

**Minutes of the 7th Meeting of
the Tuen Mun District Council**

Date: 13 January 2025 (Monday)

Time: 2:31 p.m.

Venue: Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) Conference Room

Present

Mr KWAN Ke-lin, Michael, JP (Chairman)	District Officer (Tuen Mun), Home Affairs Department and TMDC Chairman
The Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth, SBS, MH, JP	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Yau-hoi, BBS, MH, JP	TMDC Member
Mr TSUI Fan, MH	TMDC Member
Ms CHING Chi-hung, MH, JP	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Manwell, MH	TMDC Member
Ms SO Ka-man	TMDC Member
Mr WAN Tin-chong, MH	TMDC Member
Mr TSANG Hin-hong, MH	TMDC Member
Mr KAM Man-fung	TMDC Member
Mr MO Shing-fung	TMDC Member
Mr YIP Man-pan, MH	TMDC Member
Ms LAI Ka-man	TMDC Member
Mr HO Jun-hang, Benton	TMDC Member
Mr LI Chiu-hung	TMDC Member
Mr LAM Tik-fai	TMDC Member
Ms CHAN Mang-yi, Vincci	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Ho-ting, Mac	TMDC Member
Dr CHAN Kwai-wao	TMDC Member
Mr CHAN Tsim-heng	TMDC Member
Ms MAK Mei-yee, Pamela	TMDC Member
Mr CHUI King-hang	TMDC Member
Mr FUNG Pui-yin	TMDC Member
Mr FUNG Yuk-fung, MH	TMDC Member
Mr TSANG Hing-chung	TMDC Member
Mr YIP Kat-kong, Kenneth	TMDC Member
Mr IP Chun-yuen	TMDC Member
Mr CHENG Yin-kwan	TMDC Member
Mr TSOI Shing-hin	TMDC Member
Mr TSE Wing-hang	TMDC Member

Ms TSE Yuk-ling
Mr KWONG Man-tik
Mr CHUNG Kin-fung
Mr LAU Chun-fai, Lawrence (Secretary)

TMDC Member
TMDC Member
TMDC Member
Senior Executive Manager (District Council),
Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs
Department

By Invitation

Mr SIU Chak-yee
Mr SZE Man-yuk, Simon

Commissioner of Police, Hong Kong Police Force
Divisional Officer 'West' (New Territories North),
Fire Services Department

Mr CHEUNG Wing-hei

Assistant Divisional Officer (Territorial Planning), Fire
Services Department

Mr LIU Pak-kei

Station Commander Tuen Mun Fire Station, Fire
Services Department

Mr LI Chi-fung

Assistant Divisional Officer (New Projects)¹²
(Acting), Fire Services Department

In Attendance

Miss CHEN Wai-tik, Wendy

Assistant District Officer (Tuen Mun)¹, Home Affairs
Department

Mr CHAN Yik-lung, Eron

Assistant District Officer (Tuen Mun)², Home Affairs
Department

Mr LAU Yu-hang, Henry

Senior Liaison Officer (1), Tuen Mun District Office,
Home Affairs Department

Ms HUNG Mei, Eunice

Senior Liaison Officer (2), Tuen Mun District Office,
Home Affairs Department

Ms CHAN Yin-ling, Cannes

Senior Liaison Officer (3), Tuen Mun District Office,
Home Affairs Department

Miss FONG Yuen-wah, Irene

Senior Liaison Officer (4), Tuen Mun District Office,
Home Affairs Department

Mr LIU Chiu-wing

Senior Engineer 6 (West),
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Ms HON Hin-yan

Chief School Development Officer (Tuen Mun),
Education Bureau

Mr CHAU Man-sang

Chief Health Inspector (Tuen Mun)¹, Food and
Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms CHAN Wan-ching

Chief Health Inspector (Tuen Mun)², Food and
Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr WONG Ho-hon	District Commander TMDIST(T), Hong Kong Police Force
Ms LAU Hung-yin	PCRO TMDIST, Hong Kong Police Force
Ms KWOK Ho-ling	OC DIS TMDIST, Hong Kong Police Force
Mr WONG Chun-hung, Samuel	Chief Manager, Management (Tuen Mun and Yuen Long), Housing Department
Ms CHANG Yuet-ming, Charlene	Administrative Assistant, Lands (District Lands Office, Tuen Mun), Lands Department
Ms TAM On-kei, Susan	Chief Leisure Manager (New Territories North), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Ms TSENG Chieh, Elsa	District Leisure Manager (Tuen Mun), Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr AU Hei-fan, Raymond	District Planning Officer, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long West, Planning Department
Mr TSEA Yiu-kwan, Rudolf	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tuen Mun)1, Social Welfare Department
Mr CHEUNG Chi-yeung, Fabian	Chief Transport Officer, New Territories North West, Transport Department
Miss CHAN Mei Ting, Emily (Assistant Secretary)	Executive Officer I (District Council)1, Tuen Mun District Office, Home Affairs Department

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all Members present to the 7th meeting of the seventh term TMDC. He also extended welcome to government department representatives in attendance at the meeting.

II. Absence from Meeting

2. The Secretary reported that the Secretariat had received no applications for leave of absence from Members.

III. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 6th Meeting held on 11 November 2024

3. The Chairman stated that the draft minutes of the captioned meeting were sent to all attendees for review on 9 January 2025. Subsequently, the Secretariat did not receive any proposed amendments. No Member proposed any other amendments at the meeting; therefore, the Chairman declared the minutes confirmed.

IV. Meeting between Commissioner of Police and Tuen Mun District Council Members

4. The Chairman welcomed Mr SIU Chak-yee, the Commissioner of Police, to the meeting to introduce the Police's work and listen to Members' views on issues of district concern.

5. Commissioner SIU Chak-yee provided an overview of the crime statistics and various aspects of the Police's work as follows:

(i) Overall Crime Figures

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 86 774 crimes were recorded, representing an increase of 3.9% compared to the same period in 2023. Among these, violent crimes amounted to 9 708 cases, marking a 4.7% rise. The overall detection rate was 25.5%, and excluding deception cases, the detection rate stood at 44.5%. Major crimes that saw an increase included deception, blackmail, triad-related crimes, and associated offences. Conversely, cases of several traditional crimes experienced a decline, including homicide, robbery, burglary, wounding and serious assault, serious drug offences, and theft;

(ii) The Situation of Deception Cases

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 40 470 deception cases were recorded, an increase of 3 232 cases compared to the same period in 2023, marking a rise of 8.7%. Approximately 60% of these cases were various types of online scam. Deception cases accounted for 46.6% of overall crime, showing an increase of 48% and 45% compared to the same periods in 2023 and 2022, respectively. The rise in deception cases in 2024 had noticeably narrowed, with the amount involved seeing a slight increase of 2.3%. While phone scams and online shopping scams saw an uptick, other major fraudulent tricks, such as online job scams and online romance scams, declined. The increase in deception cases was mainly driven by the emergence of “impersonating customer service” phone scams at the beginning of the previous year, with 5 032 cases recorded in the first 11 months of last year. In response, the Police launched “Anti-Scam Month” campaign in August last year, focusing on fraud education and prevention work targeting “impersonating customer service” scams and conducting a series of intelligence-led enforcement actions, including dismantling four phone scam operation centres and arresting 11 individuals. As a result, “impersonating customer service” scams decreased from a peak of 1 111 cases in July to 517 cases in November;

(iii) Combating Telecommunications Scams

The Police had been actively seeking to strengthen cooperation with various stakeholders to combat telecommunications scams. Since September 2022, the Police had established a working group with the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) and the telecommunications industry, and had launched several measures, such as blocking spoofed calls from outside Hong Kong with the prefix “+852” and blocking phone numbers or websites suspected of engaging in scams. The working group would continue to explore ways to prevent criminal groups from exploiting loopholes in the real-name registration for SIM cards. Starting from October last year, Hong Kong residents had been required to verify their identity via “iAM Smart” App when registering SIM cards; otherwise, telecommunications providers would conduct manual checks before activating the SIM card. Since 31 December last year, when citizens received calls from newly activated local prepaid SIM cards, they would first hear a voice prompt to help raise awareness and prevent phone scams. In addition, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) would

submit a legislative amendment proposal to the Legislative Council in 2025 to prohibit the resale of already registered SIM cards and was considering limiting the number of SIM cards that could be registered per person. The Police would discuss the implementation details with the CEDB;

