of the ESF or other schools in traffic arrangements.

Information Paper

Number of Children Referred to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau
(Paper No. EW 21/2019)

60. Members noted the above paper.

Date of Next Meeting

61. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 10:00 am on 12 September 2019 (Thursday).

62. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 am.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/35

August 2019