

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of
the Social Welfare and Housing Committee (2024-2027) of
the Tuen Mun District Council

Date : 29 February 2024 (Thursday)
Time : 2:31 p.m.
Venue : Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) Conference Room

Present

Ms LAI Ka-man (Chairman)	TMDC Member
Mr TSE Wing-hang (Vice Chairman)	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Yau-hoi, BBS, MH, JP	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Manwell, MH	TMDC Member
Ms SO Ka-man	TMDC Member
Mr TSANG Hin-hong, MH	TMDC Member
Mr YIP Man-pan, MH	TMDC Member
Mr HO Jun-hang, Benton	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Ho-ting, Mac	TMDC Member
Dr CHAN Kwai-wao	TMDC Member
Ms MAK Mei-yee, Pamela	TMDC Member
Mr FUNG Pui-yin	TMDC Member
Mr FUNG Yuk-fung, MH	TMDC Member
Mr TSANG Hing-chung	TMDC Member
Mr KWONG Man-tik	TMDC Member
Mr CHUNG Kin-fung	TMDC Member
Miss WONG Wing-tsin (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council)1, Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department

By Invitation

Mr KWOK Yu-yuen	Assistant Housing Manager/Sam Shing 2, Housing Department
Mr TSEA Yiu-kwan, Rudolf	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun) 1, Social Welfare Department
Ms TSANG Yin-ling	Social Work Officer 2 (Planning and Coordinating), Social Welfare Department
Mr TSOI Chi-ho	Neighbourhood Police Co-ordinator, Police Community Relations Office (Tuen Mun District), Hong Kong Police Force

In Attendance

Mr KWAN Ke-lin, Michael, JP	District Officer (Tuen Mun), Home Affairs Department, and TMDC Chairman
Mr LI Chiu-hung	TMDC Member

Mr LAU Yu-hang, Henry	Senior Liaison Officer (1), Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department
Ms CHOW Tsuen-ming, Anita	Liaison Officer i/c (Building Management and Town Centre), Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department
Mr KWOK Kin-man, Tony	Senior Building Surveyor/E5, Buildings Department
Ms HO Mai-wah, Josephine	Senior Housing Manager/Tuen Mun and Yuen Long 1, Housing Department
Mr LI Mun-tong	Housing Manager/Tuen Mun 2, Housing Department
Ms CHAN Shui-yum, Angel	Labour Officer (Employment Services) (Tuen Mun), Labour Department
Mr MA Man-piu	Senior School Development Officer (Tuen Mun) 3, Education Bureau
Ms KO Man-lai, Jessica	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun) 2, Social Welfare Department
Mr TSE Wai-kit	Assistant Police Community Relations Officer, Police Community Relations Office (Tuen Mun District), Hong Kong Police Force
<u>Absent with Apologies</u>	
Ms CHING Chi-hung, MH, JP	TMDC Member

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all present to the 1st meeting of the the Social Welfare and Housing Committee (2024-2027) (SWHC).

2. The Chairman stated that as the audio recording of the meeting would be uploaded to the TMDC website, Members who wished to speak should first press the “Request to Speak” button under the screen of the audio system and wait to speak, and should speak only after she signalled them to do so.

3. To ensure the efficiency of the meeting, the Chairman set limitations on speaking time as follows: For each agenda item, each Member would be allowed to speak twice, with time limits of three minutes for the first speech and one minute for the second speech. Furthermore, for each tabled paper, the proposer might have an additional three minutes to introduce the content. Secretariat staff would assist in keeping track of time, and Members would be notified by a ringing sound when their speaking time elapsed. The Chairman continued that the meeting would be conducted according to the order of business on the agenda. She asked all Members present to keep their speeches concise and avoid repetition.

4. The Chairman requested that members of the public observing the meeting take note that the areas on either side of the screen of the overhead projector located at the back of the conference room were designated as press areas. Only journalists who were registered and issued with a media sticker as identification were permitted to remain in these areas. She reminded that journalists should also stay within the press areas for photographing.

5. The Chairman further reminded Members that those who were aware of their personal interests in any matters discussed at the meeting should declare the interests before the discussion. She would, in accordance with Order 22(4) of the Tuen Mun District Council Standing Orders (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

6. The Chairman reported that the Secretariat received an application for leave of absence from Ms CHING Chi-hung, who was unable to attend the meeting due to illness and had submitted relevant medical certificates to the Secretariat. The Secretary remarked that, according to Order 64(1) of the Standing Orders, the above reason was considered one of the reasonable reasons for absence by the SWHC. Therefore, Ms

CHING Chi-hung's absence was approved. The Secretary further reported that no other applications for leave of absence from Members were received.

III. Discussion Items

A. Concern about the Waiting Time for Special Child Care Centre Service in Tuen Mun District

(SWHC Paper No. 1/2024)

B. Concern about the Waiting Period for Special Child Care Centre Service in Tuen Mun District

(SWHC Paper No. 2/2024)

7. The Chairman stated that the Secretariat received a written response from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) on the captioned issues, and distributed relevant documents to all Members via email before the meeting for their perusal. She welcomed Mr Rudolf TSE, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun) 1, and Ms TSANG Yin-ling, Social Work Officer 2 (Planning and Coordinating) of the SWD, to the meeting. She mentioned that a Member raised the issue of waiting time for special child care centre service in the Tuen Mun District during the first meeting of the TMDC held on 5 January 2024, which was supported by other Members present. Consequently, the TMDC Chairman referred the issue to the SWHC for follow-up discussion. Subsequently, the Secretariat also received papers on the above issue from Members. Since discussion items (A) and (B) were correlated, she would combine the discussion for the two items.

