

**Minutes of the 1st Meeting of
the Sha Tin District Council in 2017**

Date : 26 January 2017 (Thursday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Sha Tin District Council Conference Room
 4/F, Sha Tin Government Offices

<u>Present</u>	<u>Time of joining the meeting</u>	<u>Time of leaving the meeting</u>
Chairman : Mr HO Hau-cheung, BBS, MH	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Vice-Chairman : Mr PANG Cheung-wai, Thomas, SBS, JP	2:30 pm	5:08 pm
Members :		
Mr CHAN Billy Shiu-yeung	2:30 pm	4:15 pm
Mr CHAN Kwok-keung, James	3:59 pm	4:35 pm
Ms CHAN Man-kuen	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr CHAN Nok-hang	2:30 pm	4:41 pm
Mr CHING Cheung-ying, MH	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr CHIU Chu-pong, Sunny	2:30 pm	4:15 pm
Mr CHIU Man-leong	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr HUI Yui-yu, Rick	2:51 pm	4:26 pm
Mr LAI Tsz-yan	2:57 pm	4:42 pm
Ms LAM Chung-yan	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr LEE Chi-wing, Alvin	2:30 pm	5:00 pm
Mr LEUNG Ka-fai, Victor	2:30 pm	4:50 pm
Mr LI Sai-hung	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr LI Sai-wing	2:30 pm	4:03 pm
Mr LI Wing-shing, Wilson	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr MAK Yun-pui	3:16 pm	4:34 pm
Mr MOK Kam-kwai, BBS	2:30 pm	4:58 pm
Mr NG Kam-hung	2:30 pm	5:07 pm
Mr PUN Kwok-shan, MH	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr SIU Hin-hong	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr TING Tsz-yuen	2:30 pm	5:07 pm
Mr TONG Hok-leung	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Ms TSANG So-lai	2:37 pm	4:18 pm
Ms TUNG Kin-lei	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr WAI Hing-cheung	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr WONG Fu-sang, Tiger	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr WONG Hok-lai	2:47 pm	5:04 pm
Mr WONG Ka-wing, MH	2:38 pm	5:28 pm
Ms WONG Ping-fan, Iris	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr WONG Yue-hon	2:30 pm	5:28 pm
Mr YAU Man-chun	2:30 pm	4:14 pm
Mr YIP Wing	2:30 pm	4:45 pm
Mr YIU Ka-chun	2:30 pm	4:23 pm
Mr YUNG Ming-chau, Michael	2:30 pm	5:28 pm

Present

Secretary : Mr YUEN Chun-kit, Derek

**Time of joining
the meeting**

**Time of leaving
the meeting**
Senior Executive Officer (District Council) /
Sha Tin District Office

In Attendance

Ms CHAN Yuen-man, Amy, JP
Mr WONG Tin-pui, Simon

Mr Angus Guy PULLINGER

Mr Sean LIN

Ms HO Yuet-ping, Jolie

Ms Rosanna TSE

Mr NG Kok-hung

Mr YUEN Tat-yung, Zorro

Ms CHU Ha-fan, Jessica

Ms YEUNG Min-jing, Anna

Ms HEUNG Ching-yee, Alice

Ms LO Lai-fong, Jackie

Ms LEE Yuk-kit, Glendy

Ms TSANG Mei-ying, May

Ms NG Sheung-han, Alice

Mrs LEE CHEUNG Yat-wai, Gloria

Mr TSAI Yu-sing, Eric

Dr HO Wing-chuen

Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin

Ms CHENG Ka-po, Theresa

Ms CHENG Yuk-kam, Brenda

Title

District Officer / Sha Tin District Office

Assistant District Officer / Sha Tin District
Office

District Commander (Shatin) (Atg) / Hong
Kong Police Force

Police Community Relations Officer (Shatin
District) / Hong Kong Police Force

DI (District Intelligence Section) (Shatin) /
Hong Kong Police Force

District Lands Officer / ST (District Lands
Office, Sha Tin) / Lands Department

Administration Assistant / Lands (District
Lands Office, Sha Tin) / Lands Department

Chief Engineer / New Territories East 3 /
Civil Engineering and Development

Department

District Planning Officer (Sha Tin, Tai Po and
North) / Planning Department

Chief Transport Officer (New Territories East)
/ Transport Department

Chief Leisure Manager (New Territories East) /
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

District Leisure Manager (Shatin) / Leisure and
Cultural Services Department

Senior Librarian (Sha Tin) / Leisure and
Cultural Services Department

Senior Manager (New Territories East)
Promotion / Leisure and Cultural Services
Department

Manager (New Territories East) Marketing &
District Activities / Leisure and Cultural
Services Department

District Social Welfare Officer (Shatin) /
Social Welfare Department

District Environmental Hygiene

Superintendent (Sha Tin) / Food and
Environmental Hygiene Department

Chief School Development Officer (Shatin) /
Education Bureau

Senior Manager (Tai Po, North and Shatin 1) /
Housing Department

Chief Liaison Officer / Sha Tin District Office

Senior Liaison Officer (East) / Sha Tin District
Office

In Attendance

Ms LEUNG Wai-shan, Cecilia

Mr HO Kin-nam, David

Title

Senior Liaison Officer (West) / Sha Tin District Office

Executive Officer I (District Council)1 / Sha Tin District Office

In Attendance by Invitation

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP

Mr CHAN Kin-fung, Simon

Title

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation / Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Assistant Director (Conservation) / Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Absent

Mr CHENG Tsuk-man

Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, BBS, JP

Ms YUE Shin-man

(Application for leave of absence received)

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Action

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives from government departments and organisations to the meeting.

2. The Chairman informed the meeting that some media representatives and members of the public, being present as observers, were taking photographs and making video and audio recordings.

3. The Chairman, on behalf of the Sha Tin District Council (STDC), welcomed: Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, Director of Agriculture and Mr Simon CHAN, Assistant Director (Conservation) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD); Ms Jessica CHU, District Planning Officer (Sha Tin, Tai Po and North) of the Planning Department; Ms Alice HEUNG, Chief Leisure Manager (New Territories East) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD); Mr Zorro YUEN, Chief Engineer (New Territories East 3) of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD); Ms Jolie HO, DI (District Intelligence Section) (Shatin) of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF); Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin, Senior Manager (Tai Po, North and Shatin 1) representing Mr LUK Hing-chuen, Steve, Chief Manager (Management) (Tai Po, North and Shatin) of the Housing Department; Ms Anna YEUNG, Chief Transport Officer (New Territories East) representing Ms KWOK Wai-ying, Candy, Principal Transport Officer (New Territories) of the Transport Department (TD); Ms Glendy LEE, Senior Librarian (Sha Tin), Ms May TSANG, Senior Manager (New Territories East) Promotion and Ms Alice NG, Manager (New Territories East) Marketing & District Activities of the LCSD.

