

**Sha Tin District Council**  
**Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of**  
**the Education and Welfare Committee in 2017**

**Date** : 5 September 2017 (Tuesday)  
**Time** : 2:30 pm  
**Venue** : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room  
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Time of joining the meeting</u></b>	<b><u>Time of leaving the meeting</u></b>
Ms LAM Chung-yan (Chairman)	DC Member	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger (Vice-Chairman)	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr HO Hau-cheung, SBS, MH	DC Chairman	2:30 pm	5:13 pm
Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	DC Vice-Chairman	2:30 pm	4:07 pm
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	DC Member	2:30 pm	5:35 pm
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	”	3:09 pm	3:38 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	”	2:45 pm	4:14 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	”	2:46 pm	3:59 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick	”	2:30 pm	5:34 pm
Mr CHIU Man-leong	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	”	2:46 pm	5:16 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr LI Sai-wing	”	2:44 pm	4:57 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	”	2:54 pm	3:43 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	”	2:43 pm	4:03 pm
Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP	”	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH	”	2:30 pm	5:33 pm
Mr SIU Hin-hong	”	2:49 pm	4:14 pm
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	”	2:57 pm	5:32 pm
Mr TONG Hok-leung	”	2:30 pm	4:55 pm
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	”	2:30 pm	5:33 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai	”	2:47 pm	5:16 pm
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	”	2:30 pm	4:46 pm
Miss WONG Ping-fan, Iris	”	2:30 pm	5:48 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	”	2:44 pm	4:01 pm
Mr YIP Wing	”	2:30 pm	5:09 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun	”	2:44 pm	5:50 pm
Ms YUE Shin-man	”	2:30 pm	4:16 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	”	2:30 pm	5:50 pm
Mr MOK Man-lok, Mannix (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 1/Sha Tin District Office		

**In Attendance**

Mr CHAN Ping-ching, Roy

Mrs YU CHOW Kai-ching, Alice

Miss LAU Yuk-ye, Lydia

Ms CHENG Ka-po, Theresa

Ms CHENG Yuk-kam, Brenda

Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek

**Title**Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Sha Tin) 1 /  
Social Welfare DepartmentSenior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 /  
Education BureauHousing Manager (Tai Po, North District and Sha Tin 1) /  
Housing Department

Chief Liaison Officer / Sha Tin District Office

Senior Liaison Officer (East) / Sha Tin District Office

Senior Executive Officer (District Council) /  
Sha Tin District Office**In Attendance by Invitation**

Ms MAK Yin-ping, Elke

Mr Thomas LEUNG

Ms LEE Sau-ye

**Title**Systems Manager (Digital Inclusion) 12,  
Office of the Government Chief Information OfficerHead of Internet Learning Support Programme /  
The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong KongSupervisor of Sha Tin (South) Social Security Field Unit /  
Social Welfare Department**Absent**

Mr CHAN Nok-hang

Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor

Mr MAK Yun-pui

Ms TSANG So-lai

Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin

**Title**

DC Member (Application for leave of absence received)

" ( " )

" ( " )

" ( " )

" (No application for leave of absence received)

**Action**

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

**Applications for Leave of Absence**

2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat of Sha Tin District Council (Secretariat) had received the applications for leave of absence in writing from the following members:

Mr CHAN Nok-hang

Sickness

Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor

Official commitment

Mr MAK Yun-pui

"

Ms TSANG So-lai

"

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

**Election of Vice-Chairman of EWC**

4. The Chairman said that Mr MAK Yun-pui had submitted a letter of resignation as Vice-Chairman of the EWC on 4 August 2017. According to Order 34(4) of the "Sha Tin District

Council Standing Orders” (Standing Orders), when the office of the Chairman or Vice Chairman was vacant, the situation “should be handled according to Order 4”, and “the Chairman of the Council shall preside at the meetings mentioned in Orders 4(3) and (4)”. She now invited Mr HO Hau-cheung, Chairman of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC), to preside over the election of the Vice-Chairman of the EWC.

5. The STDC Chairman said that Vice-Chairman of the EWC would be elected according to the procedure set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 and 9 to 14 of Appendix II of the Standing Orders, which were the same as those for the election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the EWC conducted on 27 January 2016 and therefore would not be repeated here. The Secretariat had sent the related nomination form and procedure to members on 18 August 2017. The nomination period had ended at 1:30 pm of the day.

6. The STDC Chairman said that as of the deadline, the Secretariat had received only one nomination for Vice-Chairman of the EWC.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Nominator</u>	<u>Seconders</u>
Mr Tiger WONG	Mr Thomas PANG	Mr LI Sai-wing Ms TUNG Kin-lei

7. The STDC Chairman asked the relevant candidate, that was, Mr Tiger WONG, to confirm his willingness to accept the nomination and the position.

8. Mr Tiger WONG indicated his willingness to accept the nomination and the position.

9. The STDC Chairman declared that, since there was only one candidate, Mr Tiger WONG was elected ipso facto as the Vice-Chairman of the EWC.

(Discussion on the remaining items on the agenda to be chaired by Ms LAM Chung-yan, Chairman of the EWC.)

**Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4 July 2017**  
(EWC Minutes 4/2017)

10. Members unanimously confirmed the minutes of the said meeting.

**Matters Arising**

**Responses of the Relevant Government Departments to Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**  
(Paper No. EW 33/2017)

11. Ms TUNG Kin-lei said that as for the response of the Education Bureau (EDB) to the provisional motion on vacant school premises adopted at the previous meeting, she was disappointed with the EDB’s failure to fully consult stakeholders in the community before utilising such premises. She did not support the use of the premises of Free Methodist Mei Lam Primary School (Mei Lam School) as a temporary school building. She hoped that the premises could be converted for community use. She also hoped that the EDB and the

Planning Department could make proper planning in future and would consult the STDC and relevant stakeholders when appropriate.

