

Minutes of the 12th Meeting of
the Social Services Committee (2016-2017) of
the Tuen Mun District Council

Date: 14 November 2017 (Tuesday)

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 SO Ka-man (Chairman)	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr TSANG Hin-hong (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 SO Shiu-shing	TMDC Member	9:50 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr TO Shek-yuen, MH	TMDC Member	9:33 a.m.	12:16 p.m.
Ms KONG Fung-yi	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr CHAN Yau-hoi, BBS, MH, JP	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	9:48 a.m.
Ms WONG Lai-sheung, Catherine	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Ms HO Hang-mui	TMDC Member	9:32 a.m.	End of meeting
Ms CHING Chi-hung	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
Ms CHU Shun-nga, Beatrice	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr KAM Man-fung	TMDC Member	10:09 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr MO Shing-fung	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr YIP Man-pan	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 TAM Chun-yin	TMDC Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Ms NG Dip-pui	Co-opted Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr YU Tai-wai	Co-opted Member	9:44 a.m.	11:31 a.m.
Mr CHU Wai-ming	Co-opted Member	9:30 a.m.	End of meeting
Mr CHAN Ho-ting	Co-opted Member	9:30 a.m.	10:45 a.m.
Ms LAI Ka-man	Co-opted Member	10:29 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Ms HO Chui-wan, Ida (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) ¹ , Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department		

Absent with Apologies:

Mr TSUI Fan, MH	TMDC Member
Mr CHEUNG Hang-fai	TMDC Member
Ms TSANG Ka-lai	Co-opted Member
Mr TSANG Hing-chung	Co-opted Member
Mr SO Wai-luen	Co-opted Member

In Invitation:

Mr Daniel LO	Senior Manager (Allied Health), Hospital Authority
Ms SIU Wing-ye	Social Work Officer (Allied Health), Hospital Authority
Mr Timothy TAM	Project Manager, Charities, Charities Department, The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Mr Matthew TSOI	Community Relations Officer, External Affairs Department, The Hong Kong Jockey Club
Dr Vincent WEN	Research Assistant Professor, Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University
Ms Charmaine LEUNG	Assistant Manager, Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University
Ms Alta SZE	Senior Project Officer, Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies, Lingnan University
Ms TSANG Shuk-ye, Ella	Housing Manager (Tuen Mun ³), Housing Department
Mr LAW Yiu-wah, Rayson	Planning and Support Officer I, Long Win Bus Company Limited

In Attendance:

Mr CHAU Ka-nin, Eric	Senior Liaison Officer (2), Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department
Mr LAM Man-kwong	Senior School Development Officer (Tuen Mun) ³ , Education Bureau
Mrs NG NG Lai-chun	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun) ² , Social Welfare Department
Mr LEE Wai-ming	Police Community Relations Officer (Tuen Mun District), Hong Kong Police Force
Ms Winnie Wa	Senior Community Relations Officer, Independent Commission Against Corruption

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairlady welcomed all to the 12th meeting of the Social Services Committee (“SSC”). On behalf of the SSC, she expressed thanks to Mr Vincent CHEUNG, the former Senior Community Relations Officer of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”) for his past contributions to the SSC, and welcomed his replacement, Ms WA Lei-chun, Winnie.

2. The Chairlady reminded Members that any Member who was aware of a personal interest in a discussion item should declare the interest before the discussion. She would, in accordance with Order 39 (12) of the Tuen Mun District Council (“TMDC”) Standing Orders, decide whether the Member who had declared an interest might speak or vote on the matter, might remain in the meeting as an observer, 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 a notification of absence was received from Ms TSANG Ka-lai.

III. Confirmation of Minutes of The Last Meeting

4. As Members had not proposed any amendment to the minutes of the 11th meeting of the SSC (2016-2017), the Chairlady announced that the minutes were confirmed.

IV. Matters Arising

(A) Request for Lowering the Eligibility Age for Medical Fee Waiver to 65 (SSC Paper No. 44/2017) (Paragraphs 5-9 of the Minutes of the 11th SSC Meeting) (Reply from Food and Health Bureau)

5. The Chairlady welcomed Mr LO Chi-chiu, Senior Executive Officer (Medical Care), and Ms SIU Wing-ye, Social Work Officer (Medical Care) of the Hospital Authority (“HA”) to the meeting.