(iv) Deepfake Technology Scams

The Police dismantled two criminal groups in October 2024 and January 2025, which used “deepfake technology” to defraud victims in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and other Asian regions into investing in cryptocurrencies, involving over \$390 million. A total of 58 individuals were arrested, including the masterminds and key members of the groups. The division of labour within these criminal organisations was very clear, with recruitment of both local and overseas technology personnel, who were then provided with training to utilise “deepfake technology” and fake cryptocurrency investment platforms for scams. Following the two arrest operations, the Police promptly held a press conference to inform the public about the latest modus operandi and crime prevention advice. In fact, cases involving scam operation centres in Hong Kong were not common, and the Police were confident in detecting such crimes;

(v) Money Laundering

During the first 11 months of 2024, the Police arrested a total of 9 452 individuals for various types of scams and related money laundering offenses, an increase of approximately 20% compared to the same period in 2023. Among those arrested, 7 100 were stooge account holders. The Police had expedited the prosecution process and had applied to the court for enhanced sentencing in suitable cases. As of the end of November last year, the Police had obtained court approval to increase the sentences for 43 individuals by 10% to 30%, with the highest penalty for stooge account holders involved in money laundering being 75 months of imprisonment;

(vi) Helping Members of the Public Identify Scams and Pitfalls

As of the end of 2024, the Police’s self-developed “Scameter+” recorded 6.88 million searches and issued 880 000 alerts to members of the public. The Police would continue to promote the use of “Scameter+”. With the support of numerous private organisations, the Police launched Anti-Scam Lucky Draw from October to November last year. Citizens who downloaded

“Scameter+” and completed designated tasks, such as sharing scam prevention information, could participate in the lucky draw. The event attracted over 1.8 million participants, and with various police districts vigorously promoting the application on different platforms, the download count of “Scameter+” increased from just over 200 000 at the beginning of last year to an additional 200 000 downloads within two months, surpassing 870 000 by the end of last year. The “Scameter+” aimed to prevent citizens from being scammed, hence Members were urged to encourage more citizens to download the application. The Police participated in the Global Anti-Scam Summit, where “Scameter+” received praise from other countries, as similar software in those countries could only check individual web pages, while “Scameter+” was able to check multiple mediums, including websites, phone numbers, and bank accounts, and was free to use. In addition, “Scameter+” recorded suspicious accounts and sent a high risk alert before confirming a transaction. This mechanism was further expanded to cover all automatic teller machines by early December 2024, and the 22 participating banks would gradually provide customers with implementation details;

(vii) Homicide

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 18 homicide cases were recorded, a 30% decrease compared to the same period in 2023. Of these, nine cases involved domestic or family violence, while the other nine included disputes, dangerous driving causing death, and three industrial accidents. The Police had detected all 18 homicide cases;

(viii) Wounding and Serious Assault

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 3 313 wounding and serious assault cases were recorded, a slight decrease of 1% compared to the same period in 2023. Less than 10% of these cases were triad-related;

(xi) Robbery

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 87 robbery cases were recorded, an 8.4% decrease compared to the same period in 2023. The detection rate was 89%, the highest recorded since 1992 for the same period;

(x) Burglary

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 1 118 burglary cases were recorded, a 7.6% decrease compared to the same period in 2023, with the amount of losses also dropping by 30%, representing a hard-earned achievement. Looking back at the first quarter of 2024, burglary cases had risen by 56%, and the amount of losses had increased by 30%. To enhance deterrence, the Police implemented several measures in areas plagued by burglaries, including strengthening intelligence gathering, stepping up patrols in high-risk areas, especially those with village houses, and utilising drones and helicopters from the Government Flying Service (GFS) to carry out air patrols and search for burglars. As a result, the number of burglary cases shifted from an increase to a decline. In addition, newly installed CCTV systems across the territory had proven effective, assisting in detecting 122 cases of various types of crime by the end of last year, including 16 burglary cases. However, the number of burglary cases involving village houses remained relatively high, and the Police would continue to strengthen efforts in this area;

(xi) Theft

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 20 685 theft cases of various types were recorded, a 1.9% decrease compared to the same period in 2023. Among these, only shoplifting cases saw an increase. The Police had urged retailers to utilise technology to enhance anti-theft measures, such as modern security systems. Theft cases recorded a 27% increase throughout 2023, and in the first quarter of 2024, the number continued to rise by nearly 10%. However, similar to burglary cases, the situation had been steadily improving over the past nine months, with the trend shifting from an increase to a decline. The Police would continue to carry out various anti-theft initiatives;

(xii) Blackmail

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 2 828 blackmail cases were recorded, an increase of 442 cases compared to the same period in 2023. The rise was primarily attributed to “naked chat” blackmail cases, which accounted for 2 279 cases, an increase of 379 cases. In 2021, students made up 34.5% of the victims. In response, the Police, the Education Bureau, and schools had intensified their awareness campaigns over the past few years, leading to a steady decline in the proportion of student victims, accounting

for 18% in 2024. Although the percentage of student victims had continued to improve, they remained a significant victim group. Therefore, the Police would continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness efforts;

(xiii) Sexual Offences

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 73 rape cases were recorded, an increase of 13 cases compared to the same period in 2023, with none involving strangers. Regarding indecent assault cases, a total of 1 103 cases were recorded, a slight increase of 3.1%, with nearly 60% of these incidents occurring in public places or within the area of MTR stations, and the detection rate was 74%;

(xvi) Serious Drug Offences

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 1 028 serious drug offense cases were recorded, a decrease of 3.7% compared to the same period in 2023. A total of 119 youngsters were arrested, down 24% from 2023, including 29 local students, also down 24%. In 2021, the number of youngsters under 21 involved in serious drug offenses reached 430, a figure that raised significant concern. In response, the Police had undertaken various initiatives over the past few years, including collaborating with schools and social workers to promote anti-drug information. As of November 2024, the number of youngsters involved in serious drug offenses had dropped by more than 70%, with the number of students falling by over 80%. Given the severe penalties associated with serious drug offenses, the Police would continue to work with relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness efforts and further reduce these figures;

(xv) Triad-related Crimes

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 1 912 triad-related crimes were recorded, an increase of 6.4% compared to the same period in 2023. The police authorities of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao conducted large-scale joint anti-crime operations codenamed “THUNDERBOLT 2024” from June to August and November to December last year. During these operations, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) arrested 8 303 individuals and seized a large quantity of illegal items, including various types of drugs

with a total market value of over \$840 million, as well as suspected crime proceeds worth \$41 million;

(xvi) Mainland Visitors

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 1 970 Mainland visitors were arrested for committing criminal offenses, a 40% increase compared to the same period in 2023. This rise was attributed to a significant surge in the number of Mainland visitors to Hong Kong following the full resumption of border crossings after the Covid-19 pandemic, with the number of arrests accounting for 0.006% of total Mainland visitors. Among those arrested, approximately 600 were involved in deception cases, with the vast majority being stooge account holders. To combat crime syndicates recruiting and arranging for Mainland individuals to come to Hong Kong to open stooge accounts, the police authorities from both regions conducted joint operations from May to July last year, arresting 244 people. In addition, in September last year, through the Anti-Deception Alliance (ADA) and real-time intelligence sharing with banks, the Police dismantled a cross-border money laundering syndicate active in Hong Kong and the Mainland, arresting 14 individuals;