12. Mr WONG Yue-hon noted that the EDB utilised the premises of Mei Lam School in School Net 88 as a temporary school building to meet the demand for places in School Net 91. He asked what transport arrangement the EDB would make to help students attending school in another school net and whether it would compensate such students.

13. Mr Michael YUNG pointed out that according to the EDB, the first and the second floors of the school premises in Wo Che was temporarily lent to another school, while the third to the sixth floors would remain vacant for the time being. He enquired how the EDB would make good use of the vacant floors, such as constructing a new school building for the school currently using the first and the second floors, so as to reconsider the use of the original premises.

14. Mrs Alice YU CHOW, Senior School Development Officer (Sha Tin) 4 gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) with regard to the compensation mentioned by Mr WONG Yue-hon, related students currently were eligible for the Student Travel Subsidy. If members opined that students from School Net 91 should receive extra subsidy as they had to attend school in School Net 88 for the time being, she would refer the case to relevant divisions for follow-up, before submitting a written reply later; and
- (b) she would also refer members' views to relevant divisions for consideration, as to whether a larger and new school building would be built for the school currently using the Wo Che premises, and vacated the premises for other purposes.

15. The Chairman said that if members had any opinions on the vacant school premises, they could raise the issue at the next meeting for further discussion. She asked the EDB to submit the information or response requested by members after the meeting.

EDB

16. Members noted the above paper.

### **Discussion Items**

2017/18 Work Plan of Sha Tin District School Development Division of the Education Bureau  
(Paper No. EW 34/2017)

17. The views of Mr HO Hau-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) though there were different voices as regards lending the school premises to the English Schools Foundation (ESF), the related arrangement had already implemented. After listening to members' opinions, the ESF had made some policy adjustments, such as not allowing students to go to school by private cars and promising to open the library to the public. He enquired whether the ESF

would ensure fulfilling the relevant commitments and whether the EDB would monitor the fulfilment;

- (b) recently the community was concerned about the issue of “phantom students”. According to his knowledge, the problem might exist in Sha Tin as well. He enquired whether the EDB had inspected schools in the district for any similar phenomenon. The incident of Hing Tak School in Tuen Mun had exposed loopholes in EDB’s existing system. He asked what measures the EDB would take to prevent similar problems in schools in Sha Tin District;
- (c) the EDB mentioned that some schools could allow the public to use their idle sports facilities, he opined that the use of space could be optimised in view of the insufficiency of community facilities in Sha Tin. According to official figures, one-tenth of the schools in Hong Kong had promised to lend out their sports facilities. However, only 8 out of the 190-odd schools in Sha Tin were willing to do so. Therefore, he asked whether the EDB would encourage schools in the district more actively to participate. He wondered whether the facilities could be used for not only sports events, but also for other functions like cultural activities which were popular among community members; and
- (d) he asked how the EDB would deal with the situation when the shortage of school places peaked in the coming year.

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

- (a) owing to the Year of the Dragon effect, the high birth rate of doubly non-permanent resident (DNR) children in that year, and the intake for several housing estates, such as Shek Mun Estate and Greenhill Villa in recent years, the demand for primary school places would began to increase in 2018 and the number of students would reach more than 16 000 in preliminarily estimation. She enquired the EDB about the number of school places reserved for the coming year and how those places would be allocated. The birth rate had dropped after the Year of the Dragon, she asked whether the EDB had relevant data;
- (b) currently the EDB was trying to meet the demand for primary school places by having additional classes. In case School Net 91 reached its capacity, the EDB would allocate students evenly to School Net 88 and School Net 89. However, the transport support would not match such arrangement. For example, it would be difficult for students to travel between their homes in Shek Mun Estate and their schools in Wo Che Estate or Kwong Yuen Estate if they were allocated there. She enquired whether the EDB would make relevant arrangements in terms of transportation; and
- (c) she enquired whether the reserved plot would be used for setting up a brand-new primary school or decantation. She asked whether the reserved plot in On Muk Street would be used for accommodating the demand of Shek Mun. And she wanted to know the overall strategy in dealing with schools constructions and “matchbox” schools. In addition, there were five to six

“matchbox” schools in Sha Tin. She would like to know the details of the decantation arrangements.

19. The views of Mr Sunny CHIU were summarised below:

- (a) the paper mentioned the arrangement for the ESF premises. He hoped that the EDB could monitor the situation and deal with any possible transport and community problems; and
- (b) regarding the utilisation of the premises of Mei Lam School to deal with the issue of school places in Shui Chuen O, he hoped the the EDB could handle the issue as quickly as possible, so as to resolve the problem of inadequate primary school places.

20. The views of Mr PUN Kwok-shan were summarised below:

- (a) with regard to the loan of school premises to the ESF, he opined that the EDB had the responsibility to duly manage the traffic conditions in the vicinity of the premises, such as Che Kung Miu Road and Chui Tin Street;
- (b) he asked whether Mei Lam School, as temporary school premises, would be placed under School Net 88 or School Net 91 for enrolment. He opined that the incident showed the needs of improvement for EDB’s planning and the necessity for remedial and compensatory measures as appropriate;
- (c) a plot in Fo Tan was reserved for teaching purposes. He hoped that the EDB could make appropriate planning as soon as possible and provide the STDC with relevant information in due course, so as to avoid any shortage of places; and
- (d) the Government began to pay attention to special education. He was very supportive of that. He opined that it would be helpful for the growth of children who had special educational needs (SENs) to start receiving special education at a young age. However, the EDB did not seem to have specifically strengthened special education at the kindergarten level. He pointed out that special schools were classified by students’ ages. Some students with special needs were allowed to start working at a certain age, but their intelligence level might not meet the requirements at work. He wondered whether the EDB could make comprehensive assessments of those students and allow them to stay in school as appropriate.

