

(Translation)

Minutes of the 7th Meeting of
Social Services and Community Development Committee (5/20-21)

Date : 2 March 2021
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Main Conference Room, Tsuen Wan District Office

Present:

Members

Mr WONG Ka-wa (Chairman)
Ms CHAN Kim-kam (Vice Chairman)
Mr MAN Yu-ming, MH
Mr LI Hung-por
Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus
Mr LAM Sek-tim
Mr CHAN Sung-ip, MH
Mr CHAN Yuen-sum, Sumly
Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio
Mr CHIU Yan-loy
Mr LAU Chi-hung
Mr LAU Cheuk-yu
Mr PUN Long-chung, Roy
Mr LAU Jackson
Mr LAI Man-fai
Mr TSE Man-chak

Government Representatives

Ms LEE Lai-kiu, Winnie	Senior Liaison Officer (2), Tsuen Wan District Office
Ms LUI Ka-wing	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing) ³ , Social Welfare Department
Ms WONG Sau-man, Samantha	Senior School Development Officer (Tsuen Wan) ¹ , Education Bureau

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat
Representatives

Miss LAM Siu-yung, Daisy	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Tsuen Wan District Office
Mr YIM Hong-yue, Owen (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 3, Tsuen Wan District Office
Mr NG Cheuk-pong, James	Executive Officer (District Council) 4, Tsuen Wan District Office

Attendance by Invitation:

For Discussion of Item 4

Mr LO Kit-hung, Eric

Divisional Commander (New Territories South), Fire Services Department

Mr WU Chi-wah

Divisional Officer (New Territories South) (Acting), Fire Services Department

Mr MO Shan-hoi

Assistant Divisional Officer (Building Improvement) 21, Fire Services Department

Mr AU Hin-lung

Station Officer (Building Improvement) 210, Fire Services Department

Absent:

Members

Mr SHUM Lester

Mr YAU Kam-ping, BBS, MH

Mr TAM Hoi-pong

The Meeting

I Opening Remarks and Introduction

The Chairman welcomed the Members and representatives from the government departments to the 7th meeting of the Social Services and Community Development Committee (SSCDC).

2. The Chairman stated that for Members' information, Mr SHUM Lester, Mr YAU Kam-ping and Mr TAM Hoi-pong were absent with apologies.

3. The Chairman reminded Members of section 28 that according to the Tsuen Wan District Council Standing Orders (the "Standing Orders"), unless otherwise agreed by the Chairman, each Member might speak for each agenda item once at the meeting. For each agenda item, a maximum of four Members might speak and each of them might speak up to 1.5 minutes. Each Member who submitted a paper might have up to three minutes to introduce the paper and speak. Each representative from government departments might have up to three minutes for giving response.

II Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the 6th Meeting held on 23.10.2020

4. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had not received any proposed amendment prior to this meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed without amendment.

III Item 2: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

5. The Chairman said that there were no matters arising from the minutes of the

previous meeting.

(Note: The Vice Chairman joined the meeting at 2:38 p.m.)

IV Item 3: Enquiry about Suspected Operation of Unlicensed Hotels and Guesthouses by Owners of Flats of Private Housing Estates in Tsuen Wan District, and Request for Stringent Regulation

(SSCDC Paper No. 33/20-21)

6. The Chairman said that Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus submitted the paper. Besides, the consolidated written reply from the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and Department of Health (DH) and the written replies from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Home Affairs Department (HAD) had been submitted prior to the meeting for Members' perusal.

7. Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus introduced the paper.

8. Senior Liaison Officer (Tsuen Wan)² (SLO(2)) of the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO) responded that the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the HAD was responsible for handling matters relating to licenses for the hotel and guesthouse industry. It had also submitted a written reply for Members' perusal. She could assist in relaying Members' views to the HAD.

9. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

(1) he opined that the OLA was too passive as it took law enforcement actions only after receiving reports. He hoped that the OLA would consider utilising the information on travel websites to proactively conduct "snaking" operations in order to enhance the deterrent effect on property owners and travel website operators. Besides, he opined that Hong Kong had failed to introduce relevant policies and technologies for effective regulation, and was also unable to tie in with the globally popular concept of short-term shared accommodation. He therefore hoped that the Government would amend the regulations and strengthen the law enforcement (Mr CHIU Yan-loy);

(2) he regretted that the HAD did not send its staff to attend the meeting. He opined that the rank of officials giving response on behalf of the government departments was descending, which was disrespectful to the Tsuen Wan District Council (TWDC). He pointed out that the OLA did not directly respond to the Member's questions in its written reply. He was also dissatisfied that when being presented with an agenda item, the government departments would only provide contact information, such as websites or hotlines, and then refuse to attend meetings of the TWDC and its committees (Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio);

(3) he opined that short-term rental of private accommodation would not only adversely affect residents but also the safety of tourists and the image of Hong Kong as an international city. Besides, he had reservations about the stringent regulation of non-compliant rental of private accommodation. He opined that local policies were outdated. As a result, there is still no suitable

legislation being introduced to facilitate the development of guesthouses in Hong Kong by utilising idle resources as in other places with a view to offering tourists an authentic local travel experience. He also hoped that the law enforcement departments would continue to regulate the said activity in buildings in the district (Mr PUN Long-chung, Roy);

- (4) he opined that the relevant policies of Hong Kong were lagging behind. Hong Kong travellers usually chose to stay in guesthouses when they travelled abroad. It was because the accommodation fee was cheaper and they could more closely experience the life of local residents during their stay in guesthouses. In his opinion, the law enforcement departments had not been vigorous in regulation, and the relevant departments had not made sufficient supporting and promotional efforts. Besides, he opined that the FHB and DH did not respond to his enquiries in their consolidated written reply, and hoped that the HAD would provide the number of prosecutions of “snaking” operations in Tsuen Wan district (Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus); and
- (5) he opined that the Government should draw reference from the legislation relating to guesthouses around the world (the Chairman).

10. The Chairman said that the SSCDC would convey Members’ views to the HAD in writing.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat conveyed Members’ views to the HAD in writing on 7 April 2021.)

V Item 4: Concern about Issues of Fire Safety and Building Management of “Three-
Nil” Buildings in Tsuen Wan District
(SSCDC Paper No. 34/20-21)

11. The Chairman said that Mr LAU Cheuk-yu submitted the paper. The representatives of the government departments responsible for giving response were:

- (1) Mr LO Kit-hung, Eric, Divisional Commander (New Territories South) (DC(NTS)) of the Fire Services Department (FSD);
- (2) Mr WU Chi-wah, Divisional Officer (New Territories South) (Acting) (DO(NTS)(Atg)) of the FSD;
- (3) Mr MO Shan-hoi, Assistant Divisional Officer (Building Improvement) 21 (ADO(BI)21) of the FSD;
- (4) Mr AU Hin-lung, Station Officer (Building Improvement) 210 (SSO(BI)210) of the FSD; and
- (5) Ms LEE Lai-kiu, Winnie, SLO(2) of the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO).

Besides, the Buildings Department (BD) had submitted a written reply on the captioned matter prior to the meeting for Members’ perusal.

12. Mr LAU Cheuk-yu introduced the paper.

13. ADO(BI)21 of the FSD responded as follows:

- (1) the FSD would promote fire safety in old buildings and “three-nil” buildings;

- (2) the Building Improvement Division of the FSD had been maintaining communication with residents of respective buildings to understand their difficulties in improving fire safety. When the FSD issued directions to a “three-nil” building, it would also recruit Fire Safety Envoys and Fire Safety Ambassadors who would take up the coordination and liaison work for upgrading the fire service equipment of the building in the future and assist in raising the fire safety awareness of residents of the building;
- (3) the FSD would submit a list of target buildings without owners’ corporations (OCs) to the TWDO with a view to assisting these buildings with timely formation of OCs; and
- (4) since 2008, the FSD had trained over 300 Fenvoys in Tsuen Wan district under the Fire Safety Envoy Scheme. It had also trained about 50 envoys since 2018.