(xvii) Youth Crime

During the first 11 months of 2024, a total of 2 610 youngsters were arrested for committing criminal offenses, a decrease of 5.4% compared to the same period in 2023. These offenses primarily involved deception, wounding and serious assault, and miscellaneous thefts. The Police placed great emphasis on fostering law-abiding awareness among youngsters and would continue to deepen cooperation with various stakeholders, including leveraging the influence of schools and parents to deliver crime prevention messages. In the last school year, the Police held seminars for over 5 000 teachers on anti-drugs, digital literacy, anti-deception and child protection, and the goal for this school year was to reach 8 000 teachers so as to provide them with the relevant training;

(xviii) Law and Order Situation in Tuen Mun

During the first 11 months of 2024, the total number of crime cases in the Tuen Mun District was 5 376, a 39% increase compared to the same period in 2023, with a detection rate of 29%. The increase was primarily driven by

a rise in deception cases, with online shopping scams and “impersonating customer service” phone scams being the most prevalent. Other crimes that saw an increase included naked chat blackmail and miscellaneous thefts, while crimes that recorded a decrease included theft from vehicle, burglary, and missing motor vehicles. In addition, there was one murder case in the district involving a dispute among by-passers. The TMDIST swiftly detected the case, arresting four individuals on the same day, three of whom had been charged with one count of murder; and

(xix) National Security Law

Since the implementation of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as of the end of November 2024, the National Security Department had arrested a total of 306 people, of whom approximately 60% had been prosecuted;

Commissioner SIU Chak-ye stated that in the first 11 months of 2024, the overall crime rate increased by 3.9% compared to the same period in 2023, with the rise primarily attributed to deception cases. Excluding deception cases, other crimes, including most major traditional offenses, recorded a decline, and the overall law and order situation remained stable.

6. Mr CHAN Yau-hoi welcomed Commissioner SIU Chak-ye to the TMDC and expressed gratitude for the efforts of the HKPF. He further noted that the HKPF’s work spanned multiple areas and asked Commissioner SIU Chak-ye how the issue of manpower shortages would be addressed. In this regard, he suggested that the Police enhance the recruitment of auxiliary police constables to assist in carrying out duties. In addition, he raised concerns about the recent frequent media reports on Southeast Asian scam cases, stating that the public was worried about travelling to Southeast Asia during the holiday season. He enquired whether, among the more than 20 cases announced by the Police, Southeast Asian countries other than Thailand were involved, and what measures the Police would take to strengthen preventive efforts.

7. Ms CHING Chi-hung stated that “impersonating customer service” phone scams had once been extremely prevalent. She commended the TMDIST for promptly carrying out extensive anti-scam publicity campaigns within the district, adding that she herself had also disseminated anti-scam information to the public through her office and street booths, while encouraging citizens to download and learn

how to use “Scameter+”. Furthermore, she expressed support for the Government’s initiatives to impose heavier penalties on stooge account holders and to prohibit the resale of real-name registered SIM cards. Lastly, she asked Commissioner SIU Chak-yee how the issue of manpower shortages within the HKPF would be addressed.

8. Mr Mac CHAN expressed concern about the physical and mental development of adolescents and related initiatives, noting with pleasure that Commissioner SIU Chak-yee’s report indicated a downward trend in both cases of youths involved with serious drug offences and the overall youth crime rate, with a particularly notable decrease of 5.4% in the Tuen Mun District. He hoped the Police would continue their efforts to keep cases of youths involved with serious drug offences at a low level. He further remarked that the drug known as “space oil” had recently become quite widespread, with many young people trying it out of curiosity or peer influence, leading to a rise in related cases both globally and in Hong Kong. Given that the method of abusing “space oil” was similar to consumption of e-cigarettes, making it difficult to distinguish whether e-cigarettes contained “space oil”. He had learnt from news reports that the Police had introduced a drug-testing strip. In this regard, he wished to understand the effectiveness of the Police’s measures, the number of arrests related to manufacturing centres selling “space oil”, and the corresponding enforcement situation. Lastly, he praised the TMDIST’s efforts in drug prevention and crime suppression, expressing hope that the Police would continue to strengthen and deepen their publicity and education initiatives.

9. Commissioner SIU Chak-yee gave a consolidated response to Members’ enquiries as follows:

- (i) The media periodically reported on the issue of manpower shortages within the HKPF, though the challenge of recruiting officers was not a recent phenomenon. Several years ago, the HKPF faced a wave of retirements, while the completion of numerous large-scale infrastructure projects in Hong Kong led to similar manpower shortages across various industries and other disciplined services. Moreover, over the past decade, the overall working population had continued to decline, coupled with a long-term decrease in the birth rate, leading him to believe that the challenge of recruiting police officers would persist. In response, the Police had actively intensified their promotional efforts in recent years, aiming to provide individuals aspiring to join the HKPF or serve society with a deeper understanding of its vision and scope of work;

- (ii) The number of applicants to the HKPF had shown a year-on-year upward trend. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the number of applicants increased by 46% compared to the previous financial year, with a further rise of 5% in the first nine months of 2024. The Police maintained a rigorous selection process for applicants, with current admission ratios of 8:1 for constables and 32:1 for inspectors. From April to December 2024, the number of inspectors recruited rose by 95% compared to the same period in 2023. In addition, between September and October 2024, the Police conducted recruitment visits to 12 local universities, after which the number of university students applying to join the HKPF increased by 33%. The Police were confident that the manpower shortage situation would continue to improve;
- (iii) In the long term, the HKPF would need to rely on technology to introduce facilitative measures to address manpower shortages and enhance the efficiency of the Police's work. For instance, members of the public could now use self-service kiosks in reporting rooms to file reports, eliminating the need to personally approach the counter;
- (iv) In response to cases in which citizens were lured to and detained in Southeast Asian countries, the Security Bureau (SB), in collaboration with the Police and the Immigration Department (ImmD), had established a dedicated task force and dispatched officers to Thailand to work with relevant local authorities to assist Hong Kong residents who had fallen victim to these scams;
- (v) The TMDIST could later discuss in detail with Members how the public could make full use of "Scameter+" to enhance public awareness of scam prevention;
- (vi) There had been a noticeable increase in cases of young people renting out their bank accounts to criminal syndicates for money laundering. The Police had been collaborating with schools to raise awareness, informing young people that money laundering was a serious offence, carrying a maximum penalty of 75 months of imprisonment. The Police would continue to strengthen their publicity efforts to heighten young people's vigilance;
- (vii) Whenever a new type of scam emerged, it tended to result in a large number of victims. Consequently, as soon as the Police identified a new form of fraudulent trick, even if it had not yet occurred in Hong Kong, they would promptly raise public awareness. He then cited the technical support scams originating in Singapore as an example, where victims' computers displayed

pop-up windows falsely claiming that their systems had been hacked, prompting them to call a technical support hotline. Impostors posing as hotline staff then tricked victims into providing their online banking details. This type of scam began occurring in Hong Kong last year as well;

- (viii) Combating scams could never rely solely on the Police; to successfully prevent fraud, the “anti-scam iron triangle” comprising the Police, various stakeholders, and the public must work closely together. Over the past few years, the Police and key stakeholders (including telecommunications network providers, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and banks) had maintained close communication, holding regular meetings to discuss ways to prevent new fraudulent tricks. He urged the public, upon receiving information about new fraudulent tricks, to help spread the word to those around them, acting as bystanders to warn others that it might be a scam. In addition, the Police had established a 24-hour consultation hotline, “Anti-Scam Helpline 18222”, where citizens could take just one or two minutes to prevent themselves from being deceived;
- (ix) The penalties for serious drug offences were considerably severe, and therefore, the Police were highly concerned about juvenile offenders in such cases. Drug offenders often misled young people, claiming that even if they were caught, the court would impose lenient sentences, but this was not the case. Consequently, the Police had been working with various stakeholders to diligently conduct anti-drug publicity campaigns; and
- (x) The Government was currently striving to legislate within this quarter to categorise “space oil” as a dangerous drug, thereby increasing penalties and enhancing deterrence. In addition, the Narcotics Bureau under the HKPF arranged last month to produce a promotional educational video, featuring testimonials from individuals who abused “space oil” and doctors explaining the harms of this drug. He hoped that all schools, particularly primary and secondary schools, could spare a few minutes to explain this video for students, allowing more young people to understand the importance of preventing drug abuse and thereby improving the situation. During the first 11 months of 2024, the Police cracked 141 cases involving the abuse of “space oil”, arresting a total of 206 individuals, including 47 teenagers. The Police had initially procured a batch of drug-testing strips, hoping to achieve a deterrent effect.