21. The views of Mr YIU Ka-chun were summarised below:

- (a) when the Government handled the new housing estates, such as Shui Chuen O Estate and Shek Mun Estate, it failed to make early planning of school facilities in the neighbourhood, which showed that the Government had room for improvement in terms of planning and cross-departmental communication. He enquired about the school arrangement in Fo Tan, when residential buildings were to be constructed in the area;

- (b) it would take students from Shui Chuen O more than one hour to travel to the premises of Mei Lam School. He asked whether the EDB would make any special arrangement or compensation. Besides, he wondered whether similar situation would happen to the kindergarten level too, which meant that there would not be enough kindergarten places to meet the demand of new housing estates; and
- (c) there was a centre in Mei Tin Estate for students with hyperactivity disorder. In view of the growing population, he asked whether the EDB would set up more similar centres for students with SENs.

22. The views of Mr WONG Yue-hon were summarised below:

- (a) the paper mentioned that five schools would open up their facilities for use by sports organisations. He opined that it was a good arrangement and asked about the names of the schools concerned;
- (b) as for the school places, the EDB said that there were sufficient school places for the 2016/17 school year. He asked how the EDB estimated the demand for school places in the coming few years. Many parents in public housing estates hoped that their children could attend school in the neighbourhood. He opined that the EDB should modify its planning in line with population changes, such as setting up temporary schools in areas with shortages of places; and
- (c) there were currently several “matchbox” schools in Sha Tin District and the headmasters complained about the difficulties in enrolling students because of environment constraints. He wondered how the EDB would improve the situation.

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

- (a) the paper mentioned that some schools would each hire a special education teacher as the coordinator. He asked the EDB to name the primary and the secondary schools concerned, since parents in the district might want to choose schools with special education support. Some students with special learning needs might fail to catch up the learning progress and had to repeat a year of study. He asked whether the coordinators could assess those students and then suggest the school to allow the students to repeat a year of study;
- (b) with regard to the loan of school premises to the ESF, the ESF had started decorating the premises on loan when neither it nor the EDB had effectively convinced members that the arrangement would have limited impact on the community, which made people wonder whether the EDB or the ESF would take follow-up actions based on the opinions collected from the previous consultation; and
- (c) children born in the Year of the Dragon would reach the age for primary schooling in the following year. He enquired about EDB’s measures, if any, to avoid students attending schools in other districts.

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

- (a) the paper mentioned that starting from the school year of 2017/18 onwards, the teacher-to-class ratio in every school would increase by 0.1%. This was a contractual arrangement, under which there was no stable teaching environment and teachers might not be able to do a good job; and
- (b) the paper said that the Administration would provide an additional recurrent cash grant of about 20,000 dollars per month, in order to strengthen the IT manpower support. He understood that there had been a similar one-off IT grant of more than 100,000 dollars for each school. However, he opined that such measures were inadequate. While paragraph 3.5 of the paper said that efforts would be made to strengthen the education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, meaning higher requirements for IT personnel, the Administration only provided an extra grant of about 20,000 dollars per month for each school. There was no promotion prospects under such contractual arrangement, making it difficult to attract IT professionals. He opined that the EDB should consider including IT personnel into the permanent establishment, in order to meet the daily teaching needs.

25. The views of Mr WONG Hok-lai were summarised below:

- (a) children with special needs were not much different from their normal counterparts in the eyes of ordinary people. Therefore it was very important to identify them and provide treatment in early childhood. He opined that the EDB should allocate resources to set up an assessment mechanism to identify children with special needs and provide them with appropriate treatment as early as possible; and
- (b) the EDB said that it would deploy more occupational therapists in special schools. He opined that it was a move in the right direction. However, people with intellectual disability would generally be assigned to sheltered workshops when they reach a certain age. But their intelligence might only be equivalent to that of children aged seven or eight, simply being incapable of coping with work. In addition, children with special needs could not continue to live in school dormitories after leaving schools, which would be a great burden for parents. He opined that the EDB should make a comprehensive assessment and arrangement in accordance with the intelligence of children with special needs.

26. The views of Mr Rick HUI were summarised below:

- (a) as for the loan of school premises to the ESF, he opined that the EDB should be held accountable in case of any traffic or community problems arose in future. Therefore he hoped that the EDB would urge the ESF to honour its commitments and implement related measures; and
- (b) he asked whether the EDB had studied the trend of the number of kindergarten students in Sha Tin District in future, so as to understand the burden on each



school net and take countermeasures. If yes, he wondered whether the EDB could provide relevant data.

27. The views of Mr Tiger WONG were summarised below:

- (a) the EDB said that it would set up the post of special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) in some schools. However, the number of students with special needs admitted to schools might vary. He enquired whether the EDB would allocate the resources proportionally; and
- (b) Primary One (P1) school places would be in short supply in the coming year or two. He asked whether there would be adequate school places to meet the demand, according to the EDB's estimation, and whether there were related figures.

28. The views of Mr CHIU Man-leong were summarised below:

- (a) the paper mentioned that the "Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme" would be launched in the 2017/18 school year. As Chairman of the Culture, Sports and Community Development Committee, he supported the scheme and he had received a lot of requests for increasing the number of local facilities available on loan to organisations. Regarding the plan, there were five secondary schools and one primary school participating at the moment, he inquired whether the department concerned could increase the subsidy and encourage schools to open school premises for public use when school premises were idle on Saturdays and Sundays;
- (b) it was generally accepted that the premises of "matchbox" schools were too small and hindered students' development. He enquired whether the EDB could earmark more resources to address the problem, such as converting vacant school premises or building schools in new housing estates;
- (c) school places in Sha Tin District would be very tight next year under the effect of the Year of the Dragon and DNR children. The EDB would operate classes in 24 temporary classrooms to meet the demand. However, it would be expensive for schools to convert special purpose rooms into classrooms. Therefore he hoped that the EDB could provide more resources for schools; and
- (d) some schools operated additional classes last year, but many parents were unaware of that. Therefore he hoped that the EDB could improve the arrangement for information dissemination. For example, announcements as to which schools might operate additional classes could be made in advance, so that parents could take that into account when selecting schools for their children, in order to minimise unfairness.

