

立法會
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Panel on Welfare Services

Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence

Minutes of the 4th meeting
held on Thursday, 5 May 2005 at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Members absent : Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Public Officers Attending : Item II

Ms Linda LAI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family and Women)

Miss Dora FU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Women)

Mr Paul TANG, JP
Director of Social Welfare

Mr FUNG Pak-yan
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family and Child Welfare), Social Welfare Department

Mrs SO WONG Wei-yee
Chief Social Work Officer (Domestic Violence)
Social Welfare Department

Mrs Loretta CHAU
District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)
Social Welfare Department

Mr LAU Sik-tim
Chief Superintendent (Crime Support) (Crime Wing)
Hong Kong Police Force

Ms Cecilia NG
Superintendent of Police (Crime Support)
Hong Kong Police Force

Mr Patrick LI, JP
Assistant Director (2), Home Affairs Department

Mr James CHAN, JP
District Officer (Yuen Long), Home Affairs Department

Mr LAU Sing
Acting Assistant Director
(New Territories North & Enforcement)
Planning Department

Item II(a) only

Mr Eddy YAU, JP
Assistant Director (Leisure Service)³
Leisure and Culture Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Mary SO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 8

Staff in attendance : Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Dr Fernando CHEUNG informed members that he was asked by the Chairman to chair the meeting on her behalf, until her arrival later at the meeting.

I. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(2)1446/04-05(01) - Administration's response to two submissions from non-governmental organisations received after the meeting held on 18 January 2005 (Chinese version only); and LC Paper No. CB(2)1446/04-05(02) - Administration's response to information requested by members at the meeting on 3 March 2005)

2. Members noted the above papers and did not raise any queries.

II. The Administration's response to the views expressed by deputations at the meeting on 18 January 2005

(LC Paper No. CB(2)980/04-05(01))

(a) *Continue discussion on strengthening town planning and community building*

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Director of Social Welfare (DSW) briefed members on the measures taken by the Administration to strengthen inter-bureau and inter-sectoral collaboration in town planning and community building in new towns as well as developed areas, details of which were set out in paragraphs 3-6 of the Administration's paper.

4. Mr Albert CHAN requested the Administration to retract its statement made in paragraph 4 of its paper which mentioned that using the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) as a general reference, the existing provision of sports ground and public facilities should have met the basic requirements of residents in Tin Shui Wai (TSW) area. Mr CHAN pointed out that if this statement was true, there would be no need for the Administration to, say, construct a District Open Space in TSW North Area 107 (with four basketball courts, one volleyball court, children's play area, elderly exercise equipment, pebble walking trails and a jogging trail with fitness stations) and a TSW Public Library cum Indoor Recreation Centre in TSW South near West Rail Station. Mr CHAN also criticised the failure of the Administration to adopt a people-centred approach in its provision of leisure and cultural facilities. For

instance, instead of allocating resources to meet urgent needs for sports facilities in TSW, the Administration had set aside some \$66 million for the development of a Local Open Space in TSW mid-South at the end of 2005 when open space in TSW was already ample. Noting from the Administration's paper that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) planned to bid resources in the 2005 and 2006 Resource Allocation Exercise (REA) to take the "District Open Space in TSW North Area 107" project forward, Mr CHAN asked when the construction of such a project would commence.

5. Assistant Director (Leisure Service)3 (AD(LS)3) responded that the reason for saying that the existing provision of sports ground and public facilities in TSW should have met the basic requirements of local residents was because the standards under the HKPSG for providing a sports ground and a library in the urban areas and new towns were per 200 000 to 250 000 population and per 200 000 population respectively, and the projected population in TSW was around 260 000. AD(LS)3 however pointed out that these standards were merely the minimum standards, and conceded that more leisure and cultural facilities could be provided to better meet the needs and aspiration of TSW residents. In the light of this, the two projects mentioned by Mr Albert CHAN in paragraph 4 above had been included in the 25 projects recommended for priority implementation in the Chief Executive (CE)'s 2005 Policy Address.