10. Mr TSUI Fan commended the officers of the TMDIST for their achievements in combating crime within the district, which included collaborating with estate

management companies and security guards in the district to successfully curb street gambling on multiple occasions, gradually restoring peace to the community; working with Members, representatives from the Area Committees, the District Fight Crime Committee, and the District Fire Safety Committee (the three committees) to provide housing estates with valuable experience and guidance on crimes related to doorstep debt collection, thereby enhancing community security services; promptly disseminating crime prevention information to Members and members of the three committees through social media applications, and conducting publicity efforts with them at various locations in the district, enabling the public to receive the latest updates more quickly.

11. Mr MO Shing-fung stated that following an incident in 2023 where triad members assaulted a security guard in Tuen Mun, and another incident in 2024 where triad members attacked villagers in other parts of the New Territories, the Police swiftly detected the cases. Hong Kong had long been a city with good law and order, and the public deeply detested triad activities. He enquired whether the Police would take more effective measures to combat triads. Lastly, he expressed gratitude to Commissioner SIU Chak-ye, Police District Commander of Tuen Mun, and the officers for working together with Members to strengthen anti-scam publicity efforts.

12. Mr WAN Tin-chong remarked that online and phone scams remained prevalent and asked whether the Police would establish regular cooperation with airlines and travel agencies to remind the public, through applications or case studies, to stay vigilant against scams when booking tickets via online platforms or applications. He further noted that a recent case involving a Chinese actor surnamed Wang, who was lured to Thailand, was swiftly detected thanks to his girlfriend's immediate notification to the embassy and local police authority, the location function on the victim's phone, and the power of online public opinion. In this regard, he enquired whether the Police would recommend that families of victims reporting cases in Hong Kong refer to the handling of the aforementioned case. In addition, he mentioned having met with several secondary school students who said they were unaware that "space oil" was a drug and that their schools had not provided related information. He therefore suggested that the Police disseminate anti-drug information to students via short-videos, such as the symptoms after abusing "space oil" or other drugs.

13. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The task of combating local crime could not rely solely on the Police; it also depended on the Police's closest partners—security guards. The Police maintained close communication with security guards in housing estates and shopping malls, enabling them to promptly report suspicious individuals or unusual circumstances to the Police, allowing officers to quickly arrive at the scene and apprehend suspects;
- (ii) Each police district was equipped with a task force and a dedicated hotline. If members of the public spotted suspicious individuals or unusual circumstances, they could first call the task force hotline. Task force members, dressed in plain clothes, would observe and investigate whether the individuals in question were suspicious, so as to take appropriate follow-up actions;
- (iii) In terms of anti-triad efforts, during the first 11 months of 2024, there were 1 912 triad-related crimes, accounting for 2.2% of the overall crime, with the Police arresting over 2 500 individuals, representing 7.6% of all arrests. In the Tuen Mun District, triad-related crimes numbered 137, comprising 2.5% of the total crimes in the district, with 263 individuals arrested. Anti-triad work was one of the Commissioner of Police's top operational priorities each year. The Police adopted proactive measures, conducting intelligence-led enforcement actions to directly combat triad illegal activities and target their financial resources through operations, such as "Operation Levington". During the first 11 months of 2024, the Organized Crime and Triad Bureau conducted five large-scale anti-triad operations across various police districts, arresting a total of 1 030 people. The Police also collaborated with Mainland authorities in joint operations, including "THUNDERBOLT 2024", in which 8 303 persons in total were arrested in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao across two phases. During the same period, the TMDIST carried out 18 operations for "Operation Levington", resulting in the arrest of over 200 individuals;
- (iv) Last month, the TMDIST also launched an undercover anti-triad operation, resulting in the arrest of 69 individuals ranging in age from 13 to 76. These offenders were relatively active triad members in the district who involved in various types of crimes, including operating gambling dens, drug trafficking, money laundering, claiming triad affiliation, and criminal intimidation, among others. He expressed gratitude for the efforts of his colleagues in the TMDIST;

- (v) The Police had consistently collaborated with the Airport Authority and airlines regarding Southeast Asian scams, conducting publicity efforts targeting travellers heading to Southeast Asian countries to prevent them from unwittingly falling into scams; and
- (vi) The Police had produced promotional videos with the specific aim of informing young people, teachers, and principals about the dangers of “space oil”. These videos would be played to students through schools, enhancing anti-drug publicity efforts targeting youths to prevent them from being misled by drug traffickers or peers and developing drug addiction.

14. Dr CHAN Kwai-wao stated that the number of deception cases remained high and continued to rise, with victims spanning a wide range of age groups and professions, and the amount involved being substantial. He asked what difficulties the Police faced in combating scams and promoting anti-scam awareness. He further noted that the Police had established the ADA and integrated “Scameter+” with the Faster Payment System platform, enquiring how Commissioner SIU Chak-yee evaluated the effectiveness of these anti-scam measures and whether the Police would introduce additional strategies and measures targeting scams in the future. He also mentioned that, in response to the rising trend of scams, the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand planned to issue an emergency decree to ensure that financial institutions and mobile network operators intensified efforts to protect user safety, sharing the responsibility of preventing scams. Financial institutions should thoroughly investigate the background of users when opening accounts to prevent those having relation with scam syndicates, while mobile network operators should filter text messages to block those potentially containing fraudulent links. He asked Commissioner SIU Chak-yee whether, from the Police’s anti-scam perspective, these approaches would be effective.

15. Mr IP Chun-yuen expressed concern over the recent rise in the number of young people being arrested. He had utilised the Police’s Youth Crime Prevention Booklet educational material to conduct publicity at various schools, commending the material for its thorough depiction of cases involving young people, including case studies, details, and sentencing outcomes. He hoped that the Police could collaborate more with the Youth Development Commission at district level to promote this initiative, thereby raising teenagers’ awareness of crime prevention and reducing the juvenile crime rate.

16. Ms LAI Ka-man stated that, given the approaching Lunar New Year, apart from the issue of doorstep debt collection, there had been a noticeable increase in

“casing the joint” activities in public housing estates and rural residential areas. Many residents’ CCTV systems had captured images of burglars, and she suggested that the Police establish a reporting mechanism, allowing residents, property management companies, and security guards to send photos to the Police for enforcement action via instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp.

17. Commissioner SIU Chak-yea gave a consolidated response to Members’ enquiries as follows:

- (i) In October last year, the Police participated in the Global Anti-Scam Summit held in Singapore, where the organiser highlighted that the rising trend of scam cases was a global phenomenon. Over the past year, it was estimated that global losses due to scams amounted to approximately one trillion US dollars, with the Asian region being particularly severely affected, accounting for over 60% of the total. This was believed to be linked to the saving habits prevalent among Asians;
- (ii) During the first 11 months of 2024, the increase in scam cases had significantly narrowed compared to the 40% to 50% rise seen in the previous two years. Beyond law enforcement, publicity and education were also crucial in anti-scam efforts, which was the reason that the Police continuously devised ways to enhance their outreach so that more people received the relevant information. The current challenge was that many citizens did not believe they would fall victim to scams and thus did not take the time to pay attention to anti-scam publicity. Since there was no way to ensure everyone received anti-scam information simultaneously, the Police tailored their approach to different types of scams, using various methods and media to reach the public. For instance, specific strategies were employed to target phone scams, including those involving impersonation of Mainland officials, “guess who”, and “impersonating customer service”. As over 80% of the victims of “guess who” scams were elderly, the Police provided anti-scam information to seniors during visits to elderly centres or through care team home visits. This type of phone scam saw a 48% decrease in 2024, demonstrating the effectiveness of the publicity efforts. Furthermore, as of the end of November 2024, the ADA, established by the Police in collaboration with ten local banks, successfully dissuaded 1 767 individuals from transferring money to scammers and intercepted over 96% of scam funds within two hours. He reiterated that the “anti-scam iron triangle” comprised not only the Police but also other stakeholders and the public, urging more citizens to help spread anti-scam information to those around them;

- (iii) Since its first publication in 2022, Youth Crime Prevention Booklet had released three volumes. The idea for its publication originated in late 2020, when the Police began disseminating information about youth crimes via instant messaging applications to the chairpersons of 18 District's School Heads Associations, the chairpersons of Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations, and 21 school-sponsoring bodies, who then forwarded the information to principals and parents in their respective districts. These groups also held regular meetings, and the concept of Youth Crime Prevention Booklet emerged from suggestions raised during one such meeting. Each year, the Police selected several crime categories worthy of attention based on prevailing crime trends, detailing relevant case studies, court rulings, and signs of unusual behaviour among teenagers, complemented by youth crime prevention videos, to strengthen teenagers' awareness of law-abiding behaviour; and
- (iv) He agreed with Member's suggestion to establish a reporting mechanism via instant messaging applications, noting that the establishment of the task force hotline was also intended as a preventive measure.