29. The views of Ms TUNG Kin-lei were summarised below:

- (a) the EDB's work plan mentioned the construction of new school premises and the use of vacant ones. New schools would be needed in new housing estates

such as Shui Chuen O Estate and Shek Mun Estate in future. She was concerned that similar to the Mei Lam School case, the EDB would have to borrow premises in other school nets because it failed to build new ones; and

- (b) after the premises of Mei Lam School became vacant in 2013, the EDB had promised to lend the premises to a tertiary institution in 2016. And now in 2017, the EDB said it would lend the premises to Shui Chuen O Estate as a temporary school building instead. The premises of Mei Lam School had been vacant for six years. She did not understand why some members still opined that the EDB had made good use of the premises. She hoped that the EDB could make good planning so that similar problems would not repeat.

30. The views of Mr YAU man-chun were summarised below:

- (a) on the first day of school, many students living in Shui Chuen O Estate had to wait at least 45 minutes at the bus stop before they could board the bus to their school in Tai Wai. Now the EDB intended to use the premises of Mei Lam School as a temporary school building to cope with the shortage of school places in Shui Chuen O Estate. He hoped the members not to hinder the implementation of the policy even if some of them did not support it; and
- (b) at present, School Net 91 had to borrow places from other school nets. There would definitely be a shortage of places in the school net in the coming year due to the Year of the Dragon effect. He hoped that the EDB representative would reflect the problem to the parties concerned after the meeting. Besides, he enquired whether the EDB could ask bus companies to provide special services at Shui Chuen O Estate in the morning, so as to reduce students' waiting time for buses.

31. Mr Wilson LI said that there was a great strain on places in the three school nets in Sha Tin. It was not satisfactory that students had to wait 45 minutes before boarding the bus on the first day of school, which showed the inadequacy on EDB's overall planning support. There was a Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) primary school in Sha Tin District, namely HKBUAS Wong Kam Fai Secondary and Primary School. According to the information in 2000, students from Sha Tin admitted to the school should not exceed 15% of the total, which meant a maximum of only 23 Sha Tin students could be admitted. He questioned whether the proportion still applied and opined that more discussion should be held with the school. The EDB should address the relevant issues and undertake necessary consultations.

32. The views of Mr CHING Cheung-ying were summarised below:

- (a) paragraph 1.1 of the EDB's paper mentioned that more resources would be allocated to schools. He enquired how the EDB would ensure schools' appointment of contract teachers into permanent positions;
- (b) as for school provision, he opined that the Government should have made available relevant teaching services before the intake for Shui Chuen O Estate. He supported the effective use of Mei Lam School as a temporary school building to address the shortage of school places at Shui Chuen O Estate; and

- (c) the idea of the “Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme” was good, but he understood that not many school would be interested, because a large number of extra-curricular activities on Saturdays and Sundays would bring a heavy burden on school management. He opined that the Government should not force unwilling schools to open up their facilities.

33. Mr SIU Hing-hong said that school facilities were public resources. Young people wanted to play ball games but could not rent venues. Therefore, members of the community kept asking the Government for more venues. It would be an effective arrangement for the community if schools facilities could be opened up for optimal use by the public.

34. The views of Mr WONG Ka-wing were summarised below:

- (a) he opined that the EDB should make an estimation based on the student enrolment of various schools in the past five years. Despite the higher student turnover rates in some schools, he believed that the student enrolment should not vary much over a longer reference period. However, if the EDB would not announce the list of schools with extra classes and places until Stage II of the admission procedure, when parents had already submitted their applications every time, it was not necessarily an effective practice; and
- (b) the EDB should encourage parents to enrol their children into suitable schools, by letting the parents know that their children might be allocated to less-than-desirable schools if their application for places in ones with higher requirements were rejected.

35. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) she wondered how long it would take the EDB to provide the number of places for the 2017/18 school year. She requested an explanation from the EDB on why the number of places for the 2016/17 school year was smaller than that of students. The number of students would rise due to the “Year of the Dragon” effect but would subsequently decline. She enquired how the EDB would deal with the situation. She understood that the implementation of a new policy in the Mainland was likely to reduce the number of cross-boundary schoolchildren. She enquired about the EDB’s countermeasures;
- (b) according to some parents who just moved into Hin Keng Estate, the EDB had informed them that their children had to go to school in Ma On Shan. She wondered whether the EDB could specify the method of estimating the number of students in different schools nets in order to determine the school places in those school nets;
- (c) while opening up school venues for use by other organisations was an arrangement of optimising resources, it would indeed add to the burden on schools. She wondered whether the EDB or the Sha Tin District Office (STDO) would provide allowances for schools participating in the scheme;

- (d) she enquired whether the EDB had a timetable for the planning and development of Shek Mun and Fo Tan, since local residents found it unacceptable that there were no relevant teaching facilities in the neighbourhood after they moved in;
- (e) the EDB said that it would count the school places in September after the school year began and related figures would not be available until early 2018. She suggested that the EDB communicate with local schools for a preliminary count, before providing the counting result and the relevant assessment report at the next meeting; and
- (f) she hoped that the EDB would provide more information at the next meeting as regards the estimated number of kindergarten children progressing to P1.