6. Members’ comments and enquiries are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member expressed regret at the failure of the Food and Health Bureau (“FHB”) to send any representative to the meeting, which was a sign of disrespect to the TMDC;
- (ii) A Member was disappointed with the FHB’s reply and opined that the bureau lacked

long-term planning on the medical policy and that it should implement the proposals of the paper with a timetable;

- (iii) A Member said the Government was providing various welfare benefits to the elderly, but the eligibility ages were inconsistent. With the rapid ageing of the population, medical expenses would only increase with time; he/she opined that the FHB should lower the eligibility age for receiving the elderly medical allowance to enable the elderly to receive early medical treatment, hence avoiding greater medical expenses in their later years;
- (iv) A Member suggested the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) to use a more durable material (such as plastic card in place of paper card) to print the medical fee waiver certificate (“the certificate”); and
- (v) A Member commented that the Government had the responsibility to take care of the elderly people’s living after their retirement.

7. Mr LO of the HA said he would relay Members’ comments to the FHB. He replied that with paper, the waiver certificate could expediently list out the terms, conditions and matters to note in relation to the medical waiver scheme for a user’s perusal. If the elderly failed to produce the certificates when they sought medical consultation, they could simply say that they were accepted patients under the scheme, then the staff of the clinics would be able to confirm it with the SWD through the online enquiry system.

8. Mr LO of the HA said further that the purpose of introducing the medical fee waiving mechanism was to provide a safety net to the people in need, including the non-elderly persons. People who could not afford public medical expense due to financial difficulties (such as the low-income group and chronic patients) could apply for a medical fee waiver at the Medical Social Services Units of public hospitals and clinics or the Integrated Family Service Centres. Medical social workers would also assess applications with due consideration given to the financial and other conditions of the applicants and issue certificates to the patients in need. Under the existing mechanism, even if a patient had not yet reached the age of 75 years but had financial difficulty, he might still apply for the use of public medical services.

9. A Member enquired if a patient sought medical consultation after office hours, how could the clinic staff confirm his eligibility for medical fee waiver, and whether it was possible to confirm the eligibility with his identity card. She also suggested the FHB to consider offering full or half medical fee waiver to some of the people aged over 65 and eligible for the Higher Old Age Living Allowance. Another Member reckoned that the Government should set a review

timetable for the medical fee waiving mechanism and provide medical fee waiver for all elderly persons over 75 years of age.

10. Mr LO of the HA responded that the online system was available 24 hours a day instead of being restricted to office hours. The procedure for using the scheme required a patient to inform the clinic staff of his eligibility for medical fee waiver besides showing his identity card. He re-iterated that the public medical services in Hong Kong had already received huge amounts of subsidy from the Government. To ensure that the public would not be denied of adequate medical care due to lack of means, the HA had set up the medical fee waiving mechanism to provide assistance to the patients in need. Therefore, people who had financial difficulties in paying medical expenses could apply for medical fee waiving. Those aged 75 or over but did not have financial difficulties needed to pay the full medical fee.

11. The Chairlady enquired whether the bureau would set a review timetable for the medical fee waiving mechanism.

12. Mr LO of the HA responded that in the 2017 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed that the medical fee waiver for public healthcare services be extended to cover the Old Age Living Allowance recipients meeting the eligibility criteria. He would relay Members' opinions to the FHB.

13. The Chairlady invited Members to give opinions as to whether the SSC should write to the FHB to convey Members' views, whether to continue the discussion of the issue or raise it to the level of a TMDC discussion.

14. Several Members responded to the Chairlady's questions as follows:

- (i) A Member said the discussion should continue, and should have a FHB's representative in direct dialogue with Members and answering Members' enquiries;
- (ii) A Member viewed the issue as one concerned with all Hong Kong people and should therefore be discussed in a TMDC meeting; and
- (iii) A Member pointed out that over the past two years, even if Members raised an agenda item to the level of TMDC discussion, the Government departments still failed to send any representative to the meeting. She had a grudge against the Government's belittling the TMDC and suggested the Chairman of the TMDC to take a tougher stance and insist to have departmental representatives in the council meetings.

15. The Chairlady summarised that the SSC resolved to pass this agenda item to the TMDC for discussion and she requested the representative of the HA to relay Members' comments to the HA.