8. The first proposer of SWHC Paper No. 2/2024 expressed gratitude to the SWD for the written response, and voiced concern over the lengthy average waiting time of 19.3 months for special child care centre service. In light of this, he enquired about the latest measures the SWD was taking to reduce the waiting time for such service in the Tuen Mun District, in order to assist parents in need in application.

9. A Member expressed welcome towards the establishment of a special child care centre on Wu Shan Road in Tuen Mun in the 2027/28 year. He continued that the written response only referenced the number of places, without providing the number of children waitlisted for the service, making it difficult to fully reflect the actual situation of special child care education. In such regard, he enquired about the Department's projected trends in waiting time and hoped that the Department would provide the number of waitlisted children in other districts. He explained that with a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, Members could then propose more effective suggestions for improving the quality of special child care education and addressing the issue of excessively long waiting period.

10. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD stated that he did not have the latest data about waiting time on hand, but he would provide additional information after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided supplementary information after the meeting, indicating that in March 2022, the Government incorporated the planning ratios of various rehabilitation services into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Among them, the planning ratio for pre-school rehabilitation services was 23 service places for every 1 000 children aged 0 to 6. This measure would facilitate the continual development of pre-school rehabilitation services, and the number of service places would continue to increase as needed. In addition, the Government had been increasing the number of pre-school rehabilitation service places through a multi-pronged approach, including identifying suitable sites within public housing estates or redevelopment projects, and urban redevelopment projects; locating suitable government lands or vacant premises (such as vacant school premises) for conversion to welfare use; and identifying suitable land sale sites, requiring private developers to construct welfare facilities.]

11. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD responded that regarding the number of waitlisted children outside the Tuen Mun District, he would enquire with the Department's headquarters after the meeting and then report back to the SWHC.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided supplementary information after the meeting, stating that as of the end of December 2023, the number of children waitlisted for special child care centre service by 11 administrative districts, was as follows:

District	Number of waitlisted children (as of the end of December 2023)
Central/Western/Southern and Islands	90
Eastern/Wan Chai	119
Kwun Tong	61
Wong Tai Sin/Sai Kung	69
Kowloon City/Yau Tsim Mong	106
Sham Shui Po	60
Sha Tin	53
Tai Po/North	84
Yuen Long	173
Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing	97
Tuen Mun	92
Total	1 004 (Note)

Note: The figure did not include pre-school rehabilitation service users who were now receiving Early Education and Training Centre or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services as transitional service, or users who were waiting for a change of service type/choice of centre.]

12. A Member noted that according to the papers, the average waiting time for the special child care centres in the Tuen Mun District was 19.3 months, and the number of service places was fewer than those in other districts. In such regard, he enquired how much average waiting time was expected to be reduced after adding 60 special child care centre service places in the second quarter of 2024. In addition, he pointed out that population growth rate in Tuen Mun was faster, hence the demand for special child care education was also higher. However, it was anticipated that the number of places would only increase after a new special child care centre was set up in the 2027/28 year. Therefore, he asked whether there would be other services to assist the children on the waiting list during this period.

13. A Member enquired about the operation of tutorial classes for children with special learning needs in the Tuen Mun Ferry Pier area. He mentioned that some citizens reported that these classes would cease operations in June, and he asked whether it was an isolated case. In addition, he enquired whether the Department had other means to increase relevant places before the completion of the public housing project on Wu Shan Road in the 2027/28 year.

14. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The waiting time of 19.3 months was the average figure for special child care centre service across the territory. There were over a hundred places in the Tuen Mun District, and an additional 60 places would be added once the new special child care centre was in service. In the coming April to June, with the completion of the new centre, it was believed that most of the waitlisted children would receive service, and the waiting time would also reduce. In addition, the Department provided a series of transitional services for waitlisted children, including Early Education and Training Centre or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (Transitional Services).
- (b) Children who were waiting for special child care centre service and were not currently receiving any subsidies or Transitional Services could also apply for a training subsidy under the Training Subsidy Programme for Children on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services, without being subject to any means test. Through self-financing pre-school rehabilitation services operated by recognised service providers, they could receive training as early as possible.
- (c) The tutorial classes for children with special learning needs in the Tuen Mun Ferry Pier area were not part of the SWD's regular services, and the Department did not have information on the cessation of service.

15. A Member mentioned that previously, a parent sent an email to all TMDC Members regarding the lengthy waiting time, hence Members tabled the captioned papers to express concern over the issue. He pointed out that the report indicated an average waiting time of 19.3 months for special child care centre service, and there were 92 waitlisted applicants currently in the Tuen Mun District. He suggested using the average waiting time as a benchmark to give priority to applicants who had been waiting for over 19.3 months to be placed in the centres. In the long term, he believed that the Department should increase the number of places of special child care centres. In addition, he recommended that the Department adopt other short-term measures, such as utilising the well-equipped Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex to temporarily accommodate some applicants in urgent need of services, to meet the demand before the 2027/28 year.

16. A Member thanked the SWD for their response and enquired about other Transitional Services apart from the special child care centre service. In this regard, he asked about the current participation of kindergartens and relevant data. Furthermore, with the development of new districts, the number of service places would increase by 60, and he asked the Department for their expectations at that time.

17. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Generally, applications were handled by social workers. In order to enable children on the waiting list for special child care centres to receive training and support as soon as possible, during the waiting period, they could simultaneously receive Early Education and Training Centre / On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services as transitional service until they were allocated a place in a special child care centre.
- (b) Since Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex primarily served adults, its facilities were not suitable for providing services to young children, the Department had not considered it as a solution for the time being. Currently, the Department provided pre-school services, which included a service team composed of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists, to offer services to pre-school children in need. Members could obtain information about the list of kindergartens offering the services on website.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided the link of relevant website after the meeting: https://www.swd.gov.hk/oprs/index_en.htm.]