Application for Leave of Absence

4. The Chairman said that the STDC Secretariat (Secretariat) received applications for leave of absence in writing from Members below:

Mr CHENG Tsuk-man

Attendance at an owners' corporation meeting

Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan Out of town
Ms YUE Shin-man Out of town

5. Members unanimously endorsed the applications for leave of absence submitted by Members above.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 November 2016
(STDC Minutes 7/2016)

6. Members confirmed the above minutes unanimously.

Visit of Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Paper No. STDC 1/2017)

7. The Chairman invited Dr LEUNG Siu-fai to give a brief introduction to the work of the AFCD.

8. Dr LEUNG Siu-fai said that it was his pleasure to be here to exchange ideas with Members. He invited Mr Simon CHAN to help introduce the work of the AFCD.

9. Mr Simon CHAN used PowerPoint to give a brief introduction with the following highlights:

- (a) the AFCD was composed of five branches, i.e. the agriculture branch, the conservation branch, the country and marine parks branch, the inspection and quarantine branch and the fisheries branch;
- (b) the agriculture branch was responsible for the provision of basic infrastructure and technical support necessary for the development of modern, efficient and environmentally acceptable farming, the registration of co-operative societies and credit unions as well as the handling of the relevant matters, the regulation and licensing of livestock farms, and the provision of administrative support for the Vegetable Marketing Organisation (VMO);
- (c) the agriculture branch carried out the Local Vegetable Farm Voluntary Registration Scheme to arrange regular technical promotions and seminars and provide soil testing services for farmers to improve soil conditions. In addition, it also launched the Accredited Farm Scheme to promote quality gardening and agricultural techniques. There were currently 276 accredited farms located in Hong Kong, and 36 totalling about 3 000 hectares operated by Hong Kong farmers in Guangdong province and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The vegetables were branded the VMO's "Good Farmer" before being distributed via the VMO to designated accredited vegetable retailers;
- (d) the agriculture branch earnestly promoted organic farming. It provided organic food certification service and held promotional activities through the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC). There were currently 149 farms already certified by the HKORC. It would also recommend quality species fit for local cultivation to farmers and provide them with the necessary techniques and

- support services;
- (e) the AFCD was responsible for managing three loan funds. The total amount loaned to farmers reached \$5.78 million in 2015-16;
 - (f) the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) announced to implement the New Agriculture Policy in the *2016 Policy Address*. Major measures included establishing an agricultural park, exploring the feasibility of designating agricultural priority areas, setting up a \$500 million “Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund”, providing better support and assistance to help farmers move up the value chain in areas such as product marketing and brand building, and developing leisure and educational activities related to agriculture;
 - (g) the “Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund” had invited application since 19 December 2016. As to categorising farmland of higher agricultural value into “agricultural priority areas”, the Government was currently planning to commission consultants to commence a study in 2017 on the feasibility and the benefits of setting up “agricultural priority areas”;
 - (h) in terms of fisheries, the work of the AFCD mainly focused on the planning and implementation of appropriate projects and measures for the conservation and management of fisheries resources, and on the provision of technical and financial support for fishermen to reposition themselves to engage in a sustainable fisheries industry. The AFCD regularly examined the water quality and fish samples of fish farms to minimise the impact of red tides and water quality on the mariculture industry. It also recommended to them improved culture techniques and good management skills;
 - (i) the AFCD started implementing the accredited fish farm scheme in 2005. A total of 117 fish farms, i.e. about 20% of the total area of local fish farms, had been registered as “accredited fish farms”. Since 2008 the AFCD had been conducting fish hatchery trials and, together with fish farmers, studying hatchery and nursery techniques suitable for local cultivation such as culture trials on jade perch (*Scortum barcoo*);
 - (j) the Government had imposed a trawling ban in Hong Kong waters, so that the seabed and marine resources could rehabilitate expeditiously. To preserve and increase marine resources in Hong Kong waters, the AFCD had combated destructive fishing practices, deployed artificial reefs and released fish fry and juvenile fish suitable for the local waters;
 - (k) the five fisheries loan funds managed by the AFCD were to propel a sustainable fisheries industry, develop or advance the mariculture industry into more eco-friendly practices and proposes. The AFCD held free courses during the fishing moratorium in the South China Sea and the Chinese New Year to provide fishermen with training in fisheries operations and switching to related industries;

- (l) the Government set up a Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund of \$500 million to help the fisheries industry develop into or switch to sustainable or high value-added operations so that the trade could enhance its overall competitiveness;
- (m) the Fish Marketing Organisation of the AFCD helped to promote local fisheries products made of the catch by fishermen or produced by fish farms. A website, a Facebook page and recipes had been made available to introduce these quality products in season. Online shopping was also provided via a mobile app called “Local Fresh” and a website in partnership with other organisations;
- (n) on inspection and quarantine, the AFCD investigated and controlled outbreaks of animal diseases, conducted livestock farm inspections and regulated the registration and sale of pesticides;
- (o) the AFCD carried out a series of prevention measures against avian influenza, including monitoring wild birds, collecting dead birds for testing for avian influenza virus, prohibiting backyard poultry, imposing biosecurity measures on local poultry farms, and increasingly combating the illegal import of birds and other animals;
- (p) on animal management, the AFCD issued dog licences, microchipped dogs, vaccinated them against rabies, quarantined imported cats and dogs, and checked detained dogs that had bitten for rabies to prevent and monitor the disease. The AFCD encouraged people to adopt abandoned or surrendered animals via its partnering animal welfare organisations, and organised promotional activities to call on people not to feed stray cats and dogs and spread a message of “don’t abandon your pet”;
- (q) to better safeguard public health and animal welfare, the Government had amended the *Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Animal Traders) Regulations* (Cap 139B). The diagnostic support services offered by Tai Lung Veterinary Laboratory of the AFCD included diagnostic and inspection services for food animals (e.g. local or imported pigs) in local farms and slaughterhouses. Besides, the Laboratory also tested pre-slaughter food animals for illegal chemical residues (such as beta-agonists, chloramphenicol, synthetic hormone, etc.);
- (r) on plant quarantine, the AFCD was responsible for controlling the import of plants, plant pests and soil to prevent the introduction and the spread of plant pests from wrecking local agriculture. It was also in charge of regulating household pesticides, agricultural pesticides and environmental hygiene pesticides, registering pesticides and issuing licences to regulate pesticide trade;
- (s) as for country and marine parks, the AFCD designated and managed 24 country parks, 22 special areas, 5 marine parks and 1 marine reserve. Regarding the management of country parks, the AFCD was responsible for planning for all kinds of construction works related to country parks; breeding seedlings and