6. As regards when the construction of the District Open Space in TSW North Area 107 could commence, AD(LS)3 said that every endeavour would be made to compress the planning lead time and expedite the delivery schedules to meet the needs for leisure and cultural facilities in TSW. For instance, a seven-a-side soccer pitch in TSW North Area 107 would shortly commence construction this month as minor works project, for completion in mid-2006. AD(LS)3 further said that the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau had confirmed that adequate funds had been set aside for implementing these two projects.

7. Mr Albert CHAN said that the scheduled mid-2010 completion date of the "District Open Space in TSW North Area 107" project was unacceptable, and urged the Administration to expedite the implementation of the project. Mr CHAN then requested the Administration to provide information on the amount of money earmarked for implementing the project, as well as when the actual construction works of the project could be carried out. Mr CHAN also requested the Administration to provide detailed design and drawings of the project. AD(LS)3 undertook to provide the information after the meeting.

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8. Mr Albert CHAN was of the view that the statement referred to in paragraph 4 of the Administration's paper which mentioned that the existing provision of sports ground and public facilities in TSW should have met the basic

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requirements of local residents was misleading. Mr CHAN then requested the Planning Department (PD) to provide a checklist setting out the planned leisure and cultural facilities in TSW and the actual provision and implementation of these facilities, so as to enable members to have a full understanding of the extent of shortfall of such facilities in TSW. Acting Assistant Director of Planning (New Territories North & Enforcement) (Acting AD/NTN&EN) undertook to provide the information after the meeting.

9. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan raised the following questions -

- (a) whether PD could give consideration to providing smaller scale active recreation facilities in public housing estates in TSW, thereby obviating the needs of residents, particularly, children, to travel a long distance to use these facilities in other parts of TSW; and
- (b) whether the completion date of the “District Open Space in TSW North Area 107” project could be advanced from the tentative completion date of mid-2010, having regard to the assurance given by AD(LS)3 in paragraph 6 above that every effort would be made to expedite the completion of the project.

10. Responding to Mr LEE’s first question, Acting AD/NTN&EN said that there were standards under the HKPSG for meeting the active recreational needs of people in the residential neighbourhood, i.e. public housing estates. For instance, active recreation facilities, such as basketball court, badminton court and children’s play area, were provided in the public housing estates in TSW Area 104.

11. Dr Fernando CHEUNG referred the meeting to paragraphs 2.1-2.4 of the Report of the Review Panel on Family Services in TSW pinpointing the failure of the Administration to take into account the changes in the housing policy and economic downturn in the provision of various Government, institutional and community facilities for TSW. To address such, the Review Panel recommended that the Government should take the lead and play a more active role in community building in newly developed districts or areas. In particular, the District Officer of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) should be charged with the responsibility to facilitate the establishment and operation of a standing mechanism to regularly review, say annually, the town planning and community building of the district at the District Council (DC) so that proactive inter-departmental and cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration could be strengthened. In the light of this, Dr CHEUNG asked HAD about the progress made in taking such a recommendation forward.

12. Assistant Director of Home Affairs 2 (ADH2) replied that in response to the recommendation of the Review Panel to establish a standing mechanism in the DC to regularly review the town planning and community building of the district, a Working Group on Tin Shui Wai Town Planning and Community Building had been established by the Yuen Long District Council in last December. The Working Group was chaired by the DC Vice-chairman and met regularly to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Panel and the provision of services and facilities in TSW by departments. ADH2 further said that the Administration had started the preparation work for a review of the role, functions and composition of DCs. It was expected that the review would commence by the end of 2005.

13. As regards Mr LEE's question mentioned in paragraph 9(b) above, AD(LS)3 reiterated that every endeavour would be made to compress the timetable for implementing the "District Open Space in TSW North Area 107" project as far as practicable. The fact that the Architectural Services Department had already commenced work on designing the project prior to the 2005 and 2006 REA was a testament of the Administration's determination to speed up implementation. AD(LS)3 further said that the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs had recently formed a subcommittee to closely monitor the implementation schedule in respect of the leisure and cultural services projects of the two former Provisional Municipal Councils. The first meeting of the Subcommittee to Follow Up the Outstanding Leisure and Cultural Services Projects of the Former Municipal Councils would be held on 9 May 2005.