- (c) Regarding future service provision and demand, there were currently 92 children on the waiting list in the Tuen Mun District. With the upcoming provision of approximately 120 places at Ching Tin Estate and Wu Shan Road, it was believed

that service demand in the Tuen Mun District could be met in the future, and the waiting period in the Tuen Mun District would be relatively reduced.

18. A Member noted that in the 2022/23 year, the average waiting time for special child care centre service was 19.3 months. As of the end of December 2023, there were 92 children on the waiting list in the Tuen Mun District. Since the average waiting time was a figure calculated based on all applications across the territory, it was difficult for Members to analyse the actual situation in the Tuen Mun District, and therefore, he hoped that the SWD could provide relevant figures in the Tuen Mun District. In addition, he noted that the number of waitlisted children in note one of paragraph seven set out in the written response did not include those children receiving Transitional Services, and thus requested the Department to provide the number of waitlisted children who were excluded due to receipt of Transitional Services. Lastly, he hoped the Department would study how to optimise Transitional Services.

[Post-meeting note: According to supplementary information provided by the SWD after the meeting, as of the end of December 2023, the number of children waiting for special child care centres in the Tuen Mun District who were currently receiving training subsidy, Early Education and Training Centre or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services as transitional service, and users who were waiting for a change of service type/choice of centre, was listed as follows:

Services	Number of users (as of the end of December 2023)
Training subsidy	49 (Note)
Early Education and Training Centre or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services as transitional service	77
Waiting for a change of service type/choice of centre	97

Note: Out of the 92 children on the waiting list for special child care centre service, 49 were receiving training subsidy.]

19. A Member relayed the contents of the email sent to all Members, and mentioned that, according to data on the waiting time for special child care centre service as of 30 November 2023, the last applicant in the Tuen Mun District who was successfully allocated service made an application in March 2021, which showed that there had been over 30 months without any applicants being successfully allocated services in the Tuen Mun District. In such regard, he pointed out that there was a discrepancy between actual figures and the number of waitlisted children provided by the SWD, and therefore wanted

the Department to explain the calculation of the average waiting time reported.

20. A Member expressed that in terms of pre-school rehabilitation services, he suggested enhancing intervention efforts for each family from a case management perspective. Moreover, he hoped to increase the amount of pre-school development subsidy granted to families in need. He also expressed concern about how the SWD's Carers Resource Centre and the information on its website could meet the service needs of families on the waiting list. He believed that in the short term, the Department should provide more resources to support the social or learning needs of young children. He raised a concern about how the Department could make good use of territory-wide services and complement district-based services to provide comprehensive support to families in need.

21. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD reiterated that the average waiting time of 19.3 months was a figure calculated based on the total number of applications across the territory. He mentioned that the figure was useful for the Department and social workers to explain to families applying for the service, giving them an estimate of waiting time. Although the situation varied by district, the figure still served as a reference for service applicants. The Department provided services through a multi-pronged approach, including case management work and pre-primary social worker service, managed by a professional team, which in turn provided comprehensive service. While more comprehensive support could be offered at special child care centres, many factors needed to be considered, such as location selection, size of premises, transport arrangements, and licensing procedures. Hence, preparation for these centres took a longer time, and the Department offered the option of certain Transitional Services for the public.

22. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD continued answering Members' questions, and made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) "Transitional Services" mainly provided support for children and their parents or caregivers. In recent years, the Government had been committed to strengthening support for caregivers. For example, in November 2023, the opening ceremony of the "Together · We Support" programme was held to promote community resources to caregivers, raise their awareness about their own needs, and cultivate a caregiver-friendly environment.
- (b) In September 2023, the SWD commissioned the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals to operate a 24-hour caregiver support hotline "182 183". The hotline was manned by professional social workers, providing the latest information on community support resources, and immediate consultation and referral services. If necessary, outbound or home visits would be arranged.

- (c) As for services in public housing estates, the SWD organised the “Support for Carers Project” for both public and private housing estates in the past. The target users of the project had now been expanded from the elderly to include people with disabilities and caregivers. The three-year project aimed to enhance property managers' understanding of the importance and needs of caregivers, promote mutual assistance in the community, and cultivate a caregiver-friendly environment.

23. The Chairman summarised the concerns of Members and requested the Department, after the meeting, to provide additional information on how to assist the waitlisted children, and on the average waiting time in the Tuen Mun District. Furthermore, she asked the Department to provide information about the organisations operating transitional measures, so that Members could explain the situation to the public.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided supplementary information after the meeting, indicating that the Department regularly updated information on its website about pre-school rehabilitation services on the Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services Waiting List.

Relevant link: https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/rehab/cat_crsrehab/crsrehabwa/]

24. A Member shared his personal experience of assisting citizens with the “182 183” enquiry hotline. After calling the hotline, he had to wait for more than ten minutes to be connected. The call was transferred three times to other social workers for follow-up, yet he still failed to obtain an effective answer. The Member hoped to familiarise himself with the “182 183” hotline to help residents, but he believed that the service quality of the hotline needed to be reviewed.

25. Mr Rudolf TSEA of the SWD stated that he would reflect the situation to the SWD headquarters or the operating agency. He continued to express his hope that the hotline could provide useful information and temporary services for caregivers. If individuals required long-term service support, the Department could also arrange for social workers to follow up and offer appropriate services for them.

26. The Chairman thanked the SWD for their response and suggested that the Department follow up on Members’ questions regarding the hotline enquiries after the meeting. In addition, the Chairman requested the SWD to take note of Members’ opinions and to provide supplementary information for their reference as soon as possible.

C. Concern about the Operation of Child Care Service Scheme in Tuen Mun District
(SWHC Paper No. 3/2024)

27. The Chairman stated that the Secretariat received a written response from the SWD regarding the captioned paper, and distributed relevant documents to all Members via

email before the meeting for their perusal.