planting trees extensively; preventing and extinguishing hill fires; managing, installing and repairing various facilities in parks (e.g. barbecue sites, picnic sites, maps, signs, pavilions, viewing platforms, etc.); and providing hiking trails for tourists;

- (t) in terms of maintaining country parks, the AFCD took care of the patrolling duties, provided the relevant information and visitor services, and promoted messages of nature conservation and preservation (e.g. the educational activity called “Take Your Litter Home” in 2016) in order to develop a responsible attitude towards the environment;
- (u) about the management of marine parks, the AFCD was responsible for patrolling, taking enforcement action, educating the public, managing the facilities within the parks, maintaining the parks’ cleanliness, etc. To achieve marine conservation, the AFCD conducted ecological assessments, protected conserved marine mammals (such as Chinese white dolphins) and organised ecological tours and seminars for the general public to participate in;
- (v) Hong Kong Geopark of the AFCD was accepted as a member of the Global Geoparks Network in 2011, and was renamed “Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark” in 2015 after its eligibility was renewed. There were eight GeoSites in total covering an area of approximately 50 km². The AFCD had planned nine land routes and two sea routes for geo tours so as to highlight the characteristics of different sites and promote the tours; and
- (w) on nature conservation, conserving wildlife and habitats was one of the AFCD’s crucial tasks. The AFCD gave opinions on nature conservation regarding work such as development proposals, planning strategies and environmental impact assessments so as to protect important local flora, fauna and natural habitats. A number of measures had also been introduced based on the principle of biodiversity, e.g. the studies and implementation of species conservation plans to conserve essential species. Besides, ecological surveys had been conducted to record and update the status of biodiversity resources in order to ensure the opinions given on conservation and the conservative measures carried out were based on the latest scientific data. On the protection of wetlands, the AFCD was in charge of managing the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site. About 70 000 migratory birds spent their winter every year at the Ramsar Site, a wetland of global significance. On the other hand, Hong Kong Wetland Park was a world-class ecotourism attraction under the AFCD’s management. The work included daily operation, educational promotion, maintenance of exhibits and ecological management. Also, the AFCD regulated the global trade of endangered species of fauna and flora in accordance with the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* so as to protect these species.

10. The Chairman thanked Mr Simon CHAN for introducing the work of the AFCD, and invited Members to express their views.

11. The views of the Vice-Chairman were summarised below:
- (a) the problems brought by *Mikania micrantha* and the frequent appearance of wild boars and wild monkeys in urban areas had not improved, causing nuisances and danger to residents and other animals. The AFCD should take remedial action; and
 - (b) he pointed out that some pet shops used inhuman methods to mate pets, and he asked if the AFCD would regulate pet shops. Besides, there were quite a lot of restrictions on bringing pets into and out of the mainland. A dog taken to Shenzhen then back to Hong Kong would have to be quarantined for a long period of time. He asked if the AFCD would review and improve such a system.
12. The views of Mr CHING Cheung-ying were summarised below:
- (a) though imported food was inspected by the AFCD, there had often been incidents where unethical businessmen medicated their farmed seafood. He requested the AFCD to conduct inspection more stringently; and
 - (b) the Sha Tin District had always been vexed by the problems of wild monkeys. It was not ideal that Kam Shan Country Park and Sun Tin Wai Estate had become a playground for monkeys. The same went for wild boars. Scores of wild boars frequented Hin Keng Estate Car Park. He asked if the AFCD could take the initiative to handle the problem, and he proposed to properly relocate the animals to suitable places.
13. The views of Mr SIU Hin-hong were summarised below:
- (a) he pointed out that it was probably due to changes in the biophysical environment of country parks in recent years that monkeys, wild pigeons, wild boars, etc. which had been bothering Sha Tin residents could not forage and inhabit in the wild. It was proposed that AFCD consider providing permanent habitats for them in the country parks;;
 - (b) in terms of agriculture, he asked the AFCD how it verified that the vegetables were organic;
 - (c) he said he had repeatedly dealt with complaint cases of illegal felling. Though there was video evidence showing the felling in progress, the AFCD left it unsettled. In dealing with the problem of illegal felling, was the AFCD entitled to prosecute and indict? If yes, please provide the number of persons successfully prosecuted over the past year; and
 - (d) he lauded the AFCD for their work on conserving the country parks, and suggested that more promotion of the country parks be done, Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park be opened to the public for snorkeling and sightseeing, and country parks be improved for special activities for the public such as paragliding and

flying fields for model airplanes.

14. The views of Mr Alvin LEE were summarised below:

- (a) he was concerned about the safety issues of country parks. The AFCD should deploy more resources for repairing and maintaining railings and stone steps, in particular the hiking trails from Ma On Shan to Sai Kung. The AFCD should more often gather opinions from avid hikers when considering adding railings and stone steps;

[Post-meeting note: Currently there were only two hiking trails from Ma On Shan (barbecue sites) to Sai Kung (to Tai Shui Tseng and Wong Chuk Yeung respectively) mended and paved by the AFCD. Both trails were in good condition and the AFCD would keep an eye on them and, subject to the circumstances, consider the need to add and extend railings. The remaining trails created by members of the public might not be safe enough to use. It was suggested that members of the public follow the AFCD's notices and use the trails mended and paved by the Department.]

- (b) some hiking trails were cordoned off after a series of downpours last year. Some hikers said that a section at Sai Wan Pavilion, Sai Kung had yet to be reopened. It was hoped that the AFCD would restore and reopen these landslide-affected trails before the rainy season;

[Post-meeting note: The section near Sai Wan Pavilion was reopened to the public around August or September last year.]