36. Mrs Alice YU CHOW gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the EDB and the ESF had explained the transport arrangements at the previous meeting. After the provision of related premises on loan to Island School, the EDB would report to members on the implementation and effectiveness of the measures in due course. The EDB planned to reserve the premises for school uses in long term, after the ESF vacated the premises. As for the related arrangement on ESF opening up the library as mentioned at the previous meeting, she would report after soliciting information from relevant divisions;
- (b) in terms of school provision, the EDB could not provide a reply regarding the planning and related issues of the proposed primary school site on On Muk Street, until it had taken follow-up actions with other government departments;
- (c) the EDB was having consultations with “matchbox” schools and following up on the related improvement works, based on the earlier consensus reached with the education sector. Relevant works had commenced for the “matchbox” schools concerned, including four in Sha Tin District, during the summer holiday in 2017. According to the established mechanism, the EDB needed to earmark/retain certain vacant school premises to cater for the anticipated future demand for school places and to allow flexible arrangements in view of the uncertainties involved. In addition, the EDB needed vacant school premises to flexibly address various and changing needs, including re-provisioning of existing schools to improve their learning and teaching environment or decanting schools which were undergoing in-situ redevelopment or extension works. The EDB would allocate school premises in accordance with actual needs in due course. The EDB understood members’ concerns and would pay attention to related arrangements in future when dealing with vacant school premises. It would also put members’ views on record;
- (d) as for the Primary One Admission (POA) in the 2018/19 school year, the primary school of Shui Chuen O of School Net 91, would use the premises of the former Mei Lam School in Mei Lam Estate, Tai Wai, as its temporary school building. But the school was still under School Net 91, therefore, only students

of School Net 91 could choose the school in Part B of the Central Allocation stage. As the school allocation result would be announced by the end of 2017, the EDB would later conduct a review and pay attention to the transport arrangement for the said primary school. As for the compensation mentioned by some members, the Student Travel Subsidy was provided to students by the Government currently. As for the suggestion of offering extra allowances proposed by some members, she would convey their views to relevant divisions;

- (e) she thanked members for their support for the “Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme” launched jointly by the EDB and the Home Affairs Bureau. The EDB would provide support and resources for schools approved to participate in the scheme. Interested sports organisations could submit applications to the EDB for renting the facilities of participating schools. If other organisations in the district were interested, applications could be filed directly to relevant schools and would be processed as per their school-based mechanism;
- (f) regarding the number of school places, the EDB would commence the statistical survey in mid-September. The relevant result would not be available until early 2018 after recheck and collation ;
- (g) as for the issue raised by some members, about the early identification of students with SENs, under the current policy, young children should undergo regular checks in Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs). Doctors of MCHCs would refer the children suspected to have SENs to the Child Assessment Centre (CAC) for assessment. If the assessment result turned out to be positive, the CAC would develop rehabilitation plans, offered follow-up assessment/services and arranged specialty referrals based on the nature and needs of individual children;
- (h) starting from the 2017/18 school year, the EDB would provide each public sector ordinary primary and secondary school an additional graduate teaching post to the teaching staff establishment in phases over three years to facilitate the assignment of a designated teacher to take up the role of SENCO. The EDB would also provide training for SENCOs to facilitate their work in schools. All public sector primary and secondary schools would be eventually equipped with SENCOs in the 2019/20 school year. We would ask schools to clearly state in their reports how they would use related resources to provide support to students with SENs, including the arrangements regarding SENCOs, for the sake of better transparency. It was important to note that the effectiveness of integrated education in schools should not be determined solely by the additional resources they acquired;
- (i) with regards to the estimation of the number of school children, the EDB made planning based on related figures provided by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD). The number of student-applicants in the stage of POA Central Allocation each year was affected by the uneven distribution of students and schools, as well as the mobility of students (e.g., relocation, newly-arrived students, and parents’ choice to enrol their children into public sector primary

schools or private/DSS ones). The 2018 POA allocation would commence in September 2017. As usual, the number of student-applicants for POA allocation for the 2018 school year would not be confirmed until registrations for the Discretionary Places Admission stage was completed in late November/early December 2017. In order to cope with the anticipated increase in the demand for school places, the EDB had reached a consensus with the education sector regarding flexible arrangements as necessary to increase P1 places in certain school nets (related measures including borrowing school places from other school nets; making use of vacant classrooms for operating additional P1 classes; converting remaining rooms in schools into classrooms; temporary allocating more students per P1 class whenever necessary and providing related schools with additional resources to ensure the quality of education, etc.). Such flexible arrangements could reduce the impact on the stable development of public schools when the number of students fell in the long term;

- (j) the EDB had not discovered any “phantom students” in the district. When determining the student enrolment, the EDB did not rely solely on the figures provided by related schools or simply conduct headcount at such schools. Instead, the EDB verified the actual intake of students via different channels. There are currently school-based mechanisms to deal with students’ leaves. According to applicable regulations, schools must report to the EDB on the seventh day of any student’s continuous absence. The EDB would examine the non-attendance case reported and provide the student and the parents concerned with necessary services, so as to ensure the right of the student to education; and
- (k) as for school provision planning, under the established mechanism, the Government would reserve sites for school purposes in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines when planning large-scale residential developments, with regard to the population and the needs for community services, so as to accommodate the population growth and related public housing developments, to meet the demand for education services in the community and to support related policies. The EDB launched school building programmes whenever appropriate in accordance with the established mechanism and procedures, taking into account future development of relevant areas, school-age population projections, the actual number of students at all levels, the latest population changes, the current education policy and other factors that might affect the demand for school places. The concrete timeframe of school provision planning would be subject to, among others, views of the District Councils, progress of technical works and funding approval. According to the relevant mechanism, the EDB had reserved two primary school sites in Shui Chuen O and Fo Tan of Sha Tin to meet the educational needs of the new population. In addition, the planning application regarding the proposed primary school site on On Muk Street in Shek Mun was still pending consideration.

37. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) members were puzzled by the number of school places, especially the projected number of kindergarten children progressing to P1. She hoped that the EDB could provide more relevant information at the next meeting;

- (b) regarding the number of school places, the EDB said that it would be counted in September after the school year began and related figures would not be available until early 2018. She suggested that the EDB communicate with local schools for a preliminary count, before providing the counting result and the relevant assessment report at the next meeting;
- (c) some school nets would lend places in the 2017/18 school year but members were not aware of the related figures. She hoped that the EDB could provide relevant information;
- (d) members were much concerned about school places and transportation, and had raised such issues a long time ago. But the EDB had apparently failed to take a square look at the issues. She suggested that the EDB take up a more active role in related planning and development projects, such as those in Shek Mun and Fo Tan, so as to avoid the recurrence of inadequate school places as in the case of Shui Chuen O Estate. She hoped that the EDB would further respond in this regard; and
- (e) as for other questions, she believed that Mrs Alice YU CHOW had recorded members' views and would provide a response at the next meeting as matters arising.

38. The Chairman declared the end of the discussion on the item on the agenda.

Meeting Schedule of the Committee for 2018  
(Paper No. EW 35/2017)

39. Members unanimously endorsed the above paper.

40. Before discussion on the questions, the Chairman reminded members that they should notify the Secretariat twelve clear working days before the meeting according to the Standing Orders if they intended to place any matter or question on the agenda. In case of doubt, members could contact the Secretariat for more information.

**Questions**

Question to be Raised by Mr WAI Hing-cheung on the Implementation of the E-Textbook Scheme  
(Paper No. EW 27/2017)

41. The views of Mr WAI Hing-cheung were summarised below:

- (a) regarding the number of primary and secondary schools across the territory that adopted e-textbooks exclusively or concurrently in teaching, the EDB had provided the survey result for the 2015/16 school year. He hoped that the EDB could share the result for the 2016/17 school year as well;

- (b) there was a great difference between secondary and primary schools in the use of e-textbooks. About 75% of primary schools used e-textbooks but only 10% of secondary schools did so. He wanted to know the reasons and whether there were any commercial factors, i.e., publishing e-textbooks for primary schools was lucrative but not in the case for secondary schools;
- (c) he enquired the EDB about the purpose of promoting the use of e-textbooks. At the beginning of each school year there were news reports about heavy schoolbags, which were a great burden for students. However, the EDB did not provide any detailed analysis in that regard;
- (d) at present, students used e-textbooks and conventional ones at the same time. He wondered whether it would mean a greater burden for parents financially and for students physically. He asked the EDB whether the desired results of e-textbooks could be achieved;
- (e) the EDB said that it was a territory-wide policy and therefore the figures of individual districts could not be provided. However, given the large population of Sha Tin, he wanted to learn about the figures in the district. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) had launched the “Internet Learning Support Programme” to help students from low-income families to get access to e-learning at home. He hoped that the OGCIO and the Boys’ & Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong (BGCA), which helped implement the programme, could provide the specific number of applicant or participating families of the programme, as well as the types of families seeking assistance and their needs;
- (f) he asked what role the OGCIO played in promoting e-textbooks other than the programme mentioned in the paper and how it would further popularise e-textbooks. The EDB said that there were 6 000 eligible families. He wondered whether all the 6 000 families had applied for participating in the programme. In addition, the EDB said that 60 000 families had received services related to the programme. He asked whether 60 000 was the territory-wide figure or just the number in Sha Tin District; and
- (g) the EDB responded that there were 34 sets of e-textbooks in 2014 and there were 46 sets at present. In other words, only 12 new sets had been developed over the past three years. He asked the EDB whether such a progress was satisfactory. He wondered whether it was owed to the slow approval of the EDB, or to the small number of applications from publishers. He also asked whether the EDB had a timetable for the full implementation of the e-textbook scheme. Besides, the EDB said that the percentage of e-textbook use in secondary schools was lower because some schools designed their own textbooks. He enquired whether those textbooks designed by schools on their own were electronic or conventional ones. If they were electronic ones, then the percentage of secondary schools adopting e-textbooks should exceed 10%. He wondered whether the EDB could persuade schools to switch to e-textbooks, so as to ease the financial burden on parents.



42. The views of Mr LI Sai-wing were summarised below:

- (a) although the e-textbook scheme had been launched for many years, it did not seem to be an obvious success. Over the past few years, he had weighed the school bags of some students during school hours and found that the weight were far beyond the limits recommended by doctors. And parents were greatly concerned their children's health; and
- (b) parents were busy buying textbooks near the beginning of each school year. Some publishers launched the so-called "new" textbooks by making only minor revisions to the old versions. He wondered whether the publication of e-textbooks was so unprofitable that the EDB could not fully implement the related scheme. To promote the scheme, the Government was even willing to provide financial assistance to impoverished students for purchasing related technology products. If even the hardware problem could be solved, he hoped that the EDB could specify the difficulties in fully implementing the e-textbook scheme.

43. The views of Mr LI Sai-hung were summarised below:

- (a) some residents in the neighbourhood earlier complained that they had difficulties in helping their children with the homework since the schools that their children studied in had fully adopted e-textbooks. He asked what kind of assistance the EDB could provide for such families and parents; and
- (b) some teachers preferred e-textbooks for dictations, while others preferred conventional textbooks. He enquired whether the EDB had studied the differences between e-textbooks and conventional ones in terms of teaching and whether it had issued related guidelines to schools.