(Post-meeting note: When the Secretary for Food and Health visited the TMDC on 12 December 2017, he already held a detailed discussion with the TMDC on this subject, and the FHB had also responded to Members' comments. Therefore, the Chairman of the TMDC viewed it unnecessary to repeat the subject discussion in a TMDC meeting but would instead write to the FHB to urge it to consider Members' comments and to make appropriate review of the policy concerned. The said letter was issued on 3 January 2018.)

V. Discussion Items

(A) Raising Concerns about the Death of Mother and Son in Shan King Estate Request for Closer Coordination among Departments to Prevent the Recurrence of Tragedy (SSC Paper No. 51/2017) (Reply from Social Welfare Department)

16. The Chairlady welcomed Ms TSANG Shuk-ye, Ella, Housing Manager/TM3 of the Housing Department ("HD") to the meeting.

17. The first proposer of the paper said since the occurrence of the captioned case in September this year, several Government departments had given their response. The Education Bureau ("EDB") viewed the failure to get in touch with the parents of the subject student as the main reason for failing to follow up on the case. However, the EDB Circular "Ensuring Students' Right to Education" stipulated that if a student aged below 15 was absent for 7 school days, the school must report it to the EDB; if the absence persisted, the EDB should issue a warning letter, attendance order or pass the case to the police for investigation and prosecution. He queried whether the EDB had handled the case according to the aforesaid procedure.

18. He said further that when the HD replied to a question raised by the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services, it mentioned that its staff had visited the flat concerned on 31 August 2017 in respect of the tenancy agreement; according to the news report, it was estimated that the mother and son had already died inside the unit by then, he was puzzled why the HD officer was not aware of it at all during the visit. The news media had reported many times that when social workers made home visits at Shan King Estate or other similar Tenants Purchase Scheme estates, they encountered a lot of difficulties. He enquired whether the HD as a key stakeholder had carried out its role and responsibilities and made efforts in coordination. The mother and son in the case had received the SWD's service, he enquired whether the SWD had continually followed

up on their case. He suggested to establish a mechanism to identify high-risk cases, have different departments informed of those cases and take early actions.

19. Members' comments are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member opined that the EDB should assume the greatest responsibility in the case, as it was responsible for liaising and following up on the absent student. She said the mother and son had lived in their unit for many years, it should not be difficult to contact them if the EDB had really tried;
- (ii) A Member was dissatisfied that as the landlord of the Tenant Purchase Scheme estates, the HD had used the excuse of staying as a neutral party to refuse participating in the management of the estates;
- (iii) A Member enquired that as the student in the case had been absent from school for 6 years, what follow-up actions the EDB had taken and why the case had not been referred to the SWD;
- (iv) A Member said it was untrue to say that the Incorporated Owners of Shan King Estate imposed many obstacles on the social workers' home visits; since 2015, social workers of many social welfare organisations had visited Shan King Estate, for which the Incorporated Owners and the management company only required applications in advance, and such procedure had been adopted all along; and
- (v) A Member said the social welfare organisations in Shan King Estate reflected that their Rehabuses were not allowed to stay in the estate for picking up the disabled, he/she commented that the HD as the landlord of the estate, should solve the problem.

20. Mr LAM Man-kwong, Senior School Development Officer (Tuen Mun) 3 of the EDB, responded that if a student was continuously absent for 7 school days, the school should report the case to the EDB on the 7th day. For absences in primary schools and junior secondary classes, the staff of the EDB and school counsellors would offer help to the parents to protect the students' right to education. If a case involved a senior secondary school student, the EDB would arrange the student to resume schooling or participate in short term courses ran by non-government organisations ("NGOs") to prepare them for career commitments according to both the student' and parents' wishes.

21. Mr LAM of the EDB said further that the EDB was sorry for the death of a youngster due to family problems. According to the records, the boy attended Primary Four in Tuen Mun in 2010 and was found absent from school since mid-2011. Between mid-2011 and mid-2012, the

bureau and counselling staff tried various ways (such as telephone, home visit and enquiring their neighbours and security guards) to contact the boy's parents, but all to no avail. The EDB had in recent years proactively improved the follow-up procedures for absentee cases, and would liaise and carry out the follow-up work together with other departments whenever necessary. The EDB would continue to listen to opinions from different sectors of the society and enhance the cooperation among departments to improve the case follow-up procedure.