- (c) some members of the public said that there was no telecommunications signal at Section 2 of MacLehose Trail. He opined that it was necessary for the AFCD to follow up on this with the telecommunications service provider, and he hoped that a progress schedule would be provided; and
- (d) he asked if permanent lavatories could be provided at popular sections for hiking and camping for the convenience of people visiting country parks.

15. The views of Mr MOK Kam-kwai were summarised below:

- (a) before country parks sprang into being in Hong Kong, indigenous villagers or citizens already built graves on the hills. Heung Yee Kuk had discussed matters concerning indigenous villages and burial grounds located in country parks with a view to exempting them from the regulations of *the Country Parks Ordinance*. When clearing up the graves, some people had no other choice but to fell the wild plants or trees growing on top of the graves whereas they did not know it was illegal to do so and there was no channel to submit an application. He hoped that the AFCD would figure out how to solve this problem; and
- (b) the rights to village houses permitted the construction of 3-storey village houses, but many people only built 2-storey ones in country parks in the past. The AFCD forbade them to renovate or rebuild the houses into 3-storey ones because

such action would change the status quo. He asked how the AFCD would solve this problem.

16. The views of Mr YAU Man-chun were summarised below:

- (a) a hill fire had broken out in the vicinity of Shui Chuen O Estate recently. He hoped that the AFCD would turn the charred hills into a greened area and replant trees there;
- (b) lately a number of tiny lotus-shaped white lights had been discovered along the hiking trail from Shui Chuen Au to Shatin Pass Road. He hoped that the AFCD would tell him after the meeting which department provided them;

[Post-meeting note: To the AFCD's knowledge, the devices had not been authorised and the AFCD had removed several of them.]

- (c) he had learnt that new hiking trails would be developed near Shui Chuen Au, and he hoped that the AFCD would provide the relevant information after the meeting; and
- (d) the Chief Executive mentioned in the *Policy Address* that he would avidly consider utilising country parks for housing development. This seemed to go against the work of AFCD. He asked what Director of Agriculture thought about this.

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

- (a) the problems posed by wild monkeys were also severe in his district area. The monkeys often intruded into people's residences and looted food at convenience stores. It seemed that the AFCD could only catch them when they showed up. He asked if there were more effective ways to solve the problems apart from neutering and catching them;
- (b) wartime relics and ancient monuments had been discovered in many locations in country parks. For instance, a pillbox had been discovered in Wong Nai Chung. However, recently it had been found that the Water Supplies Department was building pipes at the pillbox location, but no notice was posted to tell the public that the site was indeed a wartime pillbox. He asked the AFCD how they managed and conserved heritage; and

[Post-meeting note: The AFCD had set up two war relics trails in the country parks of Shing Mun, Lion Rock and Ma On Shan. Interpretation panels were installed along the trails to introduce the wartime ruins, the information of which was also uploaded to the AFCD's website for the public's convenience. The AFCD regularly inspected the interpretation panels and removed the weeds and garbage.]

- (c) the number of hikers was growing nowadays, but some hikers lacked environmental awareness, e.g. many littered at Sunset Peak. He asked if the AFCD could step up inspection and prosecution.

18. The views of Ms LAM Chung-yan were summarised below:

- (a) the ever-growing number of wild animals caused a public nuisance. Some people in society deliberately emphasised whether co-existence with the wild animals was the right thing to do, but she opined that the focus should be on how the wild animals should be managed instead; and
- (b) previously she expressed her views to the Sha Tin District Office (STDO) and the AFCD, and asked if the wild animals could be relocated to an appropriate site, such as a wildlife country park, so that they would return to nature. Besides, she asked if the AFCD had educated the public on the proper knowledge, e.g. what treatment would benefit the animals most. She was concerned about how to help them return to nature, and hoped that the AFCD would do a good job at education so that the public would understand the meaning of ecological balance.

19. The views of Mr NG Kam-hung were summarised below:

- (a) wild animals had posed a problem mainly because people had been feeding them. He opined that the problem would be solved if the relevant departments worked together;
- (b) another reason for the problem was that the animals' habitats (e.g. country parks) had been reducing in size. The *Policy Address* mentioned that country parks of low ecological value would be developed for other uses. He asked the Director about his views and what criteria the AFCD adopted to measure the ecological value of country parks. He also asked whether To Kwa Peng, Hoi Ha, Sham Chung and Tai Long Sai Wan in Sai Kung, as well as Lai Chi Wo, So Lo Pun, Fung Yuen and the ruins in Global Geopark in the New Territories North East were of high or low ecological values; and
- (c) the AFCD mentioned that Hong Kong Geopark remained to be Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark after passing the assessment in 2015. He asked if the AFCD had been managing the geopark properly. For instance, transportation at High Island Reservoir and Long Ke was very difficult. It took a lot of time and money to travel from those places back to the town centre of Sai Kung during public holidays. He suggested adding a mini-bus stop at Sai Wan and asked the AFCD to reply in writing to his petition letter submitted before the meeting.

20. The views of Mr TONG Hok-leung were summarised below:

- (a) Mei Tin Estate and Tai Wai New Village were often plagued by wild monkeys that caused hygiene problems by breaking into residential areas to plunder food and foraging for food in the rubbish bins on the streets. No obvious improvement was made after the AFCD had received complaints. Although he was not a fan of culling animals, such disturbance could not be neglected; and

- (b) though the AFCD claimed that the wild monkeys had been neutered, there were still plenty of them. Questioning if the neutering was not effective enough, he asked if there were other feasible solutions, such as relocating the wild monkeys to other places.

21. Mr Tiger WONG said that the nuisances caused by wild monkeys had already spread to Siu Lek Yuen, Wong Nai Tau, Tai Che Village, etc. Their quantity had surged to more than twenty, compared with a few in the past. He asked the AFCD to figure out an effective solution, otherwise the problem would spread to Ma On Shan.