28. A Member enquired about the age range of children served by the child care centres as mentioned in paragraphs four and five of the captioned paper, and requested an explanation for data on overall usage of services for the 2023/24 year (from April to September). In addition, he suggested that the Department should intensify its efforts to promote the services. He recommended that if the data revealed an oversupply in child care services, resources could be reallocated to special child care centres during the 2023/24 year. He hoped that various government departments could collaborate and share practical data, such as birth rates and student enrollment figures, to address livelihood issues in a timely manner.

29. A Member expressed concern over a child abuse case that had occurred in the Tuen Mun District. Regarding the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project”, he suggested installing video surveillance equipment for families in need in order to monitor child care services provided by home-based child carers. He believed this arrangement would be mutually beneficial for both parties.

30. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Child care services catered for two age groups through different types of institutions. Standalone child care centres served infants from birth up to the age of three, while kindergarten-cum-child care centres served children from birth or two up to the age of six.
- (b) Regarding enquiries about the overall usage of services, the data listed for each fiscal year was calculated from 1 April of each year to 31 March of the following year. Currently, the Department only compiled the data for the first half of the 2023/24 year.
- (c) As resources allocated for child care service and special child care centre service were not exactly the same, it was difficult to directly compare the amount of resources allocated for such services. However, Members’ opinions would be conveyed to the Department.
- (d) Representatives of the SWD would convey the suggestion to install surveillance equipment to the Department.

31. A Member noted from the data that the usage rate of day child care service in the Tuen Mun District was relatively low. He suggested that the Department consider allocating more resources to child care centres. To prevent further cases of child abuse in the Tuen Mun District, he proposed that the Department could consider referring

families in need to child care centres first, to avoid a continuously low usage rate and waste of resources.

32. A Member expressed support for the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” and made enquiries about the training hours of the project. He pointed out that children under three required more care, and asked whether the Department provided targeted training for caregivers and internship opportunities for new home-based child carers. In addition, he enquired about the supply and demand situation for home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District. If a shortage was found, he suggested that the Department should explore alternative ways to recruit more home-based child carers.

33. The Chairman consolidated the enquiries of all Members and asked the SWD about the current situation and the philosophy of the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project”.

34. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD noted Members’ opinions and stated that she would report back to the headquarters. She then made a consolidated response to Members’ enquiries as follows:

- (a) The philosophy of the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” was to foster a spirit of mutual assistance at the neighbourhood level, encouraging homemakers with spare time during the day to participate in social services. This project aimed to provide flexible daytime care services for families in need or parents with unstable work hours. In the Tuen Mun District, Yan Oi Tong was the only service operator under the project, and the Department currently had no data about the number of home-based child carers in the district. At present, for home-based child care service, the SWD invited eligible local organisations from all 18 districts in Hong Kong to bid to participate in this project, with applications closing in early March. Following the selection by the assessment committee, the Department would report the latest situation in the Tuen Mun District to the TMDC in due course.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided supplementary information after the meeting, indicating that in the 2023/24 year (as of December 2023), there were 37 home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District under the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” operated by Yan Oi Tong.]

- (b) Regarding the low usage rate of day child care service, she pointed out that in general, responsible social workers would introduce different types of services to parents, allowing them to choose appropriate services according to their needs, thereby increasing the usage rate. Some services required a referral from a social worker, while others could be applied for directly by parents to service units.

- (c) One of the reasons for the low usage rate of service might be the remote location of centres, which reduced parents' willingness to use the service. To enhance promotion, the Department regularly produced promotional materials. For example, the SWD distributed calendar cards to the public last year, introducing various services. In addition, service operators also promoted their services through various activities via street booths, leaflets and banners, in order to introduce relevant services to the public and increase usage rates.

35. A Member expressed his concern about how to unleash the labour force of women in society. As mentioned in the 2024-25 Budget, women would be encouraged to participate in child care services and enter the labour market. He pointed out that as shown from the data, the usage rate of child care service was low, but the Government would add ten more standalone child care centres in the future. Therefore, he worried that resources might be wrongly allocated. He believed there was a demand for child care service in the community, and hence he hoped the Department would focus on how to optimise child care service and find a way to overcome the difficulties.

36. A Member reported the feedback he received, commenting that the location of child care centres might not suit the needs of parents. In addition, he was aware of the Department's current measures to support day child care services. He pointed out that what many local organisations lacked most was land resources, and suggested that the Department strengthen cooperation with community groups, nurseries, and kindergartens, enabling parents to choose child care services provided by nearby institutions and schools. He hoped the Department would actively consider allocating resources in a flexible manner to increase the usage rate of child care service.

37. The Chairman remarked that Members wished to know the locations of the ten child care centres to be established in the future and requested that the SWD consult the TMDC on future development plan for child care centres in due course.

38. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD stated that the Department had always adopted a multi-pronged approach to select locations for day child care centres. This included housing property development projects and purchasing private premises to increase the number of service places for child care centres in the Tuen Mun District. She hoped Members would understand that the selection of locations was subject to various factors, but the Department would continue to identify more suitable sites for day child care services through different channels, including the Housing Department (HD), schools voluntarily providing school buildings, and vacant shops. The Department would report back to Members if there were any new developments.

39. A Member suggested that the Department consider incorporating the data of concern

to Members into regular reports, including the waiting time for special child care centres and the usage rate of child care centre service, to allow Members to promptly follow up on the situation in the Tuen Mun District.

