

Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of  
the Commerce, Industry and Housing Committee (2018-2019) of  
the Tuen Mun District Council

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Date: 4 June 2018 (Monday)

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Venue: Tuen Mun District Council (“TMDC”) Conference Room

| <u>Present</u>                       |   | <u>Time of Arrival</u> | <u>Time of Departure</u> |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ms CHING Chi-hung (Chairman)         | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr CHAN Manwell, Leo (Vice-chairman) | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr LEUNG Kin-man, BBS, MH, JP        | TMDC Chairman   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr LEE Hung-sham, Lothar, BBS, MH    | TMDC Vice-chairman  | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr TO Sheck-yuen, MH                 | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms KONG Fung-yi                      | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr NG Koon-hung                      | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms WONG Lai-sheung, Catherine        | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr AU Chi-yuen                       | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms HO Hang-mui                       | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr LAM Chung-hoi                     | TMDC Member   | 9:55 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr TSUI Fan, MH                      | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms LUNG Shui-hing, MH                | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr CHAN Man-wah, MH                  | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr CHEUNG Hang-fai                   | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| The Hon HO Kwan-yiu, JP              | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms CHU Shun-nga, Beatrice            | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr TSANG Hin-hong                    | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms SO Ka-man                         | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr KAM Man-fung                      | TMDC Member   | 9:43 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr MO Shing-fung                     | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr YEUNG Chi-hang                    | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr YAN Siu-nam                       | TMDC Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr FUNG Pui-yin                      | Co-opted Member   | 9:34 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr CHAN Ho-ting                      | Co-opted Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms LAI Ka-man                        | Co-opted Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr WONG Yu-kei                       | Co-opted Member   | 9:36 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Mr LAW Wai-hung                      | Co-opted Member   | 9:30 a.m.              | End of meeting           |
| Ms HO Chui-wan, Ida (Secretary)      | Executive Officer (District Council) 1, Tuen Mun District Office, |                        |                          |

## Home Affairs Department

### In Attendance

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Ms YAN Yuet-han, Fion         | Senior Liaison Officer (1), Tuen Mun District Office,<br>Home Affairs Department                              |
| Miss LEE Fung-yi, Maggie      | Liaison Officer Town Centre (2),<br>Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department                         |
| Mr LO Yan-kit, Stephen        | Senior Building Surveyor/E5, Buildings Department (Acting)  |
| Ms CHENG Chui-king, Christine | Housing Manager/Tuen Mun 4, Housing Department  |
| Ms WA Lei-chun, Winnie        | Senior Community Relations Officer /ICAC Regional Office (NTNW),<br>Independent Commission Against Corruption |
| Miss PO Hoi-yan, Pamela       | Labour Officer (Workplace Consultation Promotion),<br>Labour Department (Acting)                              |
| Mr TAM Kwok-leung             | Administrative Assistant/Lands, District Lands Office, Tuen Mun,<br>Lands Department (Acting)                 |

### Absent with Apologies

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Ms LUNG Shui-hing     | TMDC Member     |
| Mr LEUNG Ka-tai, Gary | Co-opted Member |

**I. Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commerce, Industry and Housing Committee (“CIHC”).

2. The Chairman reminded Members that Members who were aware of their personal interests in any matters discussed at the meeting should declare the interests before the discussion. The Chairman would, in accordance with Order 39(12) of the Tuen Mun District Council Standing Orders, decide whether the Members who had declared interests might speak or vote on the matters, might remain at the meeting as observers, or should withdraw from the meeting. All cases of declaration of interests would be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**II. Absence from Meeting**

3. The Secretary reported that no applications for leave of absence had been received from Members.

**III. Confirmation of Minutes of Last Meeting**

4. As Members proposed no amendments to the minutes, the Chairman announced that the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CIHC (2018-2019) were confirmed.

**IV. Matters Arising**

**(A) Requesting Housing Department to Close Security Loopholes on Fire Escape Staircases Linking Kwan Tai House and Car Park (CIHC Paper No. 10/2018) (Paragraphs 14-18 of the Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> CIHC Meeting)**

5. The Chairman said that the Housing Department (“HD”) had mentioned at the last meeting that it would install closed-circuit TV and put in place security patrol log books for the four fire escape staircases mentioned in the paper, and apply for the installation of an anti-theft gate for staircase No. 13. She asked the HD to report on the progress of the above arrangements.

6. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD responded that the department had applied for the installation of anti-theft gates for staircases No. 8, No. 10 and No. 13. Since the proposed installation of anti-theft gates for staircases No. 8 and No. 10 would block the fire escape, the relevant applications had not been

approved by the Independent Checking Unit. However, the application concerning staircase No. 13 had been approved. Engineers from the department were working with the works contractor on the implementation of the construction arrangements. Also, they would contact the Police to conduct a site visit and ask them to give advice on the installation of the anti-theft gate. She pointed out that in 2017, the management company had invited the Police to visit the above site and to advise on improving the security. The Police had subsequently given comments to Link Asset Management Limited (“the Link”) for its consideration. Currently, the engineers from the department were awaiting a feasible proposal from the Link.

7. The proposer of the paper said that at an earlier meeting of the Estate Management Advisory Committee, the HD had given an account of the above arrangement. He would contact the Link again to follow up on the relevant situation.

8. The Chairman concluded that the proposer of the paper would continue to follow up on this matter at the meetings of the Estate Management Advisory Committee.

**(B) Requesting Housing Department to Promptly Solve Problem of Insufficient Stock of Lighting Tubes for Corridors in Fu Tai Estate (CIHC Paper No. 11/2018)**

**(Paragraphs 19-23 of the Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> CIHC Meeting)**

9. The Chairman said that at the last meeting, the HD had mentioned that the lighting tube supplier could deliver all lighting tubes ordered by public housing estates in Tuen Mun district in mid-April this year. She asked whether the problem of insufficient stock of lighting tubes for public housing estates in Tuen Mun district had been solved.

10. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD responded that among the nine housing estates in Tuen Mun district, all housing estates, except Fu Tai Estate and Po Tin Estate, had reserved stock for lighting tubes. In the year 2017-18, the public housing estates ordered a total of some 10 000 lighting tubes and among them, only Fu Tai Estate encountered the situation of insufficient stock. As at 31 March 2018, there were 1 559 lighting tubes remaining in Tuen Mun district. Taking into account that the lighting tube supplier having inadequate stock would

affect estate management, the department had terminated the contract with the relevant supplier and arranged for re-tendering. Also, Fu Tai Estate had already received the remaining 2 500 lighting tubes on 19 April 2018.

11. The proposer of the paper was surprised that only Fu Tai Estate had encountered the situation of insufficient stock of lighting tubes. He also asked the HD to give a response about which parties should be held liable and how similar situations could be prevented from recurring. He said that the 2 500 lighting tubes received by Fu Tai Estate on 19 April 2018 were almost exhausted and opined that the quality of the lighting tubes was too bad. Moreover, whenever he asked the estate manager about the above situation, the manager often responded evasively.

12. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD responded that the information she had provided were from the procurement department, the estate manager and the property management company, and she had only noted the problem of poor quality of the lighting tubes just then. Since there were still lighting tubes remaining in Tuen Mun district, if an individual housing estate faced the situation of insufficient stock of lighting tubes, the estate manager could consider borrowing from housing estates with stock or purchasing with cash in till.

13. Members made different comments and enquiries on the HD's response, which are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member opined that the housing estates should calculate the stock needed in advance for central coordination by the HD and should not borrow from other estates or ask estate managers to make purchase on their own;
- (ii) A Member pointed out that while Fu Tai Estate had run out of stock of lighting tubes, Tai Hing Estate had more than 7 000 lighting tubes and this reflected that the department should properly allocate the stock to the housing estates. Also, he pointed out that the quality of the lighting tubes ordered by the department was poor and found it unbelievable that Fu Tai Estate had exhausted 2 500 newly purchased lighting tubes in a short period of time;
- (iii) A Member opined that it was very likely that the lighting tubes received

by Fu Tai Estate were substandard goods and reckoned that the department needed to investigate the source of supply of that supplier thoroughly and gain an understanding from the individual estate manager on the relevant situation; and

- (iv) A Member opined that the practice suggested by the department for housing estates running out of stock of lighting tubes to borrow from other housing estates temporarily was not proper and urged the department to review the relevant mechanism.

14. The Chairman urged the HD to thoroughly investigate the above situation as soon as possible, gain a further understanding from the relevant estate manager and management company, and report on the investigation result at the next meeting.

HD

## V. Discussion Items

### (A) Proposal Regarding the Improvement to the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Transfer Exercise (CIHC Paper No. 15/2018)

15. The first proposer of the paper said that the paper not only proposed to improve the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Exercise (“TWOR”), but also to enhance the Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme (“LSITS”). The former was for public rental housing (“PRH”) households with average living floor area per person less than 5.5 square metres while the latter was for households with average living floor area per person less than 7 square metres. He pointed out that in 2015, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”) had reduced the quota for the Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme from 2 000 to 1 000 and the relevant quota had been opened to applicants for both schemes at the same time. If the number of applications for the TWOR had exceeded 1 000 that year, no places would be offered to applicants for the LSITS. He opined that the HA rolling out the schemes without reserving adequate places was no different from giving the applicants false hopes. He suggested the HA increase the application quota to 2 000 again, consider factors other than the crowdedness of the household when scrutinising applications, and simplify application procedures.