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

- (a) some members of the public fishing at both banks of Shing Mun River might injure passers-by when they wielded their fishing rods, and the selling of their catch might pose a hazard to people's health. He asked if there was any regulation to govern fishing so as to safeguard members of the public;
- (b) he asked the AFCD if the effectiveness was evaluated after the wild monkeys had been neutered. Regarding members of the public who fed them illegally, he asked if the AFCD had ever made any arrest or taken other action. If yes, he asked the AFCD to provide the relevant information;
- (c) a number of migratory birds visited Shing Mun River for food and rested on the neighbouring trees in the winter, causing nuisances to the residents. He was entrusted by the residents of Man Lai Court in particular to relay the message to the department concerned so that the problem would be followed up on. He asked the AFCD if there was any method it could teach the affected residents to solve the problem without hurting the birds. Besides, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) previously promised to step up cleaning work in the vicinity of Man Lai Court, but the residents said there was no apparent effectiveness. He hoped that the FEHD would actively follow up; and
- (d) there were quite a number of wild dogs on the hills which might pose a threat to hikers. He asked the AFCD to follow up.

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

- (a) Sha Tin was surrounded by mountains and the residents used to be on good terms with wild animals which had begun to cause nuisances to the residents lately. He agreed that animals had their rights too and should not be culled. Instead, they should be released back to nature;
- (b) Lung Hang Estate was affected by different wild animals, especially wild boars lately which had destroyed the graves of indigenous villagers and caused hygiene problems. He hoped the AFCD would handle it. The problem of wild animals stemmed from feeding them. He asked if the AFCD could strengthen

prosecution against illegal feeding of wild animals. Neutering them was also an effective method;

- (c) besides, he opined that the AFCD might consider relocating the animals to other places phase by phase. He suggested setting up an interdepartmental advisory group and inviting stakeholders to join it so as to discuss how to solve the problem; and
- (d) members of the public who visited country parks would comment on the facilities. For instance, some of them suggested providing washrooms in country parks and rain shelters at Section No. 4100 in Hung Mui Kuk. He hoped the AFCD would consider these suggestions.

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

- (a) the numbers of people and wild animals in Sha Tin had both increased, and the living space of the latter had as a result decreased. It was necessary for the Government to consider how to achieve the co-existence of mankind with wild animals when communities were developed and cities planned;
- (b) scores of wild animals inhabited Tai Wai, but she opined that the AFCD adopted a rather passive attitude towards educating residents in the district. She suggested that the AFCD take the initiative to educate students at school in the district that they should never try to touch wild animals if they ran into them. Besides, she opined that it was necessary for the AFCD to review the existing regulations to enhance governance over illegal feeding of wild animals;
- (c) regarding the scheme of neutering wild monkeys, though the official statistics had shown a decline in the number of wild monkeys, we all saw there were still many of them and young ones which had caused nuisances to the community. She asked why there was still no improvement if the neutering scheme was successful;
- (d) a hill fire had taken place in Fo Tan recently and she asked how the AFCD would restore the biophysical environment. In addition, the Mikania problem on the hiking trails still persisted; and
- (e) the number of people fond of camping had grown, but they found there was not sufficient camping space only after they had arrived on site. She hoped the AFCD would manage the camp sites properly.

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

- (a) he had been following up on the issues concerning the shingle beach in Wu Kai Sha, and was grateful to various departments for their follow-up efforts. The AFCD implemented a series of fisheries management measures to ban trawling, but the shingle beach in Wu Kai Sha was not a fishing ban area and there were some people fishing nearby. Members of the public were concerned if the biophysical environment would be affected. He hoped the AFCD would follow up; and

- (b) regarding marine parks, the biophysical environment would be affected if some natural shorelines were destroyed. He asked if the AFCD would mend the shorelines and prosecute the culprits. He also asked whether there was any regulation for that, and if there was, which department was responsible. He objected to the Government's attempt to utilise country parks for other development uses at the expense of the biophysical environment.

26. The views of Mr CHAN Nok-hang were summarised below:

- (a) previously there were reports saying that pork tainted with asthma drugs was released to the market for sale because the AFCD did not send the test results to the slaughterhouse on time. He asked the AFCD how long it would take to send a test result and if any improvement had been made to prevent similar incidents from happening again; and
- (b) some chicken farmers injected chickens with antibiotics which would have adverse effects on people's health once they partook of the meat. To his knowledge, the AFCD would grant an antibiotics permit to chicken farmers, but the permitted dosage was rather high. He asked if the AFCD could conduct a review in this regard so that members of the public could rest assured.

27. The views of Mr MAK Yun-pui were summarised below:

- (a) hiking trails were gaining popularity and many people would even use those not made by the Government. For instance, a trail near Lee On Estate and Monte Vista in Ma On Shan leading to a park was originally not a hiking trail but a path formed by hikers themselves. These hiking trails were easily blocked by landslides. It would be difficult to rescue hikers on these trails in case of accidents. He hoped the AFCD would follow up;

[Post-meeting note: There was a trail outside of Ma On Shan Country Park between Lee On Estate and Monte Vista not mended and managed by the AFCD. The AFCD suggested that members of the public use hiking trails provided by the department and avoid using those formed by themselves to prevent danger and minimise repercussions done to nature.]

- (b) illegal loggers would bring sharp instruments to log valuable plants, such as incense trees, along hiking trails formed by hikers themselves. If the AFCD did not step up inspection, a multitude of trees and plants would be logged, causing danger to hikers. He had repeatedly notified the AFCD of this problem but nothing had improved; and
- (c) regarding control over endangered species, scores of people purchased and sold endangered animals online, e.g. Radiated Tortoises, Cuora Trifasciata, etc. According to regulations, only with licences issued by the AFCD could these animals be sold. He asked if the AFCD had reinforced online supervision and if it would encourage members of the public to report illegal online trade in endangered species by offering prize money.

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

- (a) the Chief Executive recently mentioned in the *Policy Address* that country parks would be used to develop other projects, causing members of the public to worry. To his knowledge, CEDD was considering plans to develop public housing estates next to Ma On Shan Country Park, and he believed the AFCD was aware of this project. Residents of Ma On Shan Tsuen were extremely worried. He asked if the AFCD would be able to defend the country park. He doubted if land supply was really in such a critical state that there was no other solution but to use country parks. He hoped the AFCD would safeguard the backyard of Hong Kong and would not readily give away country parks; and
- (b) regarding *Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Trading and Breeding) Regulations (Cap 139B)* which was legislated before deliberation, organisations of animal rights wished to know whether the Government would continue to handle the problem of home breeding which had long been their concern. If home breeding was illegal, they wondered how members of the public should deal with their pets breeding on their own at home. However, if the regulation was too loose, he wondered if some people might profit from home breeding. He asked if the AFCD would promise to tighten the regulation so that no one could profit from home breeding.