44. Mrs Alice YU CHOW gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) phase I of the E-Textbook Market Development Scheme was launched in 2012, while the second phase began in 2013. A grant of 50 million dollars was provided to publishers for the development of e-textbooks. Publishers also worked with schools to try out their e-textbooks. There were 34 sets of e-textbooks on the internet in 2014 and there were 46 sets at present, with a total of 12 new ones over three years. Those 12 sets were placed on the internet after a lot of detailed testing. As for the question by some members about the details of the review, related information would be followed up by competent divisions. The subjects covered by the e-textbook schemes included Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, General Studies and Physical Education in primary schools, as well as Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, History, Computer Literacy and Life and Science in secondary schools;
- (b) the EDB was concerned about the problem of heavy schoolbags. At this stage,

the adoption of e-textbooks was a school-based policy. The EDB provided a channel for schools to try out e-textbooks as assistance in teaching. It was up to schools to decide whether they wanted to adopt e-textbooks. Some secondary schools developed textbooks for self-directed learning and did not necessarily use e-textbooks;

- (c) regarding the number of primary and secondary schools across the territory that adopted e-textbooks exclusively or concurrently in teaching, the survey for the 2016/17 school year would be completed by the end of 2017 and the related result would be available later;
- (d) schools would follow up on the cases of individual students to assist them in using e-textbooks. The EDB believed that schools would not force students to buy e-textbooks; and
- (e) she said that she did not have information in hand as regards studies on schools' adoption of e-textbooks and the differences between e-textbooks and conventional ones in teaching. She promised to provide related information after the meeting.

45. Ms Elke MAK, Systems Manager (Digital Inclusion) 12 of the OGCI0 gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the Government had engaged two non-profit organisations, namely the BGCA and WebOrganic, to implement the "Internet Learning Support Program" launched by the OGCI0, in the eastern and the western parts of Hong Kong, respectively. As of July, there were about 60 000 families eligible for services under the programme, according to the BGCA and WebOrganic; and
- (b) the programme, launched in 2011, aimed to mitigate the impact of digital divide on the quality of learning and to promote the use of the internet in a safe and proper manner. Related services included providing home broadband access and computer equipment at affordable prices for eligible families, free technical guidance and computer inspection for students and parents, as well as free training and tutorial support.

46. Mr Thomas LEUNG, Head of Internet Learning Support Programme of the BGCA gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) the programme was launched in 2011 and was now moving into the sixth year. By the end of March 2017, nearly 1 000 families in Sha Tin District registered with the programme each year. At present, about 2 000 families in Sha Tin received related services; and
- (b) many students received services in various forms but had not registered for the programme. More than 90 schools in Sha Tin, including secondary, primary and special ones, had been admitted to the programme, and the BGCA provided services for about 20 schools each year. The BGCA organised lectures at schools. But registration was voluntary. Therefore, many students received

services but did not register for the programme.

47. The Chairman asked the EDB, the OGCI and the BGCA to submit relevant supplementary papers after the meeting.

Question to be Raised by Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick on the Higher Old Age Living Allowance  
(Paper No. EW 28/2017)

48. The views of Mr Rick HUI were summarised below:

- (a) the Higher Old Age Living Allowance (HOALA) would be introduced in the first half of the following year, but the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had not yet announced the application procedures. The amount of the allowance, about 10,000 dollars per month, would be very important for eligible elderlies;
- (b) the SWD had recently introduced the policy of medical fee waiver for public healthcare services for persons aged 75 or above. The SWD would issue the Certificate for Medical Waivers to eligible elderly persons, while those not meeting the requirement needed to submit documentary proofs of assets. Such an arrangement postponed the availability of medical waivers for elderly persons who would be otherwise eligible. He hoped that the SWD would send notices to ineligible elders so that they could re-submit their applications once they became eligible. If the SWD could not provide an electronic certificate in place of the conventional one, he hoped that the SWD could at least provide a laminated one to facilitate carriage by elderly persons; and
- (c) he hoped that the SWD did not adopt the above approach when implementing the HOALA. Instead, the Administration should firstly screen out ineligible elders and send the application form to them several months prior to the launch of the policy so that they could fill out the form in advance. The form should also state that such elders would be deemed eligible after a certain period of time. After the launch of the policy, all elders could receive the letter of eligibility at the same time.

49. Mr Billy CHAN said that in implementing the policy of medical fee waiver for public healthcare services, the SWD sent the related certificate to eligible elders. He wondered whether the SWD could take the initiative to send declaration forms to ineligible elders so that they could declare their assets earlier. Some elders might fill out their forms according to previous requirements; therefore they became ineligible for the HOALA and had to settle for a smaller amount of allowance. Allowing elders to declare their assets at an earlier stage could alleviate the administrative burden on the implementation of the HOALA in future.

50. The views of Ms TUNG Kin-lei were summarised below:

- (a) recently many elders questioned why the Government had to wait for a year before implementing the HOALA. The SWD responded that it would take time to handle the electronic system. But she knew that many elders did not understand what it really meant and would like to reflect the situation to the SWD; and

- (b) she said that many elders had recently visited her ward office to enquire about the Certificate for Medical Waivers, which they hoped would not be in the conventional printed form. She suggested that the SWD communicate with the Hospital Authority (HA) on the possible inclusion of the profiles of eligible elders into the HA's computer system, so that those elders could be exempted from payment of medical fees even they did not have the certificate with them.

51. The Chairman asked whether the SWD would hold briefing sessions at elderly centres in different areas before implementing the policy. If yes, then she strongly recommended that the SWD invite District Council Members and their assistants to such sessions. She opined that too many cards or certificates would be inconvenient for elders. She hoped that the SWD could optimise the procedures and should timely report to members on any policy updates.