14. DC(NTS) of the FSD responded as follows:

- (1) since 1997, the FSD had launched the Fire Safety Ambassador Scheme which encouraged all sectors of society to support the public assumption of the roles of Fire Safety Ambassadors and instructors. There were over 6 000 Fire Safety Ambassadors in Tsuen Wan district at present;
- (2) the FSD had organised fire safety promotional events in Tsuen Wan district from time to time, including Tsuen Wan District Fire Safety Carnival, Tsuen Wan Fire Safety Bus Parade cum Fire Drill, and fire safety talks;
- (3) in September of 2018 and 2019, Members of the Tsuen Wan District Fire Safety Committee (TWDFSC) organised Fire Safety Bus Parade cum Fire Drill in partnership with staff from Tsuen Wan Fire Station and Tsuen Wan Fire Safety Ambassadors. They distributed fire safety promotional leaflets and souvenirs in the district, and held a fire safety talk in Yi Pei Square at Chung On Street after the parade to explain various fire prevention measures to and demonstrate how to use fire-fighting tools for people living in the neighbourhood and residents of “three-nil” buildings; and
- (4) the FSD organised Tsuen Wan District Fire Safety Carnival in Sha Tsui Road Playground, Tsuen Wan on 14 January and 16 December 2018 respectively, promoting messages of fire prevention among the public through dramas and exhibitions.

15. SLO(2) of the TWDO responded as follows:

- (1) the HAD had all along been very concerned about the building management problems of old buildings and “three-nil” buildings. It had launched various supporting schemes from time to time and encouraged owners to form OCs or suitable residents’ organisations with a view to helping them to more effectively manage their buildings;
- (2) the HAD launched the Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme in November 2011 to recruit owners or residents who lived in buildings aged 30 years or above and without any form of management as Resident Liaison Ambassadors. Resident Liaison Ambassadors would assist government

departments in contacting residents of the buildings and discussing daily building management matters. The long-term objective of the scheme was to enhance the knowledge and interest of the residents in building management and through this residents' network, assist these buildings in the formation of OCs to facilitate effective building management in the future; and

- (3) excluding industrial buildings, cargo centres, warehouses and other village-type buildings, there were currently 74 "three-nil" buildings in Tsuen Wan district and 75 Resident Liaison Ambassadors from 40 "three-nil" buildings. The number of Resident Liaison Ambassadors would be irregularly updated subject to changes.

16. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:

- (1) he was pleased to note that the FSD and TWDO had carried out considerable publicity and educational work. He enquired whether the FSD had instituted prosecutions against building owners in violation of the fire safety regulations and how the FSD would follow up on the matter if it failed to reach the owners in question. He hoped that the FSD would make every effort to urge the owners to implement basic fire safety measures, and impose severe penalties on and monitor offenders (Mr CHAN Yuen-sum, Sumly);
- (2) as many buildings in Tsuen Wan district had received fire safety directions from the FSD, he enquired about the percentage of these buildings which had not complied with the directions, the number of "three-nil" buildings in Tsuen Wan district which had received the directions, and the criteria for issuing fire safety directions. He also enquired whether notices would be issued to old buildings without fire safety facilities in the urban area first; and whether the TWDO would provide support for owners of the buildings concerned in case they were unable to share relevant expenses (Mr CHIU Yan-loy);
- (3) old buildings had an array of problems, such as fire safety, external wall structure and environmental hygiene. However, without the power to enforce the law, Fire Safety Ambassadors and Resident Liaison Ambassadors could only give advice to persons in charge of problematic buildings. He therefore opined that the TWDO should take the initiative to intervene in the management of old buildings of a certain age and without residents' organisations, and appoint property management companies to assist those buildings in dealing with various problems. After the establishment of OCs, owners of the buildings could decide whether to change their property management companies on their own (Mr LI Hung-por);
- (4) he commended the FSD for positively responding to Members' questions and comments. Besides, the BD indicated in its written reply that Tsuen Wan district had nine buildings aged over 60 years. He requested the BD to provide a list of those buildings. He would submit a paper on speeding up urban renewal in Tsuen Wan, and would like to invite representatives of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) to attend the discussion (Mr LUK Ling-chung, Antonio);

