

**Extract from the minutes of LegCo Members' meeting
with Yuen Long District Council on 5 May 2005**

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I. Roles and functions of District Council

2. Mr CHAN Siu-kay said that the existing roles and functions of DCs, which were mainly advisory in nature, could not keep up with rising public expectations. In the light of this, Mr CHAN urged LegCo Members to take up with the Administration on strengthening the roles and functions of DCs. Mr CHAN also expressed dissatisfaction that the Administration often advised, and not consulted, DCs on issues affecting their districts and that heads of departments rarely attended DC meetings to brief and answer questions from members. Mr CHAN also said that the staffing of DCs was very unfair. For instance, although the number of members of Wanchai and YL DCs varied greatly, i.e. 14 versus 42, the number of staff provided for both DCs was the same.

3. Mr LUK Chung-hung said that although DCs were vested with the power to vet and approve the provision and use of public facilities and services within the districts, such power was merely confined to the implementation of minor environmental improvement and community involvement projects in the districts. Mr LUK further said that the remuneration and operating expenses reimbursement for DC members were inadequate, and should be reviewed by the Administration.

4. Mr LEUNG Fuk-yuen expressed views similar to those of Mr CHAN Siu-kay and Mr LUK Chung-hung.

5. Mr LIU Yam hoped that in the coming review of the roles, functions and composition of DCs by the Administration, consideration could be given to reducing the number of appointed members.

6. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for increasing the roles and functions of DCs, which was particularly pertinent after the dissolution of the two municipal councils.

7. Mrs Selina CHOW shared DC members' views that more executive powers on deciding district matters should be provided to DCs to enable them to better meet local needs and expectations. Mrs CHOW pointed out that she had in fact brought this up with the then Governor during the setting up of DCs back in the 1980s.

8. The Convenor suggested and members agreed to refer the views/concerns raised by DC members in paragraphs 2-5 above to the Panel on Constitutional Affairs for follow-up. The Convenor advised that review of district administration had already been included in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

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