16. Members made different comments on the proposals of the paper, which

are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member pointed out that some households had applied for transfer through the TWOR and the LSITS (hereinafter collectively referred to as “transfer schemes”) for many years but were still unsuccessful. The Member suggested the HA make reference to the practice of waiting for subsidised housing and assign serial numbers to applicants for this type of schemes so that they did not have to re-submit applications every year;
- (ii) A Member said that many households applied every year but the result disappointed them every time and asked whether the HA would make special arrangement for households which had applied for many times;
- (iii) A Member pointed out that the average living space per person in the United Kingdom, Japan and Taiwan was 75 square feet, 199 square feet and 140 square feet respectively, much higher than 5.5 square metres and 7 square metres set by the HA. The Member opined that the Government should raise the relevant standards;
- (iv) A Member pointed out that the majority of PRH flats constructed by the HA in recent years were flats for less than four people, and as a result, there were inadequate large flats for overcrowded households to apply for transfer;
- (v) A Member agreed that more factors for consideration should be included when scrutinising applications for the transfer schemes and also enquired whether the “Well-off Tenants Policies” amended last year was useful in alleviating the applications for the above schemes;
- (vi) A Member reckoned that the major cause of the problem was inadequate supply of PRH flats and urged the Government to identify land for building flats expeditiously (e.g. converting golf courses into PRHs) to ease the situation of overcrowded living environment of households;
- (vii) A Member proposed that the department staff take the initiative to contact households which had applied for the transfer schemes last year to ask whether they still needed to apply for transfer. The Member also suggested that assets tests be conducted only after having transfer

arrangements so as to minimise the inconvenience caused to the applicants and reduce the administrative costs of the department;

- (viii) A Member enquired about the number of households eligible for the transfer schemes and the number of applications in recent five years;
- (ix) A Member reflected that some applicants had received notifications from the department informing them that they could register for transfer at the office but after arriving at the office, staff had told them that the registration quota was full. She opined that the above practice was very inhumane and urged the department to make improvements as soon as possible;
- (x) A Member suggested that the transfer schemes be open for application by households regularly and the department should not put posters in the estates only before the schemes were open for application so that the households in need of transfer would not miss the application opportunity;
- (xi) A Member pointed out that family members of some households would add their spouses or children into the tenancies after marriage and those households would thus become overcrowded. Therefore, the Member reckoned that the HA should devise the relevant policy;
- (xii) A Member indicated that he was a member of the Subsidised Housing Committee of the HA and pointed out that the HA had reduced the quota for the transfer schemes in 2017-18, instead of 2015 mentioned in the paper;
- (xiii) A Member said that as at mid-2016, there were about 3 600 overcrowded households in Hong Kong, representing about 0.49% of the PRH households in the territory, which was lower than the performance indicator set at 0.55% by the HA. He opined that given the insufficiency of housing resources, there were no conditions to increase the quota for the transfer schemes; and
- (xiv) A Member asked about the longest waiting time for the applicants for the transfer schemes from the department's record.



17. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD responded that at the meeting on 31 October 2016, the Subsidised Housing Committee (“the Committee”) of the HA had reviewed the TWOR and the LSITS. Taking into account that the average waiting time for PRH applicants had been increasing, and the basic housing needs of the existing households had been satisfied, the Committee decided, starting from the year 2017-18, to merge the TWOR and the LSITS and around 1 000 flats would be reserved for transfer under the scheme each year. The relevant arrangement would facilitate the earliest release of more flats for allocation to the applicants. Regarding the existing tenants, they could still improve their living environment through the transfer schemes. For overcrowded households with average living floor area per person of 5.5 square metres or below and had made six unsuccessful applications for transfer under the TWOR, or for overcrowded households with average living floor area per person of 4 square metres or below, the department would arrange for immediate transfer to flats with suitable living floor area.

18. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD continued that when processing the applications for the transfer schemes, the HD would, according to the living density of the eligible households, put the tenants in a single queue by the computer, so as to determine the priority for applicants to select flats (i.e. households with higher living density could select flats first). Density being the same, the household of a larger size would have priority. Both conditions being the same, the length of residence in the existing tenancy would determine. Three conditions being the same, priority would be determined by computer randomisation. Since the transfer schemes aimed at improving the living space of PRH tenants, it was relatively fair and reasonable to determine the priority of flat selection based on benchmarks such as living density, number of family members and length of residence of households. To simplify the application procedures, according to the existing practice, if applicants had, within one year, submitted other applications which required the passing of the Comprehensive Means Test and the fulfilling of the “no-domestic-property” requirement, and those applications had been approved and involved no changes in family status, income and assets, they could be exempted from submitting documentary proofs of income and asset. However, it still had to be subject to the confirmation of the Estate Office or District Tenancy Management Office.