29. Mr Billy CHAN asked how the AFCD, the main department responsible for conserving country parks, would respond if the Government classified the value of some country parks as not high. He opined that there were still many plots of land available for development use and hoped that the AFCD would defend the rights of the public to enjoy country parks.

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

- (a) the AFCD mentioned during their presentation a few precaution measures against avian flu, including prohibiting backyard poultry, but there was no regulation to prohibit feeding wild pigeons. In dealing with complaints about nuisances caused by stray animals, the AFCD only mentioned cats and dogs and said nothing about wild monkeys and wild boars which had the biggest impact on Sha Tin. He suggested that the AFCD consider enacting a law, applicable not only to country parks, against feeding wild animals in particular aggressive animals and those affecting environmental hygiene. Besides, the AFCD should consider relocating the animals affecting members of the public to other places; and
- (b) some animal protection organisations regarded monitoring wild animals as culling. He hoped that the AFCD or the HKPF would step up education so that the public would understand the impact made by wild animals to humans. It was the AFCD's duty to publicise that the department's monitoring of wild animals did not equal culling. He hoped the AFCD would do their best to safeguard people's lives and property.

31. The views of the Chairman were summarised below:

- (a) he said that he raised the issue about wild animals affecting residents in the district a long time ago. The problem still persisted today and was even spreading. The reaction of the residents was also escalating. He appreciated the efforts made by the AFCD in response to complaints about nuisances caused by wild animals. Unfortunately, their hard work was in vain and anything but pro-active. Now that the problem had persisted for quite a long time, it was necessary for the AFCD to identify some innovative or groundbreaking strategies to deal with it;
- (b) previously he also suggested relocating the animals to other places. In fact, the AFCD had experience of relocating animals, e.g. cattle were once relocated when the development of Lautau Island commenced. He asked if the AFCD would consider moving wild monkeys or wild boars. He learnt at another meeting that a theme park would be erected at Lautau Island. He instantly suggested if those wild monkeys and wild boars could be relocated there. He understood that these suggestions would not be realised overnight, but they were worth a thought; and
- (c) he asked the AFCD to improve the barbecue facilities at country parks, such as providing more washrooms. The barbecue site in Ma On Shan was adjacent to driveways, but installing too much pedestrian lighting would jeopardise the biophysical environment. It would be necessary for the AFCD to take these factors into consideration and do their best to improve existing facilities while planning in order to sustain the the biophysical environment and make things user-friendly for the public.

32. Dr LEUNG Siu-fai thanked the Chairman and Members for their opinions and questions. He understood that Members were concerned about the management of wild animals, long-term development of country parks, ancillary facilities of transportation, regulation of pet breeding, certification of organic produce, seafood safety, conservation of natural shorelines, illegal logging of trees, etc. He first asked Mr Simon CHAN to respond to the problems of wild animals and provide information.

33. Mr Simon CHAN gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) he thanked the Chairman and Members for their opinions about the management of wild animals. The AFCD had taken note of the nuisances caused by wild animals (e.g. wild boars and wild monkeys) in the Sha Tin District and the growing number of complaints in this regard. The AFCD opined that wild animals gathered together because they were fed and were able to find food in the trash. These factors hence reinforced their reproductivity and lowered their guard against humans. Despite this, there had been very few cases about human injuries caused by wild boars' attacks;

- (b) the AFCD used different methods to deal with the problems of wild animals. There was a team in the Sha Tin District specialising in handling wild boars and wild monkeys, so that hopefully they were able to handle nuisances caused by wild animals immediately. The AFCD had been working hard on promoting a much needed concerted effort among the public, estate management companies and relevant government departments to solve the problems, especially the one of feeding wild animals;
- (c) the AFCD had taken various measures to control the number of wild animals. Regarding wild boars, there were two wild pig hunting teams which took action after receiving reports about crops ruined or public safety threatened by wild boars. The AFCD was also piloting an anaesthesia and relocation programme which was to set free anaesthetised wild boars in remote areas. Previously, the AFCD took a relatively large-scale action in Kak Tin Village to set free eight anaesthetised wild boars in remote country parks. The AFCD had been keeping track of their whereabouts for research purposes. On the other hand, due to high reproductivity of wild boars, the AFCD was considering a pilot programme, similar to that for wild monkeys, for neutering wild boars to control their quantity; and
- (d) the birth rate of wild monkeys had dropped dramatically since the implementation of the neutering programme for monkeys. Since 2009, their birth rate had dropped from 60% to the current rate of 30%, i.e. from some 2 300 to some 1 800. Not all monkeys were neutered under the programme, so infant monkeys could still be spotted on the streets. The AFCD had also assessed whether the monkeys should be relocated to other places. For instance, if they were to be relocated to deserted islands, it was necessary to ensure the environment would satisfy their survival needs and to assess whether the relocation would affect the biophysical environment. A thorough study had hence concluded that there was no place in Hong Kong suitable for large-scale relocation of monkeys. The existing control measures were effective. The complaints about nuisances were due to the feeding of wild animals which lured them to the urban areas. In this connection, the AFCD was planning a large-scale publicity campaign to educate the public not to feed wild animals. Several years ago, the AFCD already began to grow plants and trees on the hills which would provide food for monkeys and result in discouraging them to forage for food in the urban areas. The AFCD took issues about wild animals seriously and would later implement a series of measures and pilot programmes. He asked for Members' patience for now.

34. Dr LEUNG Siu-fai gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) regarding wild animals, he added that the AFCD had carried out a series of promotional and educational measures. Feeding wild animals was a main reason for drawing them to urban areas. The AFCD would step up promotion and education so that members of the public would understand feeding them would have an impact on their habits and cause nuisances to people. The AFCD was also studying if it would be feasible to release some information on action tackling nuisances caused by wild animals, so that everyone would be

updated. On the other hand, the AFCD had a team responsible for handling this kind of nuisances in the Sha Tin District. It was hoped that resources and manpower in this regard would be boosted to improve the work. Some members asked if legislation could be introduced to ban feeding of wildlife. The AFCD kept an eye on the situation and would review if it was necessary to adopt more radical measures. For the time being, promotion and education were the foremost things to do;

