

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Enhancing the Role and Functions of District Councils

Purpose

The Constitutional Affairs Panel has requested the Administration to provide a progress report on the issue of enhancement of the role and functions of the District Councils (DCs). This paper provides a brief account on the measures that have been taken by the Administration to enhance the role and functions of the DCs.

Background

2. During the Resumption of Second Reading Debate of the Municipal Services (Reorganization) Bill, the Administration informed the Members that, after the new DCs had commenced operation, we would consider how to strengthen the roles of DCs as well as their functions and duties within their respective districts. Since the establishment of the DCs on 1 January 2000, progressive steps have been taken to enhance their role and functions and the support provided to DC members.

Measures to Enhance the Role of DCs

3. The measures that have been implemented so far to enhance the role of DCs include: -

- (a) the DC chairmen and vice-chairmen have been invited to join the respective District Management Committees as full members;
- (b) each DC has set up a committee on environmental improvement, or expanded the role of an existing one to monitor the provision of environmental hygiene services;

- (c) the DC chairmen/vice-chairmen have been invited to sit on the Central Steering Committees and District Working Groups on the Rural Public Works Programme and the new Urban Minor Works Programme;
- (d) an addition of \$13 million have been given to the DCs in the year 2000-01 for organizing community involvement projects; and
- (e) DC members are eligible for a new accountable allowance of up to \$10,000 for meeting the expenses incurred by them in relation to the running of their offices and the employment of assistants with effect from 1 January 2000. DC Vice-chairmen are also provided with a special allowance of \$9,095.

4. Members may wish to note that details of the above measures were given in a paper issued by the Home Affairs Bureau for the meeting of LegCo Panel on Home Affairs held on 14 November 2000.

Way Forward

5. Home Affairs Bureau will conduct a review to see how the role and functions of the DCs can be further enhanced. A District Administration Seminar will be organized on 18 November in order to solicit the views of DC members on the operation of the DCs and areas for improvement.

Conclusion

6. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
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