40. A Member noted that the Department only reported the number of children using the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” in the report, without including the number of home-based child carers. He pointed out that the Labour and Welfare Bureau had listed the number of home-based child carers in all 18 districts when replying to Legislative Council questions in 2022. He hoped that the Department could produce the latest number of home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District by collecting data from various institutions. He pointed out that the 2023 Policy Address mentioned strengthening support measures for home-based child carers. In this regard, he hoped that the Department could report on the progress of the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project”. He believed that strengthening the home child care project could assist some low-income individuals and release women's labour force. To help the SWHC better understand the situation in the Tuen Mun District, he asked the Department to provide the actual number of home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District at the next meeting.

41. A Member expressed the hope that the Department could make good use of resources and public funds to boost the low usage rate of child care service. He suggested that the Department consider merging the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” with child care centres, which would not only make efficient use of resources for centralised supervision but also address the deficiencies of the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project”.

42. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the suggestion to include the relevant number of child care service in regular reports, generally speaking, information such as waiting time and number of applicants in each district were provided by relevant service branches of the SWD headquarters. Therefore, including such numbers in regular reports needed to be considered by the SWD headquarters.

[Post-meeting note: After the meeting, the SWD indicated that it prepared the usage rate/number of users of each day child care service based on relevant service statistics submitted by each service operator every quarter. As there were many service operators involved, and it would be time-consuming to compile and analyse relevant data, generally, the SWD only considered releasing archived data based on the grounds for request for data.]

- (b) Regarding the number of home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District, the

Department would have a further study and provide relevant information for Members' reference after the meeting.

- (c) The Department was aware of Members' opinions on improving the "Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project" and making good resource allocation. She added that both the Department and service operators were responsible for supervising home-based child carers to protect service users.

43. The Chairman requested the Department to provide more information on home-based child carers to the SWHC via email or at the next meeting.

[Post-meeting note: According to the information provided by the SWD after the meeting, in the 2023/24 year (as of December 2023), there were a total of 37 home-based child carers in the Tuen Mun District under the "Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project" operated by Yan Oi Tong.]

D. Conducting Studies and Collecting Views on Stimulating Local Employment in Tuen Mun District
(SWHC Paper No. 4/2024)

44. The Chairman stated that the TMDC discussed the captioned matter at its 1st meeting held on 5 January 2024. The TMDC Chairman asked Members to collect opinions from residents and relevant parties within the district and to submit a summary of the collected opinions and suggested corresponding measures to the SWHC for discussion, after which the SWHC would consolidate the opinions and submit a report to the TMDC. Members had individually collected opinions from residents and relevant parties in the Tuen Mun District on how to create more local employment opportunities, and a summary was set out in the annex of the paper.

45. The District Officer (Tuen Mun) (DO), also acting as the TMDC Chairman, stated that at the 1st meeting of the TMDC, Members were asked to collect opinions from residents and relevant parties within the district on two topics, in order to submit a summary of opinions and suggested corresponding measures to the Government. The Secretariat would extract key points from the summary of opinions submitted by Members after the meeting and put forward a comprehensive report to the TMDC.

46. A Member expressed concern over the follow-up work regarding the summary of opinions on the topics. He suggested that all Members first reach a consensus on the issues they wished to focus on for discussion, then refer related opinions to the SWHC for discussing the feasibility and asking relevant Departments for their input. In this regard, he believed that revitalising industrial buildings was an issue of concern for many Members, and would involve the work of various government departments, such as the Lands Department and the Planning Department, etc. He suggested that the SWHC first

determine the direction of discussion. With this in mind, he believed that developing a fisherman's wharf in Sam Shing Hui could help promote local employment. He hoped that, after reaching a consensus, the SWHC could continue to follow up on key issues separately.

47. The Chairman thanked the Member for his opinion. She agreed that it was necessary to invite relevant departments to attend meetings when needed, based on the matters raised by Members. This would allow Members to better understand the information and background of an issue and more effectively improve livelihood of local residents.

48. A Member pointed out that looking through the summary of opinions collected by Members, some involved the Government's long-term planning and also required cross-departmental collaboration. He was concerned about how to effectively reflect the collected opinions to relevant departments through the TMDC, so that these opinions could provide reference for the Government's future policy planning. He hoped that a cross-departmental working group could be established in the future to discuss related issues and implement measures. He stated that in order to attract outstanding young people to work in the district, it would be necessary to improve the overall community planning. Therefore, he was concerned about how to attract talents and keep young people in Tuen Mun for development.

49. The DO stated that in response to the summary of opinions submitted by Members, the Secretariat would first extract the key points and put forward a summary report to the TMDC. Thereafter, TMDC Members could further discuss the paper at the TMDC meeting. The TMDC would consolidate relevant opinions and send them to relevant departments for follow-up or reference. If Members wished to follow up on individual matters, they could continue the discussion at the TMDC meetings. The TMDC hoped to promote communication between Members and government departments by way of effectively reflecting those collected public opinions to the Government, in order to ensure effective communication between the Government and the people.

50. A Member pointed out that all livelihood issues were interconnected, and the issue of local employment was closely related to transport problems. At the root, the lack of employment opportunities in the Tuen Mun District was the main reason why residents needed to work across districts. He suggested making good use of the land in Tuen Mun, and believed that Tuen Mun West and Lung Kwu Tan had development potential, which would provide job opportunities for the market. In addition, he pointed out that in recent years, some industrial areas with development potential had been used for goods distribution, which was a waste. He continued to cite recent successful examples of revitalising industrial buildings and providing employment opportunities for local residents, and believed that revitalisation of factories in the Tuen Mun District would be a

key point of discussion in the future, such as carrying out study on revitalisation of factories in Tuen Mun town centre. He concluded that accelerating the pace of revitalisation, as compared to developing some new projects, would be more effective in promoting local employment.

51. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to take note of Members' opinions and consider inviting relevant government departments, such as the Lands Department, to attend the SWHC meetings in the future to discuss major issues set out in papers proposed by Members so as to allow the TMDC to communicate directly with relevant departments.