- (b) apart from wild monkeys and wild boars, feeding of wild pigeons was also mentioned. People messing up places due to feeding of wild pigeons would be prosecuted for littering. The AFCD and the FEHD took regular joint action, such as distributing flyers and advising people not to feed wild birds. The AFCD had also provided members of the public and the industry with unharmed methods which would help disperse them. Members interested in obtaining the information could contact the AFCD;
- (c) regarding the ancillary facilities of country parks and Hong Kong Geopark, members had brought up issues about the facilities of washrooms and trash bins, barbecue lighting system, repairs to hiking trails, maintenance, communications, etc. The AFCD would inform the country parks team of the mentioned locations after the meeting and let them handle the issues separately. In general, the hiking trails were regularly maintained, but the maintenance might not be carried out on time due to the vast area. Nevertheless, damaged hiking trails jeopardising hikers would be taken care of expeditiously. As for the provision of washrooms, mobile washrooms could be swiftly arranged for locations near driveways. Otherwise, it would be rather difficult to set up washrooms at locations inaccessible to cars. The AFCD would do its best to set up dry closets. As for locations near urban areas or accessible to cars, Members might voice their opinions for the AFCD's consideration. The AFCD would also follow up on the rain shelter mentioned by Members;

[Post-meeting note: About the transportation facilities of Hong Kong Geopark, members of the public and tourists might get to East Dam on foot or by taxi, or they might join guide tours to visit the dam as well as other geological scenic spots. The AFCD often discussed with the Sai Kung District Office and the TD transportation to and from High Island Reservoir East Dam for the convenience of members of the public and tourists.]

- (d) about utilising country parks for other development uses, the *Policy Address* mentioned that the Government would endeavour to include places of high ecological value into the scope of country parks so as to enhance recreational and educational uses. The AFCD would keep improving the work. The AFCD had recently formulated a biodiversity strategy and action plan in order to enhance the conservation of species and habitats in country parks. The *Policy Address* also mentioned that consideration should be taken to develop the periphery of country parks of relatively low ecological value for non-real estate uses. He understood that the Chief Executive's purpose of bringing out this idea in the *Policy Address* was to initiate thoughts and discussion in society. In fact, the Government still had not come up with a concrete proposal. Country

parks were regulated by the *Country Parks Ordinance*. Development proposals concerning country parks were all subject to the procedures stipulated in the Ordinance, whether it was in the past or in the future. The procedures included an adequate period of time for the public to voice their opinions;

- (e) regarding certification of organic produce, the AFCD set up the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre with the Hong Kong Baptist University a decade ago to provide certification services. Hence, organic products on the market could be certified. Members of the public could familiarise themselves with the organic labels on the website. There were also imported organic products which came from different countries with different certifying organisations and different labels. The relevant information had been uploaded to the Centre's website for the public's easy reference. Since organic goods were currently not statutorily required to be certified before being put on the market, he suggested that the public choose certified products or buy from shops with a good reputation;
- (f) local pet shops were required to apply for a licence issued by the AFCD. The licence would stipulate requirements regulating the pet shops, such as the in-store environment provided for the pets. The AFCD would also conduct inspection regularly. If shops were found to have violated the licensing conditions or regulations, enforcement action would be taken. Recently, regulations of the Animal Trader Licence had been passed to govern breeding of dogs for trade purpose. There was a set of considerably strict requirements under the licence and the AFCD would inspect the licensed premises, so that the people who were concerned about this issue might rest assured. As for the inspection of imported and exported pets, dogs brought from the mainland back to Hong Kong, according to international requirements, were required to be quarantined for a long period of time. For dogs that did not travel from rabies-affected areas, their quarantine period could be relatively shorter. However, since rabies cases were often spotted in the mainland, there was not much room for relaxing the regulations. Having said that, the AFCD was currently studying the possibility of shortening the quarantine period under some special circumstances;
- (g) the issues about seafood safety were mainly under the purview of the FEHD. To his knowledge, the FEHD carried out spot checks at the wholesale and retail level. Further information could be obtained from the FEHD;
- (h) some members quoted Wu Kai Sha as an example for conservation of natural shorelines. He stated that locations within the marine parks or marine reserve areas were governed by regulations. Those outside of the reserve areas were under no regulation for the AFCD to abide by, but the AFCD would provide professional opinions and advice;
- (i) the AFCD and the HKPF were very concerned about the problem of logging. Last year, the AFCD carefully reviewed the problem of incense trees being logged and formulated new measures to combat illegal logging. The measures had been submitted to the Legislative Council (LegCo), and the relevant papers were available via the AFCD or on the LegCo's website. Simply put, the

AFCD had reinforced connection with local organisations and residents apart from conducting inspection and taking enforcement action with the HKPF, so as to acquire more information to facilitate effective combat action;

- (j) the felling of trees on burial grounds in country parks involved three government departments, i.e. the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the District Lands Office (DLO) and the AFCD. The DLO would consult the AFCD in advance if trees had to be felled due to the maintenance of graves. In general circumstances, if the felling of trees would not affect the biophysical environment or the trees were not a rare species, the AFCD would provide the DLO with technical advice for it to inform the applicant(s) of the decision. If the trees involved were a rare species, the AFCD would not recommend felling them;
- (k) for villagers residing in traditional villages located in country parks who wished to build or repair small houses, they were required to submit an application according to the established procedure. In general, small house applications were submitted to the DLO. For applications involving ecological issues or locations within country parks, the DLO would consult the AFCD which would evaluate the applications and consider such things as the number of trees to be felled and the ecological impact. If no serious harm would be done to the biophysical environment of country parks, the AFCD would not object. Even if the biophysical environment would be affected, the AFCD would not necessarily object, but might suggest that the location be adjusted and then it would conduct another evaluation; and
- (l) in case of hill fires within country parks, the AFCD would carry out restoration by implementing a tree planting scheme. However, after a hill fire, the restoration would have to wait till the soil resumed to its normal state. The AFCD was now planting more local species which would thrive more easily and be more beneficial to the biophysical environment.

[Post-meeting note: The AFCD had planned to plant trees in Shui Chuen O in Ma On Shan Country Park where a hill fire had taken place, so as to restore the country park and prevent soil erosion.]

35. The Chairman pointed out that the AFCD understood that the nuisances caused by wild animals originated from continuing feeding by members of the public, but the AFCD seemed hesitant when dealing with this issue. On behalf of the STDC, he urged the AFCD to be decisive and take enforcement action in accordance with the regulations instead of merely resorting to promotional and educational approaches. He thanked Director of Agriculture and Assistant Director (Conservation) again for diligently responding to Members' opinions and questions. He asked them to reply in writing to unanswered questions.