Admin 14. Mr Albert CHAN requested LCSD to critically review the implementation timetable of all outstanding leisure and cultural services projects endorsed by the former Municipal Council, and revert to members in writing.

(b) *Continue discussion on strengthening district welfare planning and coordination*

15. DSW briefed members on the measures taken by the Administration to strengthen inter-bureau and inter-sectoral collaboration in the planning of welfare and other supporting facilities/services in new towns as well as developed areas, details of which were set out in paragraphs 9-16 of the Administration's paper. DSW added that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was currently conducting a pilot project at Kwun Tong District, namely, "Kwun Tong District Welfare Concourse", involving representatives from various departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community groups and service users. The pilot project aimed to promote early identification and early intervention through cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary coordination and cooperation. The outcome and experience of the project should help to shed light on how to enhance

district welfare planning and coordination. The project was scheduled for completion by the end of 2005.

16. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern that the saying by the Administration to strengthen inter-bureau and inter-sectoral collaboration in the planning of welfare and other supporting facilities/services in new towns as well as developed areas was merely talk, as noted from paragraph 16 of the Administration's paper that the district welfare planning protocol was still being developed. If that was not the case, Mr LEE asked whether more welfare services units, such as Children and Youth Centre (CYC), would be provided in TSW area. There were suggestions from some quarters of the community that the abundant vacant parking space in TSW should be converted for use as CYC or public clinic.

17. DSW responded that the Administration considered that welfare services provision in TSW was adequate to meet local needs. In fact, TSW had been better provided with welfare services than other districts with similar population having regard to the unique population profile of TSW. Although the standard for providing an Integrated Family Services Centre (IFSC) was per 100 000 to 150 000 population, TSW area with its projected population of around 265 000 in 2005 already had three IFSCs. DSW however pointed out that past experience showed that merely relying on hardware, such as IFSCs and Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs), to prevent and tackle family problems was not enough. There was also a need to place emphasis on developing more software, such as building a strong social network and stepping up educating the public about the importance of family harmony and cohesion, in preventing and tackling family problems. To this end, effort would continue to be made to engage people from different sectors of the community, such as teachers and doctors, to collaborate with NGOs and DCs.

18. As regards the district welfare planning protocol, DSW clarified that the fact that such a protocol was being developed did not mean that there was no district welfare planning mechanism in place. The reason for developing such was to make the existing practice on district welfare planning more systematic and consistent. DSW pointed out that prior to the development of the protocol, the District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) of SWD had been adopting some commonly shared practices and approaches to facilitate district welfare planning. Factors considered included district demographic and socio-economic data, district characteristics and dynamics, service provision in the district, policy directives, etc. For instance, to facilitate the re-engineering exercise of family services to form IFSCs, a number of social indicators, among others, had been considered to assess the complexity of social problems in the district. They included new arrivals, elderly population, family service caseload, child abuse and battered spouse cases,

Comprehensive Social Security Assistance cases under categories of single parent family, low earning and unemployment, youth crime, low educational attainment, etc. The draft protocol and the set of social indicators were to be made ready for external consultation during the first quarter in 2005-06.

19. District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long) (DSWO(YL)) briefed members on the recent/future improvements made/to be made to the welfare provision in TSW. They included the following -

- (a) a Family and Child Protective Services Unit had been set up since April 2005 to specifically handle child abuse and battered spouse cases in Yuen Long district,
- (b) an ICYSC would be set up in TSW North Area 103 in 2007-08;
- (c) an Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centre cum Hostel would be set up in Tin Yan Estate in TSW Area 101 in early 2006 and invitation for proposals to operate the home had already been made. A residential care home for the elderly was also planned for setting up in Tin Yan Estate; and
- (d) consideration was being actively made to reprovision one of the two District Elderly Community Centres from Yuen Long town to TSW.