IV. Items for Information

A. Report by the Buildings Department

(SWHC Paper No. 5/2024)

B. Report by the Housing Department

(SWHC Paper No. 6/2024)

52. Members noted the content of the captioned reports.

53. A Member enquired whether sub-districts listed in the Report by the Buildings Department (BD) was based on the constituency boundary in the past and asked if this zoning method was outdated. He suggested that in the future, the Department should only list the names of local communities. In addition, he expressed concern about illegal parking in On Ting Estate. Since parking spaces in On Ting Estate were jointly managed by the shopping centre and the HD, he enquired about how the HD would conduct enforcement actions.

54. Ms Josephine HO of the HD stated that the Department would, according to the deed of mutual covenant or land lease, take road control actions within the estate, including conducting inspections, issuing warnings to illegally parked vehicles, impounding vehicles, or issuing fixed penalty notices, etc.

55. Mr Tony KWOK of the BD stated that sub-districts listed in the report were based on computer records. The zoning method ensured that all communities in the Tuen Mun District were included, and data for all these communities was accurate.

56. A Member expressed concern about the serious issue of illegal parking in Fu Tai Estate. He hoped that the Department would keep in close contact with him after the meeting to monitor the situation. In addition, he pointed out that no arrests were made during itinerant hawker control actions, while he noted that there were itinerant hawkers selling goods in Fu Tai Estate during evening commuting hours. Furthermore, he enquired about the reasons for the high number of rental complaint cases in Fu Tai Estate and Yan Tin Estate. Lastly, he mentioned that the statistics on unauthorised animal keeping, throwing objects from height, and smoking offence under the Marking Scheme

for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates were only updated up to 31 January 2024. He hoped that the Department could provide the latest monthly data in future meetings.

57. A Member enquired about the statistics on illegal gambling enquiry or complaint cases in Wu King Estate. He pointed out that illegal gambling had long been found around chess tables in Wu King Estate for many years, and he also noticed that staff regularly dispersed gatherings. In such regard, he wanted to know whether the figures listed in the Report by the HD already reflected the number of enforcement actions taken by the Police and the HD.

58. Ms Josephine HO of the HD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the issue of illegal parking in Fu Tai Estate, the Department would reflect Members' opinions to the estate office and strengthen road control actions.
- (b) Regarding the control of itinerant hawkers, apart from hawker control actions taken by estate office staff, the HD headquarters also arranged additional staff for related actions, and held joint operations with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on hawker issues.
- (c) Regarding the issue of itinerant hawkers in Fu Tai Estate, the HD would continue to carry out blitz operations and joint actions with the FEHD to prevent resurgence of the hawker problem, ensuring good hygiene conditions within the estate and the safety of residents' access.
- (d) It was estimated that the high statistical numbers of enquiry or complaint for public housing estates in the Tuen Mun District correlated with the Department's intensified crackdown on abuse of public housing in recent years, leading to an increase in related complaints/enquiries.
- (e) Regarding the issue of illegal gambling in Wu King Estate, the Department had been maintaining close communication with the Police and arranged multiple joint operations to combat illegal gambling. However, no concrete evidence, including gambling equipment or money, was found in these operations so far. During the pandemic, the Department also invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) to prosecute offenders, reduced the number of chess tables, and regularly cleaned the related areas to maintain environmental hygiene. She thanked Members for their opinions on daily management in public housing estates and Members were welcome to directly contact estate offices so that estate management personnel could follow up in a

timely manner.

59. A Member mentioned the number of fixed penalty notices issued for illegal parking within public housing estates in the Tuen Mun District (special operation team), and asked the Department about the enforcement procedures for illegal parking, such as how many warning notices would be issued and when impoundment actions would be taken. In addition, he reported to the Department that some monthly rental parking spaces were occupied by other vehicles at night. He said he would report to the Tai Hing Estate Office, but at the same time, he hoped that the Department could help improve the situation. He suggested that the Department formulate a mechanism to ensure that contractors and management companies had the authority to monitor illegal parking activities, especially during non-office hours of the HD. Furthermore, he asked the Department about the handling of illegal parking during non-office hours.

60. A Member asked the BD how it determined the boundary of a sub-district. He also asked the HD how the statistics on itinerant hawker control actions in On Ting Estate were compiled. He mentioned that the areas within On Ting Estate where occupied by hawker stalls were not under the jurisdiction of the HD. Moreover, citizens had reported to him about people smoking at the bus stop in On Ting Estate, which differed from the reported numbers. He added that the public hoped for better channels to express opinions to the HD.

61. Ms Josephine HO of the HD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) In addition to hawker control actions carried out by estate offices, the HD headquarters also deployed special teams to perform related tasks, thereby increasing the total number of actions taken.
- (b) Regarding the issue of people smoking at the bus stop, the Department would check the land lease to determine whether the bus stop fell under the jurisdiction of the HD. If not, the Department would refer the information to responsible government departments for follow-up.
- (c) Regarding illegal parking activities, some estate car parks and parking spaces had been sold and were not properties of the HD, and hence they were not under the management of the HD. For example, some monthly rental parking spaces within Tai Hing Estate had been sold, over which the Department could have no jurisdiction. She mentioned that the Department once received complaints about a parking space being occupied by others. In such cases, the Department would call the owner of shopping centre and management company to learn about the situation and assist in contacting the Police for enforcement actions. Generally, the Department, depending on resources, would arrange staff to issue warnings to an

illegally parked vehicle first. And if such offence was found persisted during further patrols, staff would impound the vehicle concerned or issue tickets. In addition, Members were welcome to report public housing estates plagued with severe illegal parking activities. The Department would try to allocate more resources to handle these cases to optimise enforcement actions against illegal parking.