Discussion Items

The Sha Tin District Council (STDC) to Serve as Event Supporter
(Paper No. STDC 2/2017)

36. STDC unanimously endorsed that the STDC would serve as Event Supporter of the “1st Hong Kong Youth Community Sports Festival” organised by the Hongkong Federation of Youth Groups (HFYG), and that the HFYG would be permitted to use the STDC’s logo on its publicity materials. Besides, the STDC noted that the HAD and the Information Services Department would display the STDC’s logo on the lamppost buntings in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR shown in the Sha Tin District.

Establishment of a Tentative Ceiling for the STDC Expenditure Heads and Estimates in the Financial Year 2017-2018

(Paper No. STDC 3/2017)

37. The Chairman said that the Finance and General Affairs Committee (FGAC) passed and recommended on 17 January 2017 the existing 11 expenditure heads, the proposal for the financial/accounting systems for the reserves and the tentative ceiling for the estimates of the 11 expenditure heads for the STDC’s consideration.

38. The Chairman added that, according to the *2017 Policy Address*, an additional \$100 million would be provided for the Community Involvement Programme. However, the actual amount granted to the STDC in the financial year 2017-2018 had yet to be confirmed. If the tentative ceiling had to wait till after the actual amount was confirmed in order to be mapped out at the STDC meeting on 23 March 2017, the progress of drawing up the estimates for the financial year 2017-2018 would be affected, and consequently the Community Involvement Programme would not be able to commence on time on 1 April 2017. After the granted amount to the STDC for the financial year 2017-2018 was finalised by the HAD, the proposed revised estimates would be submitted to the STDC via the FGAC.

39. Mr CHING Cheung-ying said that he did not object to the paper above, but opined that even though the tentative ceiling of Expenditure Heads 1 and 6 reserved for the Community Involvement Programme organised by the LCSD had constituted 1/3 or above of the total tentative ceiling for the relevant expenditure heads, the LCSD had not provided the relevant expenditure details to the STDC. He opined that it was necessary for the STDC to strengthen the monitoring of the expenditure. Besides, he stated that despite the burgeoning development of local organisations in recent years, the amount reserved for organising national education activities was over \$200,000, whereas that reserved for local organisations to apply for organising the Community Involvement Programme was merely some \$800,000. He opined that there was room for reviewing the allocated proportions.

40. The Chairman understood Mr CHING Cheung-ying’s concern, and opined that it was necessary to strengthen the monitoring of the expenditure spent by the LCSD on organising the Community Involvement Programme.

41. Ms Jackie LO, District Leisure Manager (Shatin) of the LCSD responded that the LCSD had always valued Members’ comments on its Community Involvement Programme. In response to Members’ suggestions, orienteering activities in large-scale parks and family day in large-scale housing estates had been planned for the coming year. Besides, to make good use of resources and ensure diverse activities, the LCSD used the types of activities held in nearby organisations as a reference while planning activities for Yuen Chau Kok Sports Centre. In the future, the LCSD would continue to keep in touch with Members and improve the Community Involvement Programme.

42. Ms Amy CHAN, District Officer of the STDO added that the LCSO almost fully spent the funding granted to the STDO every year. The LCSO might consider reporting to STDC regularly on the expenditure progress of the Community Involvement Programme. Since activities began and ended at different periods, the status of LCSO's expenditure might vary accordingly. Besides, regarding the funding granted by the STDC for launching national education activities, the format and content should be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure the funding catered for the needs of target groups. After the HAD had noted the finalised funding amount granted by the STDC for the financial year 2017-2018, the proposed revised estimates would be submitted to the STDC via the FGAC.

43. The Council unanimously endorsed the above paper.

Funding Application

Funding Application for Employment of Contract Staff by the STDC Secretariat (Paper No. STDC 4/2017)

44. The Chairman said that the FGAC had endorsed the funding application on 17 January 2017 and recommended it to the STDC for its consideration.

45. Mr Michael YUNG said that although the functions of the STDC had grown in recent years, the civil service grade of the Secretariat had not increased its manpower noticeably. He expected an increase to support the operation of the STDC, such as the handling of Members' applications for operation expenses reimbursement. Also, he opined that the number of staff in the civil service grade of the STDC Secretariat was relatively small compared with those in other districts.

46. Mr WONG Yue-hon said that the turnover of contract staff at the Secretariat was high. He wished to know the numbers of contract staff and civil servants at other districts' secretariats.

47. Ms Amy CHAN said in response that the Secretariat was composed of civil servants and contract staff. The STDC was permitted to use not more than 15% of its funding to employ contract staff to carry out duties of the STDC for the whole year. In other words, the more funding was granted to the STDC, the more contract staff could be employed. As for the handling of Members' applications for operation expenses reimbursement, the Secretariat would review the work flow.

48. Mr Wilson LI said that apart from the manpower at the Secretariat, he was also concerned about the manpower of the government departments in the Sha Tin District which served members of the public directly. He favoured an increase in manpower in those departments to support their service provided for the public. He wished to know the current manpower status of those departments.

49. The Chairman said that he understood Member's concerns above, and asked the STDO and the Secretariat to follow up on their opinions. He would also relay the problem of manpower arrangements for the Secretariat to the relevant government department(s) on suitable occasions.

50. The Council unanimously endorsed the funding application.

Information Items

Reports of Committees under the STDC

District Facilities Management Committee
(Paper No. STDC 5/2017)

Culture, Sports and Community Development Committee
(Paper No. STDC 6/2017)

Education and Welfare Committee
(Paper No. STDC 7/2017)

Development and Housing Committee
(Paper No. STDC 8/2017)

Traffic and Transport Committee
(Paper No. STDC 9/2017)

Health and Environment Committee
(Paper No. STDC 10/2017)

Finance and General Affairs Committee
(Paper No. STDC 11/2017)

51. The Council noted the seven reports above.

Financial Account of the STDC as at 17 January 2017
(Paper No. STDC 12/2017)

52. The Council noted the above paper.

Information Papers

Report of the District Facilities Management Committee
(Paper No. STDC 13/2017)

53. The Council noted the above paper.

Date of Next Meeting

54. The next meeting was scheduled to be held at 2:30 pm on 23 March 2017 (Thursday).

55. The meeting was adjourned at 5:28 pm.

Sha Tin District Council Secretariat
STDC 13/15/50

March 2017