22. The Chairlady enquired whether the EDB had contacted other departments with regard to the above case.

23. Mr LAM of the EDB supplemented that the EDB and school social workers had followed up on the case by making telephone contacts and home visits between mid-2011 and mid-2012.

24. Mrs NG NG Lai-chun, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun) 2 of the SWD, responded that after the incident, the family members of the two deceased persons were assisted by a NGO Integrated Family Service Centre, but the details could not be disclosed. To follow up on the impact of the tragedy, the Caritas Integrated Family Service Centres of Shan King Estate had set up a booth and distributed leaflets inside the estate. Concerning home visits, the case social workers only had to enter details on the visitors' register to enter the estate. To enhance the welfare support for the residents of the estate, in particular, about visits by volunteers, the department and the welfare service unit would have direct communication with the housing manager of the HD in meetings of the district liaison committee.

25. Ms TSANG of the HD responded that once a unit under the Tenant Purchase Scheme was sold, its management procedure would be identical to that of the private properties, that is, it would be managed by the relevant owners' corporation. Under the Building Management Ordinance, even if the HD was the majority owner of the estate, the management of the buildings of the estate still vested with the management company and the relevant owners' corporation. However, the department encouraged the owners to properly maintain their properties for the overall interests of the estate. The staff of the department had visited the unit of the case on 31 August 2017 but found nothing unusual. The department would continue to carry out regular visits to all the rental units in accordance with the housing policy.

26. The Chairlady said if a student's absence from school persisted, the EDB would refer the case to the police. She enquired whether Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") had received any referral from the EDB.

27. Mr LEE Wai-ming, Police Community Relations Officer (Tuen Mun District) of the HKPF, responded that he would pass the relevant information to the Secretariat after the meeting.

28. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that in general, the EDB would not refer the case to the HKPF just for failing to contact the parents of the absent student.

29. Members' comments and enquiries in another round of discussion are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member enquired whether the EDB had tried to contact the mother and son of the case by other means after mid-2012, and also urged the relevant department to improve the reporting mechanism as soon as possible;
- (ii) A Member said the mother and son in the case had lived in the unit all along, so if the EDB had communicated with the HD earlier, it should have been able to contact them. She hoped that the departments could learn the lesson and improve the coordination among themselves;
- (iii) A Member queried whether the EDB had tried to contact the mother and son in compliance with the relevant system;
- (iv) A Member learnt from a news report that the owners' corporation of Shan King Estate required a social welfare organisation to take out insurance before it could make home visits at the flats of the estate, and considered that it would greatly increase the administrative cost of a social welfare organisation;
- (v) A Member said the owners' corporation's said insurance requirement was to protect the owners' interests, the owners' corporation of Shan King Estate had not received any complaint from the social welfare organisations in this regard. Under the law, only emergency vehicles could use an emergency vehicular access, the Rehabuses could use a passing place to pick up or set down residents of the estate;
- (vi) A Member said the EDB circular did not require a school to have successfully contacted the parents of an absent student before referring the case to the police and requested the EDB to provide more details about it;
- (vii) A Member said most people living in the Tenant Purchase Scheme estates were grassroots citizens, the HD should not apply the management model of private housing to these estates;
- (viii) A Member queried that if only emergency vehicles could use the emergency vehicular

access in Shan King Estate, why the SWD had set up so many social welfare centres in Shan King Estate. She also requested the HD to confirm whether the Rehabuses were not allowed to use the access;

- (ix) A Member enquired why the EDB had not referred the case to the HKPF after mid-2012;
- (x) A Member said the social welfare organisations of Shan King Estate had held a joint press conference earlier to spell out the obstacles in providing services in the estate, she enquired whether the SWD had offered assistance in removing those obstacles;
- (xi) A Member requested the EDB to reply in the next meeting whether there were other Tuen Mun cases in which the parents of the absent students could not be contacted; and
- (xii) A Member said all of the Government departments should not remain stagnated and must contact other departments for assistance if need be.

30. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that he would relay Members' opinions to the responsible division of his department and request it to review the procedures for handling cases in which it was difficult to get in touch with the absent students or their parents. The EDB was currently reviewing the system for communicating with the other departments, he would provide more information after the meeting.