18. Mr WONG Ho-hon, District Commander TMDIST(T), stated that the TMDIST had established instant messaging application groups with various stakeholders, including security guards from public housing estates, private residential estates, and shopping malls. Security guards could immediately report suspicious individuals and unusual circumstances to the Police, assisting officers in quickly tracking down the whereabouts of relevant suspects. As the Lunar New Year approached, the Police would also intensify their efforts to promote crime prevention information.

19. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye stated that the "999" hotline was primarily for reporting emergencies and must not be misused. If citizens had any suspicions, they could call the task force hotline. As long as the report was made in good faith, even if it turned out to be a misunderstanding, there was no need to worry about being charged with causing wasteful employment of the Police.

20. Mr KAM Man-fung asked the Police whether the low detection rate of deception cases was related to technological issues, cross-border challenges, or policy guidelines, and how the Police planned to overcome these obstacles to improve the detection rate. In addition, he pointed out that the SB had maintained an amber outbound travel alert on Thailand since 2015 due to the country's unstable political

situation and occasional terrorist attacks. Given the recent surge in abduction cases in Thailand, a popular travel destination for Hong Kong residents, he suggested that the SB elevate the travel alert on Thailand from amber to red before the Lunar New Year.

21. Ms Pamela MAK stated that, despite the Police's widespread anti-scam publicity efforts, many people still fell victim to scams. She asked about the common characteristics of scam victims and whether the majority were "homebodies" who rarely left their homes. She also suggested that the Police consider continuously broadcasting anti-scam promotional videos in hospitals, at bus stops, and on buses to reach a wider audience with anti-scam information. Furthermore, she enquired about which industries had a higher number of scam victims and opined that banks, as major institutions, should take on social responsibility by leading the way in halting loan promotions via telephone to prevent citizens from inadvertently falling into scams.

22. Mr CHUI King-hang remarked that fraudulent tricks were constantly evolving, with many scammers first enticing victims to download applications. He asked whether the Police would closely liaise with relevant organisations to request the removal of suspicious applications from circulation and suggested that the Police enhance "Scameter+" by adding a warning feature for suspicious applications, alerting mobile users to delete such applications. In addition, he proposed that the Police collaborate with mobile phone manufacturers to mandate that all mobile phones sold in Hong Kong came pre-installed with "Scameter+".

23. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The low detection rate of deception cases was due to the fact that many scam syndicates did not operate within Hong Kong. Last year, of the over 9 000 individuals arrested by the Police, approximately 7 000 were stooge account holders rather than core members of scam syndicates;
- (ii) The SB would consider whether to issue or elevate outbound travel alerts based on varying circumstances, and he would convey the Member's suggestion to raise Thailand's travel alert level to red to the SB;
- (iii) There were no specific characteristics among scam victims, who spanned all age groups and education levels. Victims of online shopping scams were the most numerous, while the elderly were more frequently targeted by phone

scams. Investment scams resulted in the highest financial losses, with many victims possessing investment experience, including even senior management from large companies. Scam syndicates often used social media to claim they possessed insider investment information, luring victims into transferring funds to fake investment platforms;

- (iv) The Police could discuss with the banking sector the feasibility of halting loan promotions via telephone, though banks, as commercial entities, operated independently; and
- (v) There were fewer reports of scammers tricking victims into downloading applications; most cases involved enticing victims to click on suspicious webpages. If Members identified suspicious applications, they could provide the information to the Police for investigation and handling, and the Police would collaborate with relevant organisations to request the removal of such applications.

24. Mr LI Chiu-hung expressed support for the installation of CCTV in the community and asked Commissioner SIU Chak-yee about the current progress of CCTV installation in the Tuen Mun District, as well as examples of cases successfully detected through the use of CCTV.

25. Mr Benton HO stated that the number of phone scams had surged sharply, involving substantial amounts of money, which not only impacted Hong Kong's economy but also affected the mental well-being of victims, particularly the elderly, leading many citizens to seek his assistance. He expressed gratitude for the Police's anti-scam publicity efforts in recent years, including a seminar on scams and drug prevention co-organised with Yan Oi Tong last year, which received a very positive response from the public. Lastly, he hoped that other government departments could collaborate to strengthen anti-scam publicity efforts.

26. Mr KWONG Man-tik stated that he had previously suggested Hong Kong followed the Mainland's approach of blocking fraudulent accounts, but unfortunately, Hong Kong had been unable to implement this practice. Recently, he heard that the Police had introduced a method of alerting citizens to potential scams by flagging overseas calls, which he considered a highly ideal approach. He hoped the Police could explore additional channels, such as embedding anti-scam messages into television dramas, to promote awareness among the public.

27. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) Last year, the Police installed CCTV systems across various districts in Hong Kong. In the initial phase, 15 sets were installed in Mong Kok, accompanied by notices featuring QR codes to collect public feedback, followed by subsequent adjustments. By the end of the year, 600 sets had been installed, including 28 in the Tuen Mun District. This year, an additional 1 385 sets would be installed, bringing the total to over 2 000. The CCTV installations would be concentrated in crime hotspots or crowded areas across the 18 districts, such as Lan Kwai Fong. The Police hoped that, starting from 2026, 2 000 to 2 500 CCTV sets could be installed annually;
- (ii) The Police utilised the newly installed CCTV systems to detect 122 cases of various types of crimes, resulting in the arrest of 202 individuals. Of these, 12 cases occurred in the Tuen Mun District, including one murder case, one burglary case, one case of possession of instrument fit for unlawful purpose, and nine theft cases;
- (iii) The Police regularly held meetings with heads of other government departments to discuss scam trends and seek their assistance in promoting anti-scam information. For example, the Water Supplies Department included anti-scam publicity leaflets with water bills from October 2024 to January 2025;
- (iv) In addition to government departments, the Police would liaise with regulatory bodies, such as the Insurance Authority, and large restaurant chains, to assist in disseminating anti-scam information;
- (v) "Scameter+" added a reporting function in March last year, allowing citizens to report suspected fraudulent websites or phone numbers to expand the anti-scam database; and
- (vi) Over the past period, the Police had frequently utilised embedded messaging in television programmes or dramas to promote anti-scam information to the public, including inviting victims to personally share their experiences of being scammed.

28. Ms Vincci CHAN expressed concern about young people abusing "space oil" and noted that some parents had reported that the behaviour of young people on the

streets suggested possible drug abuse. In response to this situation, she asked the Police whether parents or teachers could make preliminary reports through the task force hotline.

29. Mr CHAN Manwell stated that last year, he personally handled three scam cases and expressed gratitude to the TMDIST officers for their assistance in following up on the cases, though it was regretted that such cases were difficult to detect. In this regard, some citizens had suggested that the Police collaborate with the OFCA to establish dedicated phone numbers or prefixes for government and bank use, making it easier for the public to identify legitimate calls.