- (5) he pointed out that many Members were aware of the frequent accumulation of miscellaneous objects at the rear staircases and on the rooftops of old buildings in the district, which could easily cause a fire. He opined that apart from the imposition of deterrent penalties by the authorities, the departments should also consider providing funding to assist persons in charge of old buildings with the procurement of fire service equipment (Mr LAM Sek-tim);
- (6) he considered fire prevention measures and education crucial. He thus enquired whether the FSD continued its educational activities, such as demonstrations of the use of fire service installations, in the district and enhanced fire prevention education with the assistance of Fire Safety Ambassadors. Besides, he enquired of the TWDO about how the public could become Resident Liaison Ambassadors. He said that residents in the district were disappointed with the TWDO for its failure to provide specific information on building management issues. He commented that the TWDO did not provide sufficient support for buildings in the district (Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus);
- (7) the FSD often organised promotional and educational activities on fire prevention in public housing estates. “Three-nil” buildings had a higher number of subdivided units and relatively poor living environment. Hence, apart from raising the awareness of fire prevention, it was necessary to strengthen the building management of “three-nil” buildings. He thus regretted that the BD did not send its representatives to attend the meeting. He opined that aside from fire prevention, the hygiene and security of subdivided units also warranted attention. He hoped that the TWDO would more actively help “three-nil” buildings to set up OCs and consider providing subsidies and fire service equipment as appropriate. He also hoped that the FSD would conduct more targeted fire prevention education for “three-nil” buildings with subdivided units (Mr MAN Yu-ming);
- (8) he was disappointed with the replies from the departments. In his opinion, they had neither taken concrete and adequate preventive measures nor allocated additional resources to strengthen the support for “three-nil” buildings. He suggested that the FSD and TWDO should arrange for Members to inspect the fire service equipment of “three-nil” buildings in the district (Mr LAU Cheuk-yu); and
- (9) he pointed out that the fire safety systems of many “three-nil” buildings did not meet the statutory minimum requirements. This problem was not dealt with by OCs or owners. He opined that the TWDO also played an important role in education and publicity on fire safety. The TWDFSC of the TWDO should consider annually subsidising “three-nil” buildings to purchase fire service equipment. Besides, he considered that the URA was better fitted to lead Members’ inspection of old buildings in the district, and hoped that the URA and other government departments would further introduce relevant funding schemes (the Chairman).

17. ADO(BI)21 of the FSD responded as follows:
- (1) although the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap. 572) (the “Ordinance”) had been implemented for a long time, there were still difficulties in enforcing the Ordinance and communicating with owners. The FSD had been providing various types of assistance. For example, in respect of building structure, the FSD had adopted a flexible and pragmatic approach to implementing fire safety regulations since 2016, such as reducing the capacity requirement for fire service water tanks in buildings;
 - (2) the Ordinance targeted buildings which were completed before 1987. The BD would record the buildings concerned and carry out fire service works in conjunction with the FSD. The priority of handling the target buildings would depend on several considerations. The FSD would discuss with the BD in this regard;
 - (3) some buildings met the fire safety standards then in force when they were completed. At present, the aim of requesting for retrofitting these buildings with fire service equipment was to enhance their fire safety. Relatively speaking, the FSD attached greater importance to fire prevention education with a view to reducing fire risks;
 - (4) the FSD would communicate with different owners after issuing fire safety directions, and approach property management companies in an effort to find owners who could not be reached; and
 - (5) earlier, the Government had additionally allocated \$5.5 billion to the URA for implementing the Fire Safety Improvement Works Subsidy Scheme. The FSD had also publicised the scheme among the public during the follow-up on cases.
18. DO(NTS) (Atg) of the FSD responded as follows:
- (1) Fire Stations in the districts welcomed applications from OCs or organisations of buildings in the respective districts for organising publicity and educational activities, such as fire prevention talks and fire drills. Upon receipt of such applications, Fire Stations of the respective districts would send staff to hold activities like demonstration of the use of fire service installations and organisation of fire drills at the buildings. The Community Emergency Preparedness Division of the FSD would also organise large-scale publicity activities from time to time; and
 - (2) due to the epidemic, the publicity and educational activities should be temporarily suspended. The FSD would resume these activities after the epidemic had subsided.
19. SLO(2) of the TWDO responded as follows:
- (1) the HAD had all along been concerned about the management issues of old buildings, and had introduced various supporting measures to help and encourage owners to form OCs or residents’ organisations with a view to improving building management and repair work;