31. Ms NG of the SWD responded that the department had been sending representatives to the "meeting of the Government Departments and the Joint Education and Social Services of Shan King Estate" ("the Joint Meeting") and hoped to seek an arrangement acceptable to all parties. To her knowledge, the Joint Meeting would hold a meeting later to explore feasible ways for improving various matters.

32. Ms TSANG of the HD responded that if the department received residents' requests for assistance, it would refer their cases to the relevant departments upon receipt of their written consent to do so. As the passage connecting King Lok House with the Community Recreation Building was an emergency vehicular access, the Rehabuses had to park at the passing place beside King Lok House.

33. The Chairlady said some Members present enquired about matters relating to the declaration of interest. Hence, she asked if any Member was related to any owners' corporation and needed to make a declaration of interest.

34. Ms NG Dip-pui, Co-opted Member, declared that she was a volunteer committee member of the Incorporated Owners of Shan King Estate.

35. The Chairlady reminded Members once more that any Member who was aware of a personal interest in a discussion item should declare the interest before the discussion. She summarised that the SSC would continue to follow up on this issue, and requested the EDB to reply to the following questions: (i) How to improve the system for cross-departmental communication; (ii) How to decide whether a case should be referred to the police when the parents of an absent student could not be contacted; and (iii) Were there other Tuen Mun cases in which the parents of the absent students could not be contacted. She requested the HKPF to reply whether the EDB or other departments had referred the captioned case to it, and also requested the SWD to provide more information about ways to improve the services of the social welfare organisations in Shan King Estate.

Education
Bureau/
Hong Kong
Police Force/
Social
Welfare
Department

(B) Request for Expedient Completion of the Premises Extension Plan for Hong Chi Morninghill School, Tuen Mun
(SSC Paper No. 52/2017)

36. The first proposer of the paper said Hong Chi Morninghill School, Tuen Mun (“Morninghill School”) currently had to share the same school premises with Hong Chi Morninglight School, Tuen Mun. Morninghill School was a school for persons with mild intellectual disability with the smallest area for the same type of school in Hong Kong. Many students of the Morninghill School suffered from hyperactivity disorder or autism, they required more activity space and special facilities like “calm down room” and physiotherapy room; however, Morninghill School did not have space for setting up such facilities and even had to use the nearby public basketball court sometimes.

37. He said further that in 2013, the TMDC proposed to the EDB to move Morninghill School to other vacant school premises, but later the EDB proposed a compromise solution to construct a building with classrooms, staff and social worker rooms on a piece of vacant land near Morninghill School. The proposal had been discussed in the meeting of the SSC on 15 July 2014 and was supported by most Members. However, after three years, the relevant construction work had not yet commenced. He requested the EDB to explain the reasons and provide the implementation schedule.

38. A Member said many staffs and parents of Morninghill School had asked her about the progress of the premises extension works. She was discontented that in recent years, the Government had launched numerous large infrastructure works, but disregarded the demands of these disadvantaged schools. She suggested the EDB to allow Morninghill School to move to the vacant school premises in Tuen Mun. Another Member enquired whether the EDB would

consider constructing a new school building for Morninghill School instead of carrying out extension works to its existing premises.

39. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that the EDB had completed a feasibility study on the premises extension for Morninghill School and had completed the approval procedure in August 2017. The EDB would later discuss with the Architectural Services Department, engineering consultant, design consultant and the responsible person of Morninghill School about the details of the extension works. When the design plan was confirmed, an application for funding would be submitted and then the construction works would commence.

40. A Member was discontented with the EDB's reply. It was already three years after the authority promised a new building for the school, he could not understand why the construction works still had not begun; he requested the EDB to provide the completion date of the construction. Another Member requested the EDB to provide the update news about the premises extension works in detail and to commence the works as soon as possible; in the long run, Morninghill School should be moved to the vacant school premises in the district.

41. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that he would relay Members concerns to the relevant division of the department.

42. A Member asked for the details of the premises extension works and whether the area of the site would be changed in accordance with the result of the aforesaid feasibility study. He/she requested the SSC to continue this discussion in the next meeting for the EDB to explain the details of the premises extension works.

43. The Chairlady summarised that the SSC would write to the EDB to reflect Members' Secretariat concerns and would continue this discussion in the next meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The said letter was sent on 20 December 2017.)