30. Mr TSANG Hin-hong expressed appreciation for the HKPF's emphasis on police-community cooperation, though he noted that some citizens hesitated to authorise government departments to handle issues. In this regard, he suggested that the Police intensify their publicity efforts to reach all sectors of society, including schools and social welfare organisations, encouraging the public to confidently refer any suspicions to the Police or relevant departments.

31. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The Police would launch a drug-testing strip for testing tools suspected of being used for drug abuse held by suspicious individuals on the street. If citizens spotted any suspicious persons, they could call the task force hotline to make a report;
- (ii) Police-community cooperation was highly important. Each year, the Police presented awards to frontline bank staff, security guards, and citizens to encourage them to report suspicious individuals to the Police, thereby preventing scam incidents; and
- (iii) Regarding the Member's suggestion for dedicated phone numbers for government departments, the Police understood that citizens were wary when receiving calls from unfamiliar numbers or those starting with the digit 3, and were actively studying solutions.

32. Mr FUNG Pui-yin stated that non-Chinese illegal immigrants were occasionally seen in the Tuen Mun District, along with related law and order or legal issues, such as theft and illegal labour. In this regard, he enquired about the Police's countermeasures.

33. Mr CHUNG Kin-fung stated that the HKPF was crucial to maintaining law and order in Hong Kong, and based on the current establishment, it should accommodate up to 4 500 auxiliary police constables. As of 2023, the number of auxiliary constables stood at 3 214, representing an establishment rate of 70%, compared to an 81% establishment rate for regular police officers, indicating room to enhance auxiliary police recruitment. Therefore, he suggested that the Police vigorously promote and encourage individuals from various industries who were keen to serve the community to join the auxiliary police force.

34. Mr CHAN Tsim-heng stated that recently, scammers had used sophisticated techniques, such as digital manipulation, to impersonate Legislative Council members in an attempt to extort money. Fortunately, the Member promptly reported the incident to the Police, and the related photos were ultimately not circulated publicly, which could otherwise undermine the credibility of public officials.

35. Commissioner SIU Chak-ye gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) He would set annual priority action items based on crime trends, with syndicated illegal immigration activities designated as the top priority for 2024, and the Police would continue to closely monitor this issue in 2025. Since November 2023, the Police had noticed an increase in non-Chinese illegal immigrants entering Hong Kong. With the cooperation of businesses, law enforcement agencies in Guangdong and Hong Kong had intensified their efforts. Following joint operations, the average monthly number of arrests dropped from 109 in 2023 to 59 in 2024;
- (ii) On the legal front, as non-Chinese illegal immigrants often submit non-refoulement claims, the Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance enacted in August 2021 further improved the arrangements for such claims. This included enhancing the ImmD's screening efficiency, preventing delaying tactics, and refining the procedures and functions of the Torture Claims Appeal Board, thereby strengthening the processes of source interception, law enforcement, and repatriation. In addition, the Police had engaged in cross-border cooperation and intelligence sharing with the Mainland and Macao, including holding anti-smuggling working meetings and conducting joint tripartite enforcement operations such as "Thunderbolt" and "Operation Clear Bay". Currently, the situation regarding illegal immigrants had shown improvement; and

- (iii) Over the past few years, the numbers of auxiliary police constables and applicants had steadily increased. Coming from diverse industries, they helped the HKPF address various challenges. Furthermore, there was no age limit for auxiliary police recruitment, for instance, a 47-year-old university medical professor once applied to join. Therefore, he encouraged Members to consider joining the auxiliary police force in the future when they were no longer holding public office.

36. Mr TSE Wing-hang expressed concern about the situation of domestic violence and enquired about the Police's plans to prevent family tragedies, as well as the related referral mechanisms in place.

37. Mr Kenneth YIP stated that when financial institutions handled company account transfers, they relied on transaction documents or various supporting documents to ensure the legality of the transactions. Therefore, he suggested that the Police enhance publicity efforts targeting financial institution staff, encouraging them to stay alert to unusual transactions and assist in preventing scam incidents.

38. Ms SO Ka-man stated that the TMDC and the Traffic and Transport Committee had previously discussed issues related to electric mobility devices. She expressed gratitude to the TMDIST and the New Territories North Traffic Unit for their swift response to the concerns, having arrested 39 individuals and confiscated multiple electric mobility devices in the district on 28 August 2024. As residents had reported that the problem persisted, she hoped in 2025, the Police would continue to strengthen enforcement around Yan Po Road and Tuen Mun North. In addition, she pointed out that at a meeting on the traffic of New Territories North, representatives from the Transport Department (TD) failed to prioritise addressing traffic blackspots in the district, such as the fatal traffic blackspots at Tuen Mun Heung Sze Wui Road and Tuen Hop Street. She hoped Commissioner SIU Chak-yee would liaise with the Commissioner for Transport to exert pressure on the TD representatives.

40. Commissioner SIU Chak-yee gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) Arrangements would be made for police officers to participate in training on handling domestic violence cases to enhance their professionalism and sensitivity towards such incidents. Furthermore, these cases would be managed by officers at the rank of sergeant or above, with an assessment form

or action checklist in place for referring cases to emergency services, enabling officers to handle them more professionally. In addition, the Police maintained close ties with community organisations or non-profit institutions and had established a 24-hour referral hotline, through which cases could be referred to the Social Welfare Department for follow-up when necessary;

- (ii) The Police periodically liaised with the banking sector to discuss ways to prevent scams and share trends in scam activities with the industry, enabling frontline bank staff to stay vigilant and refer suspicious transactions to the Police for follow-up;
- (iii) During the first 11 months of 2024, the Police arrested 601 individuals for illegally using electric mobility devices, a 1.6-fold increase compared to the same period in 2023. The Police would continue to strengthen enforcement across all districts. He requested Members to provide details of relevant traffic blackspots and stated that he would pass the information to the Commissioner for Transport to address the situation;
- (iv) The Police currently deployed drones or collaborated with the GFS to conduct air patrols in areas prone to burglaries, aiming to enhance deterrence. However, as burglars often entered residential units by climbing from hillsides, the Police hoped that housing estate security guards would increase patrols along hillside areas. If suspicious activities were detected, such as wire netting being cut, they should immediately notify the Police to facilitate investigations or ambush operations. The Police were happy to provide professional training to security guards or residents; and
- (v) The Police welcomed Members to organise security guards or residents to participate in training, and the Police could assist by sharing professional knowledge.

V. Discussion Items

- (A) Suggestion for Enhancing the Cleanliness around Noise Barriers along Tuen Mun Road and Strengthening Routine Maintenance and Repairs (TMDC Paper No. 1/2025)**
(Written Response from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department)
(Written Response from the Highways Department)

41. The Chairman stated that the Secretariat had sent letters to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Highways Department (HyD), and the Fire Services Department (FSD), inviting them to appoint representatives to attend the TMDC meeting. Subsequently, the Secretariat received written responses from the FEHD and the HyD. These documents were distributed to Members via email prior to the meeting for their reference.

42. The Chairman welcomed Mr CHAU Man-sang, Chief Health Inspector (Tuen Mun)¹, Ms CHAN Wan-ching, Chief Health Inspector (Tuen Mun)², of the FEHD; Mr Simon SZE, Divisional Officer ‘West’ (New Territories North), Mr CHEUNG Wing-hei, Assistant Divisional Officer (Territorial Planning), Mr LIU Pak-kei, Station Commander Tuen Mun Fire Station, and Mr Li Chi-fung, Assistant Divisional Officer (New Projects)¹² (Acting), of the FSD to the meeting.

43. Mr IP Chun-yuen, the first proposer of the paper, stated that a fire broke out on Cheung Pei Shan Road in Tsuen Wan on 27 November 2024, severely disrupting traffic across Northwest New Territories, which raised his concerns about the safety of noise barriers. He further noted that noise barriers spanned over 5 kilometres from Siu Hong to Hanford Garden in Sam Shing area, expressing worry that a similar incident could paralyse traffic. He pointed out that miscellaneous objects had accumulated near noise barriers in areas such as San Hui, Chi Lok Fa Yuen, Tuen Mun Town Centre, and On Ting Estate. He believed that, besides the FEHD, various departments should undertake clearance work according to their respective responsibilities. Although the relevant departments claimed to have conducted clearances, he learnt that large amounts of miscellaneous objects had re-accumulated at these locations. Moreover, these noise barriers, built over a decade ago, were now covered with dust and facing water leakage issue. Therefore, he suggested that the HyD conduct regular repairs and maintenance.