- (2) she would convey Members' views and suggestions on the HAD exercising power to proactively engage property management companies, legislative amendments and other considerations to the HAD;
- (3) the Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme was open to owners or tenants who were 18 years old or above and lived in buildings aged 30 years or above without any form of management. They could join the scheme by submitting a completed registration form to the HAD or the Building Management Liaison Team of their respective District Offices;
- (4) given the fragmented ownership of old buildings and the fact that most of the owners were elderly people or did not live in their flats, the TWDO found it difficult to identify owners who were willing to convene OC meetings and serve as OC members when assisting these buildings with the formation of OCs. It was also difficult to recruit Resident Liaison Ambassadors because tenants frequently moved out from the buildings. The TWDO would continue to step up its publicity and promotion, visit "three-nil" buildings, assist the buildings in the formation of OCs, and invite residents to join the Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme;
- (5) in collaboration with the FSD, the TWDFSC often organised fire safety talks for residents of "three-nil" buildings and conducted fire drills and fire safety talks for residents of private buildings;
- (6) she would convey the Member's proposal of the TWDFSC subsidising the procurement of fire service equipment for "three-nil" buildings to the said committee; and
- (7) the TWDO did not have the record of the exact year of completion of buildings. Members could approach the BD to enquire about the list of buildings aged over 60 years in the district.

20. The Chairman said he would include the captioned item in the Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Meeting at the next SSCDC meeting. He hoped that the BD and URA would send staff to give response at that meeting.

(Note: Mr LI Hung-por left the meeting at 3:35 p.m.)

VI Item 5: Concern about the Life of Homeless People in the District in the Coldness of Winter

(SSCDC Paper No. 35/20-21)

21. The Chairman said that Mr LAM Sek-tim submitted the paper. The representatives of the government departments responsible for giving response were:

- (1) Ms LUI Ka-wing, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing)³ (ADSWO(TW/KwT)³) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD); and
- (2) Ms LEE Lai-kiu, Winnie, SLO (2) of the TWDO.

22. Mr LAM Sek-tim introduced the paper.

(Note: Mr CHAN Sung-ip left the meeting at 3:40 p.m.)

23. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded as follows:
- (1) the SWD mainly provided four supporting services for street sleepers, including the Integrated Services Teams for Street Sleepers (ISTs), the Integrated Family Services (IFS), emergency and short-term placement, and financial assistance;
 - (2) the IST serving Tsuen Wan district attended the SSCDC meeting on 15 September 2020. Members also participated in the IST's outreach services after that meeting;
 - (3) she encouraged Members to refer cases of street sleepers to the SWD for follow-up; and
 - (4) the ISTs and IFS of the SWD would distribute warm items, such as blankets, to street sleepers before the onset of winter. If the Hong Kong Observatory forecast that the temperature in the urban area would fall below 12°C, service teams and social workers of the SWD would conduct outreach services and encourage street sleepers to seek refuge in cold shelters.
24. SLO(2) of the TWDO responded as follows:
- (1) the HAD would open temporary cold shelters in various districts during cold spells or when the Cold Weather Warning was in force. It would also provide warm items, hot water and hot food for users of these shelters according to the circumstances;
 - (2) different factors should be taken into account when choosing a site for a temporary cold shelter. Princess Alexandra Community Centre was a popular venue among organisations in Tsuen Wan district with a high utilisation rate. The SWD, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local organisations also had offices or service venues in the site, including a nursery school for children aged between two and five. In view of the above, the TWDO held that Princess Alexandra Community Centre was not suitable for serving as a temporary cold shelter;
 - (3) Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was a single-storey building without other users sharing the venue, which made it easier to manage. Also, there were several facilities in the Community Hall, including a hall, multi-purpose activity room and conference room. Therefore, the operation of a cold shelter had relatively little impact on other activities being held in the Community Hall; and
 - (4) if Lei Muk Shue Community Hall could not serve as a temporary cold shelter due to unforeseen circumstances, the TWDO would implement contingency measures and make changes accordingly.
25. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:
- (1) he opined that Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was inconveniently located on a hilltop. The Community Hall was also in close proximity to a housing estate of which residents were frequent users of its facilities and services. Besides, as the Community Hall was not separately built, it had to be closed

earlier following the identification of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building within which it was located. If there were confirmed cases of COVID-19 in this building when the Community Hall served as a temporary cold shelter or heat shelter, it might cause confusion. He thus opined that a temporary cold shelter, heat shelter or shelter should be set up in a separate building at a relatively remote location. In addition, he pointed out that street sleepers in Tsuen Wan district were mostly concentrated in the town centre. Therefore, Princess Alexandra Community Centre was more convenient for them, and people in need did not have to travel a long distance to Lei Muk Shue Community Hall (Mr CHAN Yuen-sum, Sumly);