62. A Member expressed gratitude for the HD's efforts in dealing with illegal parking in Yau Oi Estate in the past. In addition, he hoped the Department could continue to effectively utilise resources to combat the issue of itinerant hawkers. Furthermore, he noticed that some public housing estates were older and, correspondingly, had more maintenance cases. He was also concerned about the issue of throwing objects from height in public housing estates and wanted to know if such incidents often originated from specific units. Regarding complaints about noise from neighbours and poor hygiene conditions, he enquired whether there were instances of repeated complaints against specific units and wanted to know what actions the HD would take if a case fell outside the HD's jurisdiction. He also suggested that the Department consider implementing measures to prevent objects from being thrown from height.

63. A Member reported to the Department the issue of illegal distribution of illicit cigarette promotion leaflets in public housing estates and hoped that such community concerns would be included in future reports. She pointed out that it was not uncommon to see illegal distribution of illicit cigarette promotion leaflets in various estates. Therefore, she hoped the Department could add to the report the actions or joint operations taken to address such offence, or the number of cases referred to the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) for follow-up.

64. The Chairman requested that the HD respond to Members' questions collectively and asked the representative of the BD to answer Members' enquiries regarding the records of sub-districts.

65. Mr Tony KWOK of the BD stated that before 2022, sub-districts were marked with "G" for identification based on District Council geographical constituency boundary in 1990. Following a computer system upgrade, from 2023, the Department adopted the sub-districts of District Council geographical constituency boundary in 2018, using "L" as the marker for identification. Members could refer to the two maps on the last two pages of the paper to understand the boundaries of sub-districts.

66. Ms Josephine HO of the HD made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The Department would continue to strengthen law enforcement actions against illegal parking in Yau Oi Estate.

- (b) The central special squad of the HD headquarters was responsible for combating itinerant hawkers across the territory, and the headquarters would also carry out more blitz operations during the Lunar New Year in the light of actual circumstances in districts.
- (c) In the Tuen Mun District, some public housing estates were older, and the Department would conduct comprehensive repairs and provide inspections of windows for public housing estates as necessary.
- (d) Regarding the situation of throwing objects from height, the Department had installed surveillance systems for prevention of throwing objects from height to gather evidence, so as to prosecute or warn the offenders. The HD also made good use of artificial intelligence technology, processing the footage captured by surveillance cameras with artificial intelligence technology to quickly identify the accurate origin of the thrown objects. In addition, staff of estate offices would identify black spots and install surveillance equipment nearby. Special action teams composed of retired police officers would be arranged to conduct mobile inspection and enforcement actions in different public housing estates, to increase deterrence and effectively implement the Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement (Marking Scheme). The Department hoped to enhance deterrence by taking punitive measures, and to improve the situation through multi-channel publicity and effective surveillance.
- (e) Regarding noise and hygiene conditions, every family had different living habits, and everyone's sensitivity to noise and level of acceptance varied, and that led to complaints. Therefore, the Department handled noise complaints with an understanding attitude. In the case of conflicts between residents, the Department would try to mediate, and in the light of actual circumstances, handle it according to the Marking Scheme. In addition, complaints about noise and hygiene conditions varied over time. Estate office staff would closely follow up on complaint cases and find out if there were any special circumstances.
- (f) Regarding illegal distribution of illicit cigarette promotion leaflets, the Department would refer the case to the C&ED for follow-up after receiving a complaint. The C&ED would regularly provide the Department with prosecution figures, and the Department would accordingly allocate penalty points or terminate the subject tenancy after receiving relevant data. If an estate office discovered a suspicious situation of illegal sale of illicit cigarettes, the Department would notify the C&ED to follow up. At present, the Department did not collect related data, but it would continue to monitor the situation and follow up. Members were welcome to provide opinions or further information to the HD for follow-up and referring to

relevant departments.

67. The Chairman mentioned that illegal distribution of illicit cigarette promotion leaflets occurred throughout the Tuen Mun District. As far as she knew, the Department carried out relevant enforcement actions in Yan Tin Estate recently. In this regard, she suggested that the Department could provide data for each public housing estate in the Tuen Mun District for Members' reference. In addition, with the impending waste charging, it might increase the instances of throwing objects from height. She asked the Department about the number of surveillance systems for prevention of throwing objects from height in the Tuen Mun District. She also suggested that the Department increase artificial intelligence monitoring devices for surveillance purposes.

68. Ms Josephine HO of the HD stated that the Department employed multipurpose surveillance systems for monitoring different situations, such as throwing objects from height, rodent activities, and illegal refuse disposal. Therefore, a surveillance system's purpose and installation location might change as necessary. In addition, special action teams carried their own equipment for monitoring the situation of throwing objects from height as well as for enforcement actions. Hence, there was no specific number of surveillance system. She indicated that the Department might consider providing the number of operations carried out by special action teams to give Members a better understanding on the overall situation of throwing objects from height.

C. Report by the Tuen Mun District School Development Section of the Education Bureau
(SWHC Paper No. 7/2024)

69. Members noted the content of the captioned report.

70. A Member noticed that items reported by the Education Bureau (EDB) currently were not the same as those reported in 2015. In this regard, he wanted to understand more about schools in the Tuen Mun District. He suggested that the EDB consider including data for the enrolment of students newly arrived from the Mainland, cross-boundary students, and students with special educational needs in the report, so that Members could follow up on the development of related matters.

71. Mr MA Man-piu of the EDB stated that he would convey the Member's concerns to the Bureau and follow up on related suggestions.