20. DSWO(YL) further said that in view of the fact that residents of TSW were quite passive in seeking assistance for their problems, a number of joint projects involving NGO service units had been initiated by her Office to reach out to the vulnerable groups in different housing estates in TSW for early problem identification and building up their social network. Given the importance of social capital in tackling family problems, the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) had been set up in 2002 to provide seed money to support community-initiated and neighbourhood-based projects that sought to build the capabilities of individuals and groups for self-help, mutual help and support, and to mobilise cross-sectoral collaboration to tackle local problems. There were currently several CIIF projects focusing specifically on TSW area for the purposes of developing individual capacities and resilience, establishing mutual help networks and increasing local participation and employment opportunities. The District Co-ordinating Committee (DCC) on Family and Child Welfare Services under her chairmanship also regularly organised activities in different housing estates in TSW to introduce their services to the residents.

21. On the provision of welfare services targeting at youngsters in TSW area DSWO(YL) said that there were at present six ICYSCs serving the area. These

Centres regularly collaborated with IFCSs operated by the Administration as well as NGOs to meet the immediate welfare needs of families-at-risk in TSW.

(The Chairman joined the meeting at this juncture)

22. Mr Albert CHAN said that in view of the lack of Community Halls (CHs) in TSW, he hoped that the Administration could render more assistance to schools in TSW so that the latter could open up their facilities/premises more for use by community organisations to run activities for families.

23. ADH2 responded that in view of the distance between TSW North and TSW South, a new CH would be provided in TSW North in addition to the existing two CHs in TSW South. The CH in TSW North was expected to be completed in mid-2007, which was nine months ahead of the originally scheduled completion date to better meet community aspirations.

24. District Officer (Yuen Long) said that the idea of opening up school facilities for public use was being pursued by the Working Group on Tin Shui Wai Town Planning and Community Building, Yuen Long District Office (YLDO), LCSD and Education and Manpower Bureau. While schools in TSW in general had no strong objection in principle to opening up their facilities/premises for organising community activities, they nevertheless had reservation about doing so due to concern over security and their own tight activity schedule. In the light of this, the Working Group on Tin Shui Wai Town Planning and Community Building had agreed to pursue a pilot scheme whereby government departments and DC would borrow facilities/premises for certain time-slots to run community building activities. In the coming school summer holidays, YLDO had secured some time-slots during every Saturday and Sunday from seven schools in TSW North. Some schools there had also agreed to allow LCSD to use their facilities/premises for certain time-slots to organise leisure and cultural activities for the public. To date, nine out of the 15 schools in TSW North had agreed to provide time-slots for YLDO and LCSD to organise activities.

25. The Chairman said that inadequate provision of welfare services and other supporting facilities/services to meet local needs was not unique to newly developed areas such as TSW, and was also present in old urban areas such as Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Sham Shui Po. For instance, residents of Kwun Tong had been requesting for a CH in their district for more than 10 years but to no avail. The Chairman hoped that in providing welfare services and other supporting facilities/services, due regard could be given to the district profile and needs and not merely based on planning standards and guidelines. The Chairman further said that one of the main reasons for the prevalent problem of lack of welfare services in the district which had given rise to family problems was due to

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the failure of the Administration to draw up a blueprint for the development of Hong Kong's social welfare policies for the next decade as had been done in the 1990s in the form of a white paper.

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26. ADH2 responded that HAD had all along been basing on various socio-economical factors including community aspirations, whether there were alternative accommodations for community activities of a district, apart from just the district's population, in providing CH in a district. For example, HAD was now actively planning to provide a CH in Tung Tau Estate in Wong Tai Sin. As to the provision of a CH in Kwun Tung, ADH2 said that he would look into the possibility after the meeting.

27. DSW said that although providing direct welfare services was important in combating family violence, it was by no means the only solution. Given that family violence was a multi-faceted problem, it had to be tackled from several fronts to be effective. These included school and community education, enhancing social capital with participation of the community and providing ongoing training to stakeholders, such as the Police and Housing Department (HD) staff, to raise their awareness of the problem. It was hoped that the "Kwun Tong District Welfare Concourse" project, referred to in paragraph 15 above, would help to