44. Mr CHUNG Kin-fung stated that there were significant miscellaneous objects accumulated near the noise barriers along Tuen Mun Road and noted that some individuals collected styrofoam boxes and cardboard for resale or other personal uses. He added that when a sudden fire broke out on Cheung Pei Shan Road in Tsuen Wan that day, it spread rapidly and affected the adjacent noise barriers. He expressed concern that similar incidents could easily occur during dry weather seasons. In this regard, he suggested that the FEHD issue verbal warnings to those hoarding miscellaneous objects, advising them against placing items near critical facilities like noise barriers and lifts to prevent casualties and repair difficulties. He proposed that departments could adopt the current approach for handling abandoned bicycles—removing the miscellaneous objects first and posting notices to inform owners to

reclaim their items within a specified period—thereby improving efficiency and ensuring public safety.

45. Mr LAM Tik-fai stated that he had raised concerns with the FEHD about the accumulation of styrofoam boxes and large furniture at Tsing Hoi Circuit near Chi Lok Fa Yuen. He explained that the situation first occurred during the pandemic period when transportation disruptions led to temporary storage. In addition, some residents discarded furniture next to the refuse collection point when they were closed. He had suggested that the FEHD reduce the area enclosed by water-filled barriers to minimise the impact on nearby environmental hygiene. Furthermore, he requested that relevant departments consider installing CCTVs at blackspots and swiftly conduct clearance operations to reduce fire risks and improve environmental hygiene in the vicinity.

46. Mr CHAU Man-sang of the FEHD gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The Department had always placed great importance on this matter. Miscellaneous objects near noise barriers primarily consisted of recyclable styrofoam boxes. Water-filled barriers were set up next to the Tsing Hoi Circuit refuse collection point to facilitate temporary storage of large items by the public until the FEHD arranged for their removal by vehicles. The Department would attempt to reduce the area enclosed by water-filled barriers and increase the frequency of large refuse collection to improve environmental hygiene in the vicinity;
- (ii) During the pandemic, the Mainland temporarily suspended the acceptance of recyclable styrofoam boxes, leading to a significant accumulation of such items across Hong Kong, which affected environmental hygiene. At that time, the Department's approach included collaborating with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to transport recyclable styrofoam boxes to designated locations for recycling, trialling cold compaction at certain FEHD venues, such as San Hui Market, to turn styrofoam boxes into recyclable styrofoam bricks, while the remaining boxes had to be sent to landfills. After the pandemic, the Mainland resumed accepting recyclable styrofoam boxes for reuse, which was more efficient and environmentally friendly than recycling and remanufacturing. Consequently, the Government now permitted the industry to clean and transport styrofoam boxes back to the Mainland for reuse, though this process could result in the accumulation of recyclable styrofoam boxes. Although these boxes were cleaned and neatly arranged, prolonged

occupation of public spaces might obstruct residents' access or heighten fire risks. Currently, if the Department found miscellaneous objects occupying public spaces and causing obstruction to scavenging operation, the FEHD staff would, in accordance with the law, first issue a "Notice to Remove Obstruction", requiring the items to be removed within four hours. Failure to comply would result in the Department removing and detaining the items. If someone later claimed the items, the Department would consider prosecution based on evidence, with a maximum fine of \$5,000;

- (iii) The Environment and Ecology Bureau had submitted the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2024 to the Legislative Council to more effectively address common public health nuisances, including obstruction to scavenging operation. The Department hoped to amend the removal deadline for items obstructing scavenging operation from within four hours of posting a notice to a deadline specified on the notice itself. Depending on the situation, the Department would stipulate a reasonable period of no less than 30 minutes and the area from which the items must be removed, accelerating the clearance process. If someone claimed the items, the Department would consider prosecution, with the proposed maximum fine increased to \$10,000. In addition, the Department would work with the EPD to actively study ways to optimise the recycling process with the industry, thereby improving public hygiene; and
- (iv) The Department had reminded shop managers and recyclers to pay attention to the placement of miscellaneous objects and increase recycling frequency. The Department would also increase the frequency of clearance operations and conduct enforcement actions as needed.

47. Mr Simon SZE of the FSD stated that, regarding the suggestion to deploy fire service installations and equipment near noise barriers, currently all noise barriers must be constructed in accordance with design guidelines issued by the EPD and the HyD. When the FSD received referrals from relevant departments about adding noise barriers, it would consider factors such as the design, length, and surrounding environment, and provide corresponding fire safety recommendations to the departments concerned.

48. Mr FUNG Pui-yin stated that large amount of miscellaneous objects frequently accumulated at Tsing Hoi Circuit and Yan Oi Tong Circuit. Although departments cleared the miscellaneous objects within a short time after receiving referrals, the problem soon reoccurred. He noted that rubbish was also found along roadsides and

highways, recounting an instance when he drove along Wong Chu Road and observed significant rubbish accumulation on the slope between two carriageways. In addition, he enquired how departments could improve or utilise the areas planted with vegetation next to noise barriers.

49. Mr TSANG Hin-hong expressed concern about the environmental hygiene around noise barriers. He pointed out that some noise barriers cover extensive areas and suggested that the HyD, the FEHD, and the Housing Department collaborate closely to improve the environmental hygiene and safety conditions near noise barriers.

50. Ms TSE Yuk-ling stated that she had noticed water leakage from noise barriers during inclement weather, forming water columns. She was concerned that it would obstruct drivers' visibility, increasing the risk of traffic accidents, and thus suggested that the Department strengthen the repairs and maintenance of noise barriers.

51. Mr CHAU Man-sang of the FEHD gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The Department would enhance rubbish clearance efforts. Regarding the issue of miscellaneous objects, including luggage, being placed at the central divider of Tuen Mun Road, the Department would collaborate with relevant departments to conduct joint operations. If the miscellaneous objects, such as luggage, was found to contain personal belongings of street sleepers, the Department would handle such items with care; and
- (ii) When clearing rubbish and handling recyclables at these locations, the Department would also address issues such as stagnant water, pests, and rodents concurrently.

52. Mr CHUI King-hang stated that some noise barriers were green walls, but he noticed that certain plants had withered, affecting the cityscape. He was concerned that withered green walls posed a fire hazard and enquired whether similar issues existed in the Tuen Mun District.

53. Mr CHAN Yau-hoi stated that the accumulation of flammable styrofoam boxes could easily lead to fires, and the Department should invoke appropriate regulations for immediate enforcement. In addition, he suggested that relevant departments plant flowers and grass near noise barriers to beautify the environment and prevent rubbish accumulation.

54. Mr KAM Man-fung stated that items generally discarded on public land should be regarded as rubbish. He enquired how the FEHD determined which items were allowed a four-hour removal period rather than being removed immediately.

55. Mr MO Shing-fung stated that the FEHD had arranged for cleansing workers to clear styrofoam boxes and cardboard near the noise barriers behind San Hui Market in Tuen Mun, but the problem of miscellaneous objects accumulation persisted. He thus enquired about the frequency of clearance operations. He was concerned that smokers in the area increased the risk of fire hazards. In addition, he understood that the accumulated items behind San Hui Market typically came from a few specific scavengers or individuals, and he asked about the Department's handling methods, such as issuing warnings or pursuing prosecutions.