(C) **Request for Provision of Greater Support to School Children to Alleviate Parents' Burden**

(SSC Paper No. 53/2017)

(Reply from Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau)

(Reply from Long Win Bus Company Limited)

Reply from The Kowloon Motor Bus Co. (1933) Ltd)

(Reply from New World First Bus Services Limited and Citybus Limited)

44. The Chairlady welcomed Mr LAW Yiu-wah, Planning and Support Officer of Long Win Bus Company Limited ("Long Win") to the meeting. She reminded Members that discussions

about “requesting the bus company to offer fare concessions to full-time students” must be restrained and confined exactly to the topic to avoid overlapping with the functions of the Traffic and Transport Committee.

45. The first proposer of the paper said the family expenditure on children education of Hong Kong was increasing, the Government should provide more support to the school children. He suggested to extend the Textbook Assistance Scheme to kindergartens, introduce an “extracurricular activity allowance for grassroots school children” and a tax allowance for children education expenses and encourage the reuse of old textbooks. He also requested the bus company to offer fare concessions to full-time students in order to alleviate parents’ burden.

46. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that the mode of teaching in kindergartens was different from primary and secondary schools. Most kindergartens used everyday life events to teach students and therefore did not have any specific textbook. The EDB currently did not provide any textbook subsidy to parents of kindergarten students. With effect from the 2017/18 school year, the Student Finance Office of Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency would provide a “Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students” of an annual amount of \$3,885 to the needy families.

47. Mr LAW of Long Win responded that the company currently offered several concessions for a variety of passengers, including the Octopus Bus-Bus Interchange concessions, same day return discount and group discount. Long Win would study the feasibility of offering fare concessions to full-time students and would continue to provide the aforesaid concessions if the financial conditions of the company allowed.

48. Members’ comments and enquiries are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member reported that some parents of the kindergarten students said that since the implementation of the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme, the fees for the previous school year (for some schools) could be covered by the education vouchers; but for the current school year, parents had to top up the fees. He said the kindergarten education subsidies provided by the EDB were more than last year, but the parents’ burden was not alleviated. He enquired whether the EDB had any measure to monitor the level of the kindergarten fees;
- (ii) A Member said at present, the better-off families would enrol their children in several extracurricular activities. The EDB should consider providing extracurricular activity allowances to students who could not afford the expenses to achieve the principle of equality;

(iii) A Member suggested establishing the books review criteria and recommended textbook list and encourage the publishers to publish paperback textbooks so as to lower the textbook prices.

(iv) A Member reckoned the EDB's reply as merely a partial response to Members' enquires.

49. Mr LAM of the EDB responded that each year, the EDB would prepare recommended textbook lists for both paper books and E-books of all academic subjects, which also listed out the reference prices of the books for the schools' reference. In addition, the EDB usually issued circulars to remind schools to select textbooks with lower prices if the qualities among the books were similar. The EDB also encouraged schools to advocate the reuse of old textbooks with a view to alleviate parents' burden and promote the environmental protection concept.

50. The Chairlady requested the EDB to reply to the issue about the level of kindergarten fees.

51. Mr LAM of the EDB supplemented that the situation cited by a Member might be related to the long whole-day kindergartens, because currently, most of the half-day kindergartens in Tuen Mun which had joined the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme were free of charge.

52. The Chairlady requested the EDB to provide the relevant information after the meeting and requested the representative of Long Win to relay Members' comments to his company.

Education
Bureau

VI. Reporting Items

(A) Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project **(SSC Paper No. 54/2017)**

53. The Chairlady welcomed Mr TAM Yu-chuen, Charity Projects Manager, Charity Affairs Division and Mr CHOI Chung-lam, Community Affairs Manager, Public Relations Division of the Hong Kong Jockey Club ("HKJC"); Dr WEN Zhuoyi, Vincent, Research Assistant Professor of the Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies and Ms LEUNG Cheuk Man, Charmaine, Assistant Manager, Ms SZE Wai-tak, Alta, Senior Project Officer of Lingnan University, to the meeting.

