

Summary of Minutes of the 12th Meeting of the Social Services Committee (2012-2013)

Meeting

The Social Services Committee (“SSC”) held its 12th meeting on 12 November 2013.

Calling for Improvement/Optimisation of the Mortuary Services of Tuen Mun Hospital

2. SSC suggested that the Hospital Authority (“HA”) should provide movable shelters at the area outside the Farewell Room. It also opined that HA should take into account pedestrian safety when providing the movable shelters as the place for holding memorial ceremony for the deceased was near the road.

Request for Extension of the School Dental Care Service to Secondary Students

3. Views put forward by Members on this item included: the School Dental Care Service (“SDCS”) should be extended to cover secondary students; the Government should vigorously develop the public dental services; dental services in Hong Kong, particularly those provided by public sector, fell behind international standards, and the qualification and training of dentists also lagged behind those of other specialists; service industry was one of the pillar industries of the Hong Kong economy, and personal appearance was important to members of the trade. Besides, the stage of secondary education was the prime time for students to receive orthodontic treatment; secondary students were also a high risk group for dental problems; the Government should educate the public on teeth protection; the Administration should review the dental service policy as appropriate and provide a more comprehensive dental care service; dental service-related data could facilitate the Administration’s consideration of whether to extend the SDCS; the Community Care Fund failed to provide sufficient dental care service for the elderly and the eligibility criteria concerned should be relaxed; the expenditure incurred by the extension of the SDCS to secondary students might not be very substantial, and it could reduce the expenditure on dental services in their adulthood and old age; and while publicity and education were very important, the Administration should also deploy more resources to strengthen treatment service.

4. In response, the representative of the Department of Health said that though the public dental services provided at present were mainly emergency in nature, the Government had introduced a number of new

measures in recent years with the aim of enhancing the oral health of the public. The Department would take into account the findings of the territory-wide oral survey when formulating and assessing various oral health programmes.

Request for Improvement of Methods of Subsidy of the Samaritan Fund

5. SSC would write to HA, asking it to send representatives to the meeting of SSC to discuss matters relating to methods of subsidy of the Samaritan Fund.

TMDC's Concern over the School Places Allocation and Admission Procedures of Pre-primary Education in Tuen Mun District

6. Views put forward by Members on this item included: disagreed with the Bureau that there were sufficient school places in Tuen Mun, and urged the Bureau to take into account all uncertainties and release accurate information on school places; the release of labour force of women would be hindered if toddlers were not admitted to kindergartens; as some kindergartens had set a limit on the number of application forms to be distributed, some parents might not be able to take leave to queue for the forms; since some kindergartens had admitted a substantial number of students, special rooms and activity space might have to be converted to classrooms which would affect education quality; it was suggested that parents should be asked to submit the pre-primary education vouchers to the kindergartens for registration; the statistics on the admission of the three types of kindergartens should be compiled separately; the Bureau should actively consider the opinions of TMDC as members of different political parties shared the same view on the issue of kindergarten places; central registration procedures should be implemented in Tuen Mun; the Bureau had to take on the responsibility of co-ordinating the allocation of school places, and it should also invite the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC") to conduct investigation in a high profile approach so as to combat the suspected illegal practices of some intermediaries; it was concerned that some kindergartens might neither be willing to communicate with the Education Bureau ("EDB") nor prepared to act in line with its procedures which aimed at making it easier for parents in school selection; it was urged that EDB should review the procedures being implemented in the North District to gather experience; education should not be over-commercialised as schools were neither training venues nor arsenals, and the Government should take on the monitoring responsibility; the closure of some kindergartens in the district might affect the supply of school places; it was hoped that central allocation of kindergarten places could be implemented throughout the territory; and EDB should report to SSC on the admission of kindergartens regularly and brief SSC on the progress after the discussion on measures concerned with the kindergarten sector in March.

7. In response, the representative of EDB said that the Bureau would adopt an open mind and continue to discuss the tackling measures with the kindergarten principals in the district.

Progress Report of the Civic Education's Cooperation Scheme with District Councils 2013-2014

8. A Member asserted that the activity could enhance teenagers' understanding of the community and poverty issues.

Progress Report of the ICAC Joint Project with Tuen Mun District Council 2013/2014

9. Members noted the contents of the report of ICAC.

Work Reports by the Working Groups under the Social Services Committee

(a) Working Group on Medical and Rehabilitation Services

10. SSC noted the contents of the report of the Working Group.

(b) Working Group on Community Care

11. SSC noted the contents of the report of the Working Group.

(c) Working Group on Education and youth Services

12. SSC would write to EDB to suggest the building of a special school in Area 54 as a solution to address the overcrowding of Hong Chi Morning Hill School and Hong Chi Morning Light School in the long run. The short and medium term solutions as well as Members' proposal of using the vacant school premises in the district would be followed up by the Working Group.

Report by the Tuen Mun District School Development Section of the Education Bureau

13. Regarding the report submitted to SSC by EDB, a Member expressed a wish that information on admission of kindergartens in the district would be included in each submission.

Report by the Social Welfare Department

14. In respect of the petition letter submitted by members of the public to the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") before TMDC's meeting in November, a Member enquired about the follow-up of the Department. In response, the representative of SWD said that the

Department had taken follow-up action after the receipt of the public views on child care centres. Regarding the views put forward by DC members and parents, the Department was concerned that the utilisation rate of the crèches of Tuen Mun had been very high in recent years and had closely liaised with EDB to follow-up on related matters.

15. A number of Members opined that there was discrepancy between the official utilisation rate of the child care centre places and the actual situation, and urged the Department to ensure the accuracy of the data. A Member hoped that SWD could report to SSC on the admission of N classes regularly and adhere to the principles of “vicinity” and “priority of studying in home districts” when allocating school places.

16. A Member said that the Department had remarked that the aim of setting up the Wu King Estate Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (“Wu King Estate Centre”) was to address the local demand on mental health services. However, now the fact was that the existing resources and manpower were shared out between Wu King Estate Centre and On Ting Estate Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (“On Ting Estate Centre”). In this regard, a Member urged the Department to re-strengthen the services of On Ting Estate Centre. Other Members said that apart from residents of the areas concerned, people of other areas of Tuen Mun could also benefit from the services of the Centres, which would facilitate the promotion of mental health education at district level.

17. In response, the representative of SWD said that from time to time, the Department would review whether the allocation of service session was the most appropriate, and that adjustment would be made to the services concerned if necessary.

Report on Crime Figures in the Tuen Mun District

18. Members noted the contents of the report of the Police Force.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

Date: 13 January 2014

Ref: HAD TM DC/13/30/SSC/2