19. Members made a second round of comments on this matter, which are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member said that even overcrowded households with average living floor area per person less than 5.5 square metres might not be arranged for immediate transfer. Since the HD could not provide relevant statistics, he hoped that the CIHC would continue the discussion on this matter and invite relevant representatives from the HD to attend the meeting to listen to Members' views, so as to gain a deeper understanding on the residents' situation;
- (ii) A Member asked whether the HD had any plans to review the transfer schemes and whether there was a notification mechanism to keep members of the community and members of the public informed of the amendments to the transfer schemes;
- (iii) A Member opined that the department had not given a response whether it would regularly roll out the transfer schemes and improve the administrative procedures;
- (iv) A Member pointed out that after getting married on the Mainland, some tenants would submit applications for their spouses and children on the Mainland to come to Hong Kong and to add them into the tenancies, and these families would thus become overcrowded households. The Member reckoned that if the department did not have sufficient flats for the households to apply for transfer, it should not allow the tenants to apply for addition of household members; and
- (v) A Member asked whether the department could set up a waiting mechanism for overcrowded households applying for transfer.

20. Ms Christine CHENG of the HD responded that as at the end of September 2017, there were around 4 000 overcrowded households in Hong Kong, representing about 0.53% of all PRH tenants, which was lower than the performance indicator set at 0.55% by the HA in the year 2017-18. Regarding PRH households with living density lower than 7 square metres per person (calculated by internal floor area), the number had dropped from around 40 000 households before the launch of the LSITS in 2006, to about 23 700 households

at the end of September 2017. She reiterated that the objectives of the TWOR and the LSITS were different. Due to the constraints of resources, the department could not guarantee that all applicants could select suitable flats.

21. The Chairman concluded that a number of Members had made different comments on the transfer schemes but the HD could not give adequate replies. She reckoned that the quota for the transfer schemes was inadequate to meet the demand and urged the HD, when planning new PRHs, to increase the number of large flats and build more PRHs. She said that the CIHC would continue the discussion on this matter and suggested the HD arrange for relevant representatives to attend the next meeting to respond to Members' enquiries.

## **VI. Reporting Items**

### **(A) Work Reports by the Working Groups under the Commerce, Industry and Housing Committee**

#### **(CIHC Paper No. 16/2018)**

#### **(i) Working Group on Occupational Safety and Health**

22. Members noted the report of the above working group.

#### **(ii) Working Group on Economic Development in Tuen Mun**

23. Members noted the report of the above working group.

#### **(iii) Working Group on Building Management**

24. The Chairman, who was also the Convenor of the above working group, said that this year, the working group would continue to set up street counters at 30 locations in Tuen Mun district to promote the mobile app TuenMun BM. Tuen Mun District Office would assist in coordinating the above work and invite Members to join the promotion campaign via email and fax.

25. A Member said that the promotion campaign for the mobile app TuenMun BM had been well received last year. She asked whether the working group would produce posters for the promotion campaign for District Council members to post in their offices so as to facilitate public access to the relevant information.

26. The Chairman responded that the working group would provide promotion posters to the District Council members. From experience, the mobile phones of some members of the public were not equipped with mobile

internet services. Therefore, the street counters would provide Wi-Fi for immediate download and installation of the mobile app TuenMun BM by the public.

27. A Member asked whether the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344) on the mobile app TuenMun BM was the latest version.

28. The Chairman responded that the proposed amendments to the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344) were pending passage by the Legislative Council and the relevant consultation documents had been uploaded to the mobile app TuenMun BM. Upon the passage of the above amendments, the working group would arrange for an update. The Chairman thanked Members for supporting the above promotion work and encouraged Members to actively make comments on the mobile app TuenMun BM so as to boost the number of downloads.

29. The Chairman announced that the working group reports in the paper were endorsed.

**(B) Work Report on Private Building Management in the Tuen Mun District**

**(CIHC Paper No. 17/2018)**

30. Members noted the above work report.

**(C) Report by the Buildings Department**

**(CIHC Paper No. 18/2018)**

31. Members noted the contents of the relevant report by the Buildings Department.

**VII. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting**

32. There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10:42 a.m. The next meeting would be held on 20 August 2018.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

Date: 17 July 2018

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