

Summary of Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Social Services Committee (2014-2015)

Meeting

The Social Services Committee (“SSC”) held its 5th meeting on 15 July 2014.

Request for Improvement to Cataract Treatment Services in New Territories West

2. Members put forward to the Hospital Authority (“HA”) various proposals on the aforesaid item, which included strengthening case referral of all clusters, increasing subsidy under the Cataract Surgeries Programme (“CSP”), hiring more overseas and retired doctors, and seconding ophthalmologists from other hospitals to Tuen Mun Hospital (“TMH”).
3. The representatives of the HA responded that the HA had always encouraged patients to participate in the cross-cluster referral arrangement, and would explore ways to provide more incentives. They would also convey the view of increasing subsidy under the CSP to the HA. Moreover, retired doctors had been employed and encouraged to work part-time, and additional local and overseas staff would be recruited continuously.
4. The SSC stressed that it was very concerned about the ophthalmic service of the New Territories West Cluster, particularly the manpower arrangement for cataract surgeries. It was hoped that the representatives of the HA would convey Members’ views to the HA.

School Places for Children Aged 2-3 in Tuen Mun

5. Members were concerned about whether child care services could meet community needs, and hoped that the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) could provide a list of child care centres and information on surplus places for parents to seek services and waiting time information at their convenience.
6. The representative of the SWD responded that diversified child care services were provided. Apart from care service for children aged 2-3 attached to ordinary kindergartens, extended hours service and Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project, etc. were also arranged. In addition, the waiting time would vary for services of different units, the respective waiting time of which had been published online and updated from time to time. Service units had also been allocated new places to shorten the service waiting time.

Request for Extension of Identification and Assessment Mechanisms for Children with Learning Disabilities (Special Learning Needs) to Pre-primary Education

7. Members were concerned about whether the existing mechanism could cater adequately to children with learning disabilities so that they could be referred to receive rehabilitation services at pre-primary education level, whether service places were sufficient, and how parents could get support if their children were found to have learning disabilities.
8. The representative of the SWD responded that the SWD aimed at providing sufficient places for its services. The Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses had been launched as part of its continuous efforts to actively identify suitable premises. In addition, the Comprehensive Child Development Service had been implemented to identify pre-primary children with health, developmental and behavioural problems. Children identified as in need would be referred to receive appropriate services. Staff of maternal and child health centres, kindergartens or Integrated Family Service Centres under the SWD could also refer children in need to relevant services of the Department of Health.

9. The SSC urged the Administration to step up publicity of referral and support services for children with learning disabilities.

Extension Project of Hong Chi Morninghill School, Tuen Mun (“Morninghill School”)

10. A number of Members supported the premises extension project of Morninghill School, and believed that it could alleviate the overcrowding problem of the school premises effectively. Yet, a Member saw it as a mere temporary means because separate premises must be provided for Morninghill School and Hong Chi Morninglight School, Tuen Mun in the future. Another Member opined that Morninghill School could be reprovisioned at the existing vacant school premises in the district. Moreover, a Member enquired if the extension project would be subject to plot ratio.

11. The representative of the Education Bureau (“EDB”) responded that with the SSC’s support, the EDB would apply for a government land allocation for the extension project, and discuss with the sponsoring body on following up the tenancy of the school premises. In addition, the land used for the project would not be subject to any building height restriction, but any project involving a building over three storeys in height would be in Category A. A feasibility study would be conducted as soon as possible to determine the final option.

12. Specific details of the project would be followed up by the Working Group on Education and Youth Services, and the EDB was asked to report on the progress to the SSC in due course.

New Territories West Cluster 2014-15 Annual Plan

13. Members expressed to the representatives of the HA their views on the aforesaid annual plan report, outpatient services, General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme, healthcare manpower, service quality of TMH, work distribution among hospitals, overall allocation of medical resources, and service conditions of minimal access surgery operating theatre, etc.

Reform of Mandatory Provident Fund (“MPF”) System – Public Consultation on “Core Fund”

14. Members put forward their views and enquiries about the future development of the MPF, different ways of implementing the “Core Fund”, administrative costs, allowance for self-employed persons, and options of contribution withdrawal, etc., and the representative of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority responded accordingly.

Work Reports by Working Groups under SSC

(a) Working Group on Medical and Rehabilitation Services

15. The SSC noted the contents of the report of the Working Group.

(b) Working Group on Community Care

16. A Member opined that the Working Group should set service targets with the local organisations it worked with, explore ways to better respond to community needs, and strengthen support to the underprivileged groups.

(c) **Working Group on Education and Youth Services**

17. The SSC noted the contents of the report of the Working Group.

Report by Tuen Mun District School Development Section of EDB

18. A Member enquired about the number of cross-boundary students (“CBS”) in Tuen Mun District for 2014/15 academic year, and hoped that the representative of the EDB would provide further information on allocation of Primary One places.

19. The representative of the EDB responded that based on the existing data, there were around 950 CBS in Tuen Mun District for 2014/15 academic year. The EDB would report to the SSC on whether these CBS were all admitted to schools in Tuen Mun District upon confirmation in September 2014.

Report by SWD

20. The representative of the SWD presented to Members the arrangements under the Pilot Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families.

Report on Crime Figures in Tuen Mun District

21. The SSC noted the contents of the report of the Hong Kong Police Force.

7th Cross-Strait Conference on Tobacco Control

22. The SSC had endorsed at the last meeting its support to the Smoke-free Community Campaign organised by Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health, which would host the 7th Cross-Strait Conference on Tobacco Control on 2 and 3 September 2014 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

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