- (2) he enquired of the TWDO about the utilisation rate of Lei Muk Shue Community Hall as a temporary cold shelter. He pointed out that street sleepers in Tsuen Wan town centre would sleep on the streets rather than using the temporary cold shelter in Lei Muk Shue. Besides, he pointed out that like Princess Alexandra Community Centre, Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre at Temple Street in Yau Ma Tei also had a high utilisation rate and accommodated offices of different social welfare organisations or a child care centre. However, it could still serve as a temporary cold shelter. Hence, he opined that the TWDO's decision of not using Princess Alexandra Community Centre as a temporary cold shelter was unjustified, and hoped that the TWDO would give more consideration to the site selection (Mr CHIU Yan-loy);
- (3) he opined that the TWDO's establishment of the temporary cold shelter for Tsuen Wan in Lei Muk Shue was unsympathetic. Princess Alexandra Community Centre suited the said purpose better given its more convenient location. He pointed out that upon the identification of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building within which Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was situated, the TWDO suddenly closed the Community Hall when it was open to the public for lunch. It showed that Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was not suitable for implementing temporary measures. In addition, he opined that as the utilisation rate of Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was not lower than that of Princess Alexandra Community Centre, the TWDO's decision of not using Princess Alexandra Community Centre as a temporary cold shelter was not justified (Mr LAI Man-fai);
- (4) even though temporary cold shelters were opened, street sleepers still chose to sleep on the streets for different reasons. The Government should establish cold shelters in more convenient locations to cater for the needs of users. Besides, he opined that the TWDO failed to fulfil its mission of responding to emergency needs of the public. In the long run, if Princess Alexandra Community Centre could not be used for emergency supporting services, it was necessary to identify another urban location for provision of such services for the needy (Mr LAU Chi-hung);
- (5) he opined that the problem of street sleepers in the district warranted the attention of various government departments. Other members of the district were also disturbed by the hygiene and security problems arising from certain street sleepers. He opined that while it was important to encourage street

sleepers to use cold shelters or heat shelters, the crux was to tackle the problem of street sleepers at root (Mr MAN Yu-ming);

- (6) she pointed out that people from all walks of life might have no choice but to live on the streets due to different social problems and therefore, street sleepers were not a problem. She opined that one should give clear justifications before accusing street sleepers of causing hygiene and security problems. Besides, she requested the SWD to provide Members with the number of people living on the streets due to the epidemic after the meeting. Also, she enquired about the number of users of the TWDO's cold shelter in 2020 and the requirements which should be met so that opening Princess Alexandra Community Centre as a temporary cold shelter would be taken into consideration (the Vice Chairman);
- (7) he pointed out that street sleepers should be referred to as the "homeless", a symptom of social problems instead of a problem. Also, people lived on the streets due to a wide range of reasons. He opined that the Government should consider the needs of the homeless in their shoes. The opening of Community Halls as cold shelters at night had already significantly minimised the impact on other activities. Besides, he opined that the differences between Lei Muk Shue Community Hall and Princess Alexandra Community Centre would not result in the failure to use Princess Alexandra Community Centre as a temporary cold shelter. He hoped that the TWDO would provide the number of evening activities held in other Community Halls in the district when Lei Muk Shue Community Hall was used as a temporary cold shelter. He also urged the TWDO to squarely address Members' aspiration for opening Princess Alexandra Community Centre as a temporary cold shelter (Mr PUN Long-chung, Roy);
- (8) he opined that as street sleepers might live on the streets due to their living environment or personal experiences, they needed more community support. Besides, he enquired how the government departments would inform street sleepers in the district about the opening arrangements of the temporary cold shelter or heat shelter, and whether they would provide follow-up and supporting services for users of the shelter, such as assisting them in applying for public housing. In addition, he enquired whether the multi-purpose activity room at Sai Lau Kok Garden met the requirements for serving as a temporary cold shelter (Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus);
- (9) he opined that the homeless might not live on the streets entirely due to their own problems. One should visit the homeless of each case in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their individual difficulties. Hence, he hoped that the government departments would arrange an outreach visit to the community for Members (Mr LAU Cheuk-yu);
- (10) he and some Members previously visited homeless people in the district on a relatively cold day, and asked staff of the temporary cold shelter whether users could sleep inside. However, the staff responded that users could only sit down to take a rest in the shelter and hot water would be provided. While there were only three users at the shelter on that day, about ten street sleepers in Tsuen Wan town centre were not willing to visit Lei Muk Shue Community

Hall, and claimed that it was too remote. He opined that if Princess Alexandra Community Centre could not be opened as a cold shelter, another venue should be identified in Tsuen Wan town centre for people in need to freshen up and eat at midnight (Mr LAM Sek-tim); and

- (11) he had written to the TWDO to explain the unsuitability of Lei Muk Shue for setting up a temporary cold shelter because of its remote location. Besides, he asked whether the TWDO had taken over premises in Sai Lau Kok or Sam Tung Uk for provision of Community Halls. He also asked the TWDO to provide an information leaflet, if any, on emergency supporting services for Members' perusal after the meeting (the Chairman).