54. The Chairlady said in the 10th meeting of all District Councils held on 2 May 2017, the representatives of the HKJC and Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies introduced the captioned project to Members. The TMDC agreed to become a partner in the

project and referred the project to the SSC for following up. Mr TSANG Hin-hong, Ms CHING Chi-hung, and herself were nominated to join the assessment panel of the district-based programme committee. The representatives of the HKJC and Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies then gave a briefing to Members on the captioned project and the results of the baseline assessment.

55. Mr TAM of the HKJC said Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies had carried out a study concerning baseline assessment in Tuen Mun District from May to September this year. The study summarised the good points about the elderly people and the age-friendliness of the district, and areas for improvement in age-friendliness. In the next three years (2018-2020), the HKJC would assign an annual amount of \$500,000 for the Tuen Mun district to subsidise the NGOs and community groups to carry out district-based programmes related to elderly people and age-friendly cities. He looked forward to Members' support for this project, as well as their comments on the action plan. Besides, he hoped that the TMDC would agree to the sending of letters through the Secretariat to the NGOs and local organisations to invite them to submit proposals and to participate in the preparation work for joining the World Health Organisation's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities ("the Network").

56. Ms LEUNG of Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies gave a briefing on the captioned project and the results of the baseline assessment through powerpoint presentation (Annex I)*.

*Only available in Chinese version.

57. Members' comments and enquiries are summarised as follows:

- (i) A Member considered the Baseline Assessment Report as a comprehensive report which could also reflect the needs of the district. He/she suggested to send the reports to different government departments to enlighten them on the improvement of the facilities of Tuen Mun District;
- (ii) A Member suggested the HKJC to consider allocating more resources to areas where the problem of ageing population was more serious and to promote plans related to age-friendly cities;
- (iii) A Member enquired about the credibility of the baseline assessment and whether adjustment had been made for the difference in the proportion of the male and female elderly respondents, and apart from the annual funding of \$500,000 to the TMDC, would there be any other support offered to the TMDC;

- (iv) A Member supported both Tuen Mun's joining the Network and the sending of letters through the Secretariat to the NGOs and local organisations to invite them to submit proposals.
- (v) A Member said the HKJC provided huge sums of subsidies to the social welfare organisations each year but suggested it to target the subsidies to elderly services basing on the Baseline Assessment Report; and
- (vi) A Member said a lot of senior citizens would like to serve the community and suggested to include the provision of the relevant training (and other assistance) for them in the action plan and not merely funding the elderly services.

58. Mr TAM of the HKJC responded that the project adopted a bottom-up and district-based approach to develop age-friendliness in the community and recommend a framework for district councils to undertake continual improvement for the well-being of senior citizens. If the SSC supported Tuen Mun's joining the Network, it had to submit to the World Health Organisation a Baseline Assessment Report, an action plan to improve the age-friendliness in the district and a letter from the Chairman of the TMDC committing to support the age-friendly work. The support team of the Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies would help the TMDC to review the progress in the next three years and would prepare the report to be submitted to the World Health Organisation. He requested Members to select some domains from the eight domains of the baseline assessment report to be the strategic priority areas of the first batch of district-based programmes.

59. Dr WAN of Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies responded that they had used convenience sampling to select respondents. The assessment team members mainly contacted the respondents in the elderly centres and social welfare organisations of Tuen Mun District, with a quota of at least 500 respondents in each sub-district. As the study was not carried out in a stratified sampling mode, the credibility level had not been calculated, but the respondent samples were sufficiently representative. They estimated that the elderly participants of the activities held in the elderly centres were mainly female, so the proportion of male elderly respondents was smaller, but it still met the sample size required in quantitative statistical analysis. The survey results of the eight domains showed no obvious difference with regard to sexes and aligned with the analysis in the qualitative study; so, he believed that the data was able to reflect the age-friendly condition of Tuen Mun District. Later on, the CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing would also consolidate and analyse the study results of all the 18 districts of Hong Kong.

60. At the request of the Chairlady, the Secretary gave the following supplementary information on the items that needed to be resolved and discussed regarding the captioned project:

- (i) Members needed to resolve whether or not to support the "Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project" and whether the Secretariat needed to send letters to the NGOs and local organisations of the district to invite them to submit proposals;
- (ii) Members needed to discuss whether or not they agreed to do the preparation work for joining the Network; and
- (iii) According to the certification requirements of the Network, the participating district had to provide a platform for the elderly to voice their opinions about the age-friendly work of the district. If the SSC agreed to join the Network, Members could give opinions on how to construct such a platform.

