

Summary of Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Social Services Committee (2014-2015)

Meeting

The Social Services Committee (“SSC”) held its 6th meeting on 26 September 2014.

Request for Increase in the Number of Dental Clinics and Benefits of Elderly Dental Services

2. Members put forward to the Department of Health (“DH”) various proposals on the aforesaid item, which included increasing channels to promote dental education; expanding coverage of the Community Care Fund (“CCF”) Elderly Dental Assistance Programme; expanding services of government dental clinics; increasing the number of beneficiaries of elderly dental services; relaxing the age limit for using health care vouchers for dental services; expressing concern about early tooth loss of pregnant women after giving birth; and building a local dental hospital.

3. The representative of the DH responded that over the years, the Oral Health Education Unit of the DH had disseminated oral health messages to various sectors of the community. In addition, the CCF Task Force under the Commission on Poverty was considering expanding the current eligibility criteria of the CCF Elderly Dental Assistance Programme progressively. As for government dental clinics, they were tasked to provide dental services to civil servants in fulfilment of their conditions of service and as part of the Government’s contractual obligations, and provide free emergency dental treatment for people in need. At present, their service capacity had been fully taken up. Moreover, the representative of the DH said that Members’ opinions of enhancing dental health care vouchers, building a local dental hospital and expressing concern about early tooth loss of women after giving birth would be relayed to the DH.

Report on Progress of the Community Participation Scheme 2013-14 and 2014-15

4. The representative of the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (“CPCE”) reported to Members on the activities organised in 2013-14, and briefed Members on the activities to be organised in 2014-15.

5. A Member supported the exchange tour organised by the CPCE, but another Member opined that as no visit to a private school operated by migrant workers had been arranged in the tour, students did not see that poverty in China was actually stemmed from problems associated with transient population. In addition, a Member suggested shifting the focus of exchange activities from poverty alleviation to policy discussion.

6. The representative of the CPCE responded that the exchange tour had provided exchange and service opportunities. It aimed at nurturing the young so as to inspire more students to rethink the political and social problems in Hong Kong after learning about the current situation in China.

Report on Tuen Mun District Anti-corruption Programme: “A Clean Future for Our Next Generation”

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

Work Reports by Working Groups under SSC

(a) Working Group on Medical and Rehabilitation Services

8. A Member considered that the Working Group should discuss more about the medical services of hospitals in Tuen Mun or New Territories West, and provide more rehabilitation services. A Member also hoped that Members of the Working Group could attend more meetings to avoid adjournment for want of quorum again.

(b) Working Group on Community Care

9. A Member hoped that the Working Group could use its resources properly to organise more in-depth activities and serve more underprivileged groups, such as the disabled and elderly living alone.

(c) Working Group on Education and Youth Services

10. A Member opined that the Working Group’s Character Development Programme for Children, which focused on character training and involved parents, could address the problem of domestic violence. Yet, she hoped that the programme could have clearer objectives and meet local needs. The convenor of the Working Group responded that her views would be followed up.

Report by the Tuen Mun District School Development Section of the Education Bureau (“EDB”)

11. Members put forward their enquiries and views, which included enquiries about (a) calculations of numbers of school places and students in Tuen Mun District; (b) number of vacant classrooms in schools; (c) implementation of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme; (d) uses of vacant school premises; (e) numbers of admission to Primary One and Secondary One in 2014-15; and (f) data on class sizes of all grades. Moreover, a Member suggested that school nets for selection by cross-boundary students (“CBS”) should not be confined and restrictive, and adequate ancillary transport facilities for CBS should be provided.

12. The SSC stressed its emphasis on the balance of grades and class sizes in schools, and urged the EDB to review the allocation system. The SSC asked the representative of the EDB to convey Members’ views to the EDB for proper follow-up and review.

Report by the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”)

13. A Member enquired about the Nursing Home Place Purchase Scheme (“NHPPS”). The representative of the SWD responded that the waiting time for nursing homes was approximately 30 months (based on last three months’ average),

and the elderly waiting for nursing homes could stay temporarily at MFBM Elderly Home under the NHPPS.

14. The Member also enquired about the contents of the SWD's integrated family services, and hoped that the number of domestic violence cases would decline as a result of these services. The representative of the SWD responded that the SWD had always taken domestic violence seriously and dealt with such incidents in the following aspects: carrying out publicity and prevention activities, setting up a Family and Child Protective Services Unit to assist families with domestic violence, and liaising with non-governmental welfare units in the district to help families in need. The Member hoped that the SWD would review the mode of integrated family services, and urged the SWD to follow up on the matter.

Report on Crime Figures in Tuen Mun District

15. The representative of the Hong Kong Police Force said that the recent murder case in San Hui Village had involved domestic violence. Record of the victim was not found in the Central Domestic Violence Database. Accordingly, the victim had never filed any report of domestic violence.

16. A Member opined that for cases of domestic violence, any assistance would be deemed too late after their occurrence. She suggested setting up a marriage crisis hotline for the public to seek immediate assistance with domestic violence issues.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

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