(Note: Mr MAN Yu-ming left the meeting at 3:55 p.m.)

26. SLO(2) of the TWDO responded as follows:

- (1) policies regarding street sleepers or homeless people fell within the purview of other government departments;
- (2) the emergency supporting services provided by the HAD in various districts, such as temporary shelters, cold shelters and night heat shelters, were all interim measures. She noted Members' views on the selection of site for them, and would convey their views to relevant officers for consideration;
- (3) having regard to the circumstances, the HAD would open temporary shelters when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Landslip Warning was in force, or in the event of other emergencies. Temporary cold shelters would be opened during cold spells or when the Cold Weather Warning was in force. The HAD would also open temporary heat shelters in the districts according to the situation when the Very Hot Weather Warning was in force;
- (4) Members could enquire of management staff of Community Halls about the respective utilisation rates; and
- (5) users of temporary cold shelters would be provided with resources, like bedding. They could also sleep in the shelters.

27. ADSWO(TW/KwT)3 of the SWD responded as follows:

- (1) the ISTs of the SWD would approach street sleepers at temporary cold shelters to encourage them to accept supporting services. However, they might choose not to accept the services for different reasons;
- (2) the causes of homelessness were complex. Social workers should handle each case separately in order to learn about the situation of each homeless person in detail. It was impossible to adopt one approach to all cases;
- (3) the SWD had no record of the number of people living on the streets due to the epidemic for the time being. She would relay Members' views to the SWD;
- (4) the SWD had engaged additional social workers and psychiatric nurses for the ISTs since October 2020, and would purchase new vehicles during March and April 2021 for use by IST members performing outreach services. Individual organisations might choose whether to accept the SWD's

- subvention according to their respective considerations; and
- (5) if Members would like to join the IST's outreach visits again, they could contact her to make arrangements.

28. The Chairman said that the SSCDC would write to the Director of Home Affairs to request for changing the site of the temporary cold shelter in Tsuen Wan, and write to the Director of Social Welfare to request for allocating additional resources to service organisations for the homeless under the SWD.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat conveyed Members' enquiries to the HAD and SWD in writing on 7 April 2021.)

VII Item 6: Information Papers

29. Members noted the contents of the following information papers:
- (1) Items Endorsed by Circulation by the Social Services and Community Development Committee during the Period from 16 October 2020 to 22 February 2021 (SSCDC Paper No. 36/20-21); and
 - (2) Financial Statement of Social Services and Community Development Committee Funds as at 11 February 2021 (SSCDC Paper No. 37/20-21).

VIII Item 7: Any Other Business

30. The views and enquiries of Members were summarised as follows:
- (1) he found that due to illegal rooftop structures, many residents of old buildings in Tsuen Wan town centre recently had to move out at the request of the BD. He hoped that government departments would open Princess Alexandra Community Centre or other venues to temporarily accommodate the affected people (Mr LAM Sek-tim);
 - (2) he wished all Members peace in turbulent times, and hoped that he would see absent Members at the next meeting (Mr YICK Shing-chung, Angus); and
 - (3) as the SSCDC would not discuss issues raised under Any Other Business, he requested the SWD and TWDO to liaise with the Member for follow-up after the meeting. Besides, he pointed out that workers who were required to undergo 14-day isolation due to the epidemic had not received any allowance or assistance. He hoped that government departments would re-examine the policy and provide allowance to protect the grassroots (the Chairman).

(Note: Mr LAU Cheuk-yu left the meeting at 4:17 p.m.)

(A) Date of Next Meeting

31. The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting was scheduled for 23 April 2021 and the deadline for submission of paper was 8 April 2021.

IX Adjournment of Meeting

32. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

Tsuen Wan District Council Secretariat

21 March 2021