61. The SSC unanimously agreed to support the "Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project", and to commence the preparation work for joining the Network. The Chairlady requested the Secretariat to issue letters to invite local organisations to submit proposals for consideration by the HKJC and the assessment panel. Secretariat

(Post-meeting note: The said invitation letter was issued by email to a total of 75 local organisations in Tuen Mun District on 18 December 2017.)

62. The Chairlady requested the HKJC to share the information about the construction of the aforesaid platform by the other District Councils which had joined the captioned project.

63. Mr TAM of the HKJC responded that some District Councils invited the senior citizens to the committee meetings or working group meetings to voice their opinions, or organise some sort of joint association for senior Citizens for the elderly to participate and regularly give opinions to the District Council.

64. A Member suggested that the Working Group on Community Care might create the aforesaid platform for discussions and voicing opinions. Another Member suggested to select the domains of housing, civic participation and employment, and community support and health services from the eight domains of the baseline assessment to be the strategic priority areas of the first batch of district-based programmes.

65. The Chairlady summarised that the first batch of district-based programmes of the

"Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project" of Tuen Mun District would focus on promoting programmes related to housing, civic participation and employment, and community support and health services. The discussions on the creation of the elderly's platform would be left to the Working Group on Community Care. She thanked the representatives of the HKJC and Lingnan University Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies for attending the meeting.

(B) Progress Report on "All for Integrity" Tuen Mun District Project 2017/18
(SSC Paper No. 55/2017)

66. Members noted the contents of the ICAC report.

67. Ms WAH of the ICAC said they held a bus parade on 7 October 2017 and she thanked Members and the local people for their support and participation in the activity.

(C) Work Reports by the Working Groups under the Social Services Committee
(SSC Paper No. 56/2017)

(i) Working Group on Medical and Rehabilitation Services

68. Members noted the contents of the report of the above working group.

(ii) Working Group on Community Care

69. Members noted the contents of the report of the above working group.

(iii) Working Group on Education and Youth Services

70. Members noted the contents of the report of the above working group.

(iv) Working Group on the Promotion of Healthy Diet

71. Members noted the contents of the report of the above working group.

72. The convener of the working group said in its meeting held on 18 October 2017, the working group approved the details of the "low salt and low sugar diet" campaign and the cooking competition was expected to be held in February 2018.

73. The Chairlady announced that the above four reports were endorsed.

(D) Report by the Tuen Mun District School Development Section of the Education Bureau
(SSC Paper No. 57/2017)

74. Members noted the contents of the report of the EDB.

75. A Member said the number of Form One students would increase in the next two years, but Tuen Mun District only accounted for a small proportion. The Hong Kong Association of the Heads of Secondary Schools was concerned that some schools had already carried out optimisation of class structures and the number of such schools might be increasing, and therefore, schools having under-enrolment might be faced with more pressure. He suggested the EDB to coordinate the schools of the nearby districts with a view to reduce under-enrolment in the schools in Tuen Mun District.

76. Mr LAM of the EDB said he would relay the above comments to the relevant division of the EDB.

**(E) Report by the Social Welfare Department
(SSC Paper No. 58/2017)**

77. Members noted the contents of the report of the SWD.

78. A Member enquired about the progress of converting the former CCC Kei Leung Primary School in Leung King Estate to an elderly facility.

79. Ms NG of the SWD said she would ask the responsible division about it and report back to the next meeting.

Social
Welfare
Department

**(F) Report on Crime Figures in the Tuen Mun District
(SSC Paper No. 59/2017)**

80. Members noted the contents of the report of the HKPF.

VII. Date of next meeting

81. The Chairlady said the first meeting of the coming term of the SSC would be held in the morning of 9 January 2018, during which the new Chairperson and new Vice-chairperson would be elected. The discussion for creating the various new working groups would be held in the 2nd meeting of the new term of the SSC. During the transition of the current term to the new term of the working groups, businesses had to move on; so, adopting the past practice, the TMDC concurred in having the unfinished jobs followed up by the conveners of the old working groups until the formation of the new ones in the coming term. The SSC noted the said arrangement.

82. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:45 p.m.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

Date: 4 January 2018

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