52. Ms LEE Sau-ye, Supervisor of Sha Tin (South) Social Security Field Unit of the SWD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) based on actual operational needs, the SWD needed to upgrade its computer system to implement the HOALA, and such an upgrade would take time;
- (b) the SWD had actively started upgrading the computer system and making relevant preparations, including developing related arrangements for the implementation. The SWD expected that the HOALA could be implemented in mid-2018 upon the completion of all preparatory work. The effective date was the first day of the month when the Appropriation Bill 2017 was passed, that is, 1 May 2017;
- (c) some members suggested that the SWD send letters to ineligible elders. She would convey the suggestion to the SWD headquarters;
- (d) the Certificate of Old Age Living Allowance Recipients (for Medical Waivers) was a brand-new measure for elders. The SWD would need to print the detailed rules and measures on A4 paper so that the beneficiaries could understand them. After a period of time, the SWD and the HA would sum up the experience and stakeholders' views and would review the relevant arrangements in due course; and
- (e) after the SWD headquarters had developed the related implementation arrangements, the District Social Welfare Offices would carry out publicity work, such as briefing District Council Members, local residents and elderly service organisations on the said arrangements.

Question to be Raised by Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael on Projection of Population and School Places, Planning of Housing and Provision of School Places and Allocation and Planning of School Places in Sha Tin District.

(Paper No. EW 36/2017)

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

- (a) paragraph 1(g) of the paper stated that all school places in Ma On Shan should be provided to student-applicants living within the school net, and as a result, there were no remaining places for the dedicated school net for cross-boundary students. He asked the EDB for the figure of P1 students from other areas enrolled into schools in Ma On Shan after the establishment of the dedicated school net. He hoped that more detailed data could be provided by school net, that is, Net 88, Net 89 and Net 91. It was undesirable that the figures submitted by the EDB apparently failed to show the population in each school net;
- (b) as could be seen from the table in paragraph 2(a) of the paper, the number of places was smaller than that of students for several past school years, with a difference of several dozen to more than a hundred, and the difference was even growing larger. He enquired about the EDB's arrangements under such circumstances. At present, the EDB used Mei Lam School as temporary premises to address the problem of insufficient places in Shui Chuen O Estate. He wondered whether a similar situation would happen in Ma On Shan in future;
- (c) while the paper mentioned the reserved sites in Shui Chuen O Estate and Fo Tan, it failed to indicate a similar plan for Ma On Shan, despite the decreasing number of classrooms in the area. The number of schools in Ma On Shan had not increased, but there was a population about 14 000 to 15 000 in the area. He asked how the EDB would deal with the matter;
- (d) the paper mentioned "live births" and he wanted to know the definition of the term. Conventionally the term "newborn babies" was used. And the current term of "live births" was rather difficult to understand; and
- (e) he would like to know how the EDB would deal with the premises of Hong Kong and Kowloon Chiu Chow Public Association Ma Chung Sum Secondary School (Ma Chung Sum School) and the old premises of Shatin Tsung Tsin Secondary School (Tsung Tsin School) after their use. In addition, the impact of the "Year of the Dragon" effect would be seen in the coming years. He asked about the EDB's arrangements on the admission of school-age children.

54. Mrs Alice YU CHOW gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) there was only a district-wide number of cross-boundary students in the dedicated school net. She would enquire about the breakdown by school net from relevant divisions and would provide related figures, if any, during the discussion on matters arising next time;

(Post-meeting note: The figures of cross-border students were available by district and by grade. For the number of cross-boundary P1 students in Sha Tin, please refer to the related discussion paper (No. EW36/2017) of the EWC meeting dated 5 September 2017.)

- (b) the EDB allowed an enrolment cap at 10% above the standard P1 class size for

public sector schools. For example, the enrolment cap per P1 class would be set at 27 for primary schools with 25 students as standard class size and 33 for those with a class size of 30. Such extra places were not included into the counting; therefore the number of students was slightly higher than that of school places. In terms of overall planning, the EDB would refer to the data provided by the C&SD as an assessment indicator. At present there were relatively more places in Ma On Shan. In case of any shortage of school places in future, the EDB would make a review or arrangement according to the established mechanism;

- (c) with regard to members' concerns about the overall planning and facilities for new housing estates in Sha Tin in future, she would convey related views to competent divisions for review on future planning, so that any school building project could be aligned with the intake for new housing estates whenever possible;
- (d) she believed that "live births" referred to the number of births, but she was not sure about the definition since the figures were provided by the C&SD; and

(Post-meeting note: A live birth referred to the complete expulsion or extraction from its mother of a product of conception which after such separation breathes or shows other evidence of life. The term was generally understood as the number of births. )

- (e) the EDB understood members' concerns about future arrangements for the premises of Ma Chung Sum School and Tsung Tsin School, especially whether they would be allocated to schools with inadequate facilities for decantation purposes. The EDB would consider members' views during planning and would report to members in due course.

55. The Chairman hoped that an item could be added to the agenda of future EWC meetings, so that the EDB would make an annual report on and members could be aware of the adequacy of school places for community needs after the intake for new estates in the district. She asked the Secretariat whether the said proposal was feasible.

56. Mr Mannix MOK, Executive Officer (District Council) 1 of the STDO said that if the Chairman requested the EDB to provide information on annual basis and the EDB agreed to do so, then the relevant item could be added to the agenda according to the relevant situation at Chairman's direction.

57. The Chairman said that she was not sure when the EDB had updated figures of school places. Therefore she suggested that the EDB provide related information to the EWC each year in due course. She understood that the EDB would pay close attention to the addition of classes and places. She hoped that the EDB could provide an estimate for the following year in each annual work report.

## **Report Items**

Reports of Working Groups  
(Paper No. EW 37/2017)

58. Members noted the above paper.

**Information Paper**

Number of Newly Arrived Mainland Children Admitted to Public Sector Primary and Secondary Schools in Sha Tin District Provided by the Education Bureau  
(Paper No. EW 38/2017)

59. Members noted the above paper.

**Date of Next Meeting**

60. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 31 October 2017(Tuesday).

61. The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat  
STDC 13/15/35

October 2017