56. Mr CHAU Man-sang of the FEHD gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) The Department was not a works department responsible for the maintenance of noise barriers and thus could not provide information regarding green noise barriers or similar matters;
- (ii) The Department was concerned about the accumulation of recyclable styrofoam boxes in the Tuen Mun District, particularly near the year-end period, and would arrange for cleansing workers to conduct at least four daily sweeps in key areas. If the accumulated recyclable styrofoam boxes obstructed scavenging operation, FEHD staff would, in accordance with the law, first issued a "Notice to Remove Obstruction" requiring the items to be removed within four hours. Failure to comply would result in the Department removing and detaining the items; if someone later claimed them, the Department would consider prosecution based on evidence, with a maximum fine of \$5,000;
- (iii) Generally, styrofoam boxes that were neatly arranged, clean, tied up, and did not obstruct pathways were regarded as recyclable items. The Department had reminded merchants in San Hui and Chi Lok Fa Yuen areas that improperly discarding styrofoam boxes and miscellaneous objects would be treated as littering, in which case the Department would consider issuing a fixed penalty notice with a fine of \$3,000. If FEHD staff could not identify the responsible party on the spot, contractors would be arranged to immediately clear the items. Furthermore, the Department would handle items with value

found in public spaces, including recyclable styrofoam boxes, with caution to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings with owners; and

- (iv) The Department would deploy plainclothes staff to conduct enforcement actions at hygiene blackspots in the district. If anyone was found violating environmental hygiene-related laws in public places, FEHD staff would immediately issue a fixed penalty notice to the offender.

57. The Chairman requested that the departments consider the opinions raised by Members and instructed the Secretariat to forward the relevant minutes to the HyD for reference.

VI. Items for Information

(A) Report by the Tuen Mun District, HKPF (TMDC Paper No. 2/2025)

58. Mr WONG Ho-hon, District Commander TMDIST(T), stated that the former District Commander TMDIST, Mr NG Kwok-cheung, was transferred out of the TMDIST on 12 January 2025. During this period, he would temporarily assume the role of the District Commander TMDIST and would continue to work closely with all Members. He then reported on the crime situation in the district, covering crime statistics and trends from January to November 2024. Regarding crime trends, from January to November 2024, the TMDIST received 5 376 crime reports, an increase of 1 508 cases compared to the same period in 2023, representing a 39% rise, while the detection rate was 29.2%, a slight decrease of 4.5%. The increase in crime was primarily driven by deception cases, which accounted for half of the total crimes in the TMDIST, followed by miscellaneous thefts, which surged from 422 cases in 2023 to 530 cases, and thirdly, pickpocketing, which rose from 10 cases to 26 cases. For crimes that recorded a decline, the first was theft from vehicles, dropping from 56 cases to 23 cases, a decrease of 58.9%; the second was burglary, falling from 53 cases to 35 cases, a decline of 34%; and the third was vehicle theft, decreasing from 49 cases to 32 cases, a reduction of 34.7%. He listed the top two major crimes from January to November 2024: first, deception cases, accounting for 50% of the total crimes in the TMDIST; second, shoplifting, comprising 10% of the total crimes; and third, miscellaneous thefts, making up approximately 10% of the total crimes. He added that the overall detection rate from January to November 2024 was 29.2%, a slight drop from 33.7% in the same period last year. However, if deception cases were excluded, the detection rate for the TMDIST would reach 65%. The Police would

sustain their efforts in crime prevention and crime fighting, actively tackling deception with wide-ranging measures through prevention, education, and detection.

59. Mr IP Chun-yuen enquired about the situation of juvenile crime. He noted that while the number of juveniles arrested for crimes had decreased across Hong Kong, according to the report submitted by the TMDIST, the number of arrested juveniles in Tuen Mun had increased. In this regard, he expressed his willingness to collaborate closely with the Police on publicity and education efforts to reduce the number of juvenile arrests.

60. Mr WAN Tin-chong expressed gratitude to Mr NG Kwok-cheung, the former District Commander TMDIST, for his proactive and close cooperation with the TMDC and other stakeholders in maintaining law and order in the district. He pointed out that crime in the TMDIST had risen by 39%, primarily due to deception cases. He enquired about how to define the location where a deception case occurred and the characteristics of the main targets of these scams.

61. Mr WONG Ho-hon, District Commander TMDIST(T) gave a consolidated response to Members' enquiries as follows:

- (i) Among the types of crimes committed by arrested juveniles in the Tuen Mun District, those showing significant increases included wounding and serious assault, with some cases involving love disputes; followed by deception. These arrested juveniles were not limited to students. Regarding deception cases, some of the arrested juveniles were stooge account holders, lured by financial incentives and subsequently deceived. The Police would continue to strengthen cooperation with schools and various stakeholders, enhancing publicity and education efforts to raise awareness among teenagers; and
- (ii) The rise in deception cases in the Tuen Mun District was influenced by multiple factors. The Police determined the location of a scam based on factors such as the victim's residential area, workplace, account opening location, the location where the call was received, and the region where bank accounts or credit card accounts were opened. Therefore, this did not indicate that Tuen Mun residents possessed specific traits making them more susceptible to scams. He added that criminal syndicates tailored pitfalls according to the backgrounds of different targets, making them more vulnerable. As such, the Police would continue to work closely with various stakeholders, employing comprehensive publicity efforts to enhance public awareness of scam prevention.

62. Mr FUNG Pui-yin asked the Police which offences were included under “Other Offences against Public Morality” among the types of crimes committed by arrested juveniles.

63. Ms CHING Chi-hung stated that, among deception-related crimes from January to November 2024, phone scams showed the largest increase compared to 2023, and she sought further information on the primary age groups of the victims.

64. Mr WONG Ho-hon, District Commander TMDIST(T) gave a consolidated response to Members’ enquiries as follows:

- (i) “Other Offences against Public Morality” primarily included cases of clandestine video-recording / photo-taking; and
- (ii) Broadly speaking, phone scams could be categorised into two types: first, scammers falsely claimed that a victim’s relative had been detained by law enforcement and demanded bail money; and second, scammers impersonated officials, alleging that the victim was involved in a criminal case. He further stated that, in the first category, victims were predominantly elderly individuals aged 60 or above. For other scams beyond this category, the age range of victims was broader, making it difficult to clearly delineate a specific age group.

VII. In-house Matters

(A) Members Joining or Resigning from Committees and Working Groups under TMDC

65. The Secretary reported that Ms Vincci CHAN joined the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (FEHC) on 25 November 2024; Ms TSE Yuk-ling joined the FEHC and withdrew from the Working Group on Tuen Mun Major Activities on 25 November 2024; Mr MO Shing-fung joined the FEHC and withdrew from the Traffic and Transport Committee on 13 December 2024; and Mr WAN Tin-chong joined the FEHC on 1 January 2025.

(B) Working Group on Boosting Local Economy (TMDC Paper No. 3/2025)

66. The Chairman asked Members to review the contents of the captioned paper. He stated that the term of the Working Group on Boosting Local Economy was originally set to end on 31 December 2024. To align with the TMDC's follow-up work in the coming year, the term of the working group would be extended by one year to 31 December 2025. The Secretariat sent a letter on 18 December 2024 inviting all Members to join the aforementioned working group. The list of working group members was also detailed in the captioned paper. Pursuant to Order 87 of the Tuen Mun District Council Standing Orders, the TMDC Chairman must appoint a working group member, who was also a Member, to serve as the chairman of the working group. The Chairman thus announced that Mr Kenneth LAU would continue to serve as the chairman of the working group.

67. The Chairman stated that the current-term TMDC had established five committees, with their terms ending on 31 December 2027, and the appointments of chairmen and vice-chairmen of each committee were announced at the first meetings of the committees. The Chairman further clarified that the terms of committee chairmen and vice-chairmen were two years, ending on 31 December 2025. The appointments of committee chairmen and vice-chairmen for the years 2026 and 2027 would be announced to all Members in due course.

(C) Reports by Committees
(TMDC Paper Nos. 4 to 8/2025)

68. The Chairman requested Members to peruse the five captioned reports. As Members had no other comments, the Chairman announced that the reports were endorsed.

VIII. Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

69. The Chairman announced the meeting closed at 5:55 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 10 March 2025.

Tuen Mun District Council Secretariat

Date: March 2025

File Ref: HADTMDC/13/25/DC/25