D. Report by the Social Welfare Department
(SWHC Paper No. 8/2024)

72. Members noted the content of the captioned report.

E. Report on Crime Figures in the Tuen Mun District

73. Members noted the content of the captioned report.

V. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

A. Understanding the Operation of Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex and Arranging for a Visit

74. The Chairman stated that in order to understand and follow up on the completion of the Siu Lam Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex (Complex), the Commerce, Industry, Housing and Social Services Committee under the previous-term TMDC arranged for TMDC Members to visit the Complex on 28 September 2023. The Complex had been put into service in phases since the end of last year. In this regard, the SWHC hoped that the SWD could arrange for a visit for the current-term TMDC Members. Regarding the operation of the Complex and the arrangements for a visit, the Chairman asked Ms Jessica KO of the SWD to provide additional information.

75. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD stated that the Complex had gradually started services from the fourth quarter of last year to the first quarter of this year. Various organisations had also gradually increased their manpower for receiving service users in phases. Since all service users who had moved into the Complex had varying degrees of disabilities and special needs, they took some time to adapt to new living environment. Currently, staff of the operating organisations needed to allocate resources to prioritise the care of service users. She mentioned that stakeholders from the district would be invited to attend the opening ceremony of the Complex.

76. The Chairman stated that in addition to the opening ceremony, it was also hoped that the Department could arrange for a visit for Members to learn about the scale of development and the number of users of the Complex.

77. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD stated that currently, staff of operating organisations were busy taking care of service users. As the services of the Complex were being rolled out in phases, the Department would discuss with the operating organisations at a later time to arrange a suitable time for Members to visit.

78. The Chairman had taken note of the response from the representative of the SWD and requested that the Department arrange for Members to visit.

79. A Member expressed support for arranging the current-term TMDC Members to visit the Complex, and understood that users who needed mental rehabilitation services and users with disability required time to adapt to new environment. Therefore, he hoped that the Department could arrange for Members to visit new community facilities offering similar services, such as Mind Space at Castle Peak Hospital. He wanted to learn about different types of rehabilitation services in the community through visit and

exchange activities. Also, he hoped that the Department could arrange for a visit to the Complex upon its completion.

80. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD stated that a visit to Mind Space should be coordinated by Castle Peak Hospital.

B. Understanding the Operation of Community Living Room and Arranging for a Visit

81. The Chairman mentioned that the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room was opened in December 2023 and was expected to serve at least 500 residents of subdivided flats. As the first flagship project under the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room, the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room provided a shared space offering diverse facilities and services to grassroots families. The SWHC was concerned about the housing situation in the Tuen Mun District. Previously, a Member proposed a visit to the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room to the SWD, hoping to understand its facilities and operation for reference. Regarding the operation and visit arrangements for the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room, the Chairman asked Ms Jessica KO of the SWD to respond.

82. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD expressed gratitude for the TMDC's interest in the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room, which was operated by The Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon (Lok Sin Tong), and public groups interested in visiting could directly contact Lok Sin Tong. The Department could provide the contact details to the Secretariat after the meeting, and the Secretariat could discuss visit arrangements with the responsible person.

83. A Member hoped that the SWD could contact Lok Sin Tong on behalf of the SWHC to arrange for a visit to the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room.

84. Ms Jessica KO of the SWD stated that since the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room was not a facility in the Tuen Mun District, it was recommended that the TMDC arrange for a visit through the Secretariat by contacting the relevant organisation. The Department would provide the contact information of Lok Sin Tong for the reference of the Secretariat.

85. The Chairman requested the SWD to provide the Secretariat with the contact details of Lok Sin Tong to facilitate the arrangements for a future visit.

[Post-meeting note: The SWD provided the Secretariat of the SWHC with the contact information of Lok Sin Tong via email on 1 March 2024.]

86. A Member expressed that Mr Xia Baolong, the Director of the Hong Kong and

Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, also visited the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room during his inspection visit to Hong Kong. Therefore, the Member supported that the SWHC should arrange for a visit for Members to inspect the Community Living Room.

87. The Chairperson requested that the SWD and the Secretariat take note of Members' opinions and arrange for a visit.

[Post-meeting note: The aforementioned visit to the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room would take place on 7 May 2024.]

C. SWHC's Activity Plan for the Coming Year

88. The Chairman stated that in the past, committees organised activities with the funds allocated by the Tuen Mun District Office (TMDO). In this regard, she introduced to Members the arrangements for activities organised by the Working Group on Commerce, Industry, Housing and Social Services (Working Group) under the Commerce, Industry, Housing and Social Services Committee last year for reference.

89. A Member expressed that since the allocation of funds for various committees for the current fiscal year had not yet been announced, it was suggested that the discussion should take place after committees were informed of the funding arrangements.

90. The DO stated that funding for committees would be allocated and considered by the TMDO after the Home Affairs Department announced the funding amounts for the "Community Involvement Programme" for the current fiscal year. However, he realised that it took time to prepare activities, so he suggested that Members could first refer to the content of activities organised by the committee in the past to preliminarily conceptualise future activities.

91. The Chairman stated that last year, the Working Group took the total budget allocation in 2022 as a reference to plan for activities in 2023. Six activities were organised last year, with approved funding of approximately \$992,940 in total. These activities included "2023 Building Management Seminar in Tuen Mun District", "Production of Building Management Souvenir", "Building Management Exhibition in Tuen Mun District", " 'Thriving with Opportunities' – Tuen Mun Economic Art Fair cum Greater Bay Area and Belt and Road Expo Carnival in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Tuen Mun New Town", "Heatstroke Prevention in Summer – Tuen Mun District Occupational Safety and Health Carnival cum Award Ceremony 2023 in Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Tuen Mun New Town" and " 'Opportunities and Challenges for Teenagers' – Carnival in Celebration of the 26th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR and the 50th Anniversary of Tuen Mun New Town". The Chairman asked

Members to take note of the above information for future discussions on planning for activities for the coming year.

92. There being no other business, the Chairman announced the meeting closed at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 25 April 2024 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

Date: April 2024

File Ref: HADTMDC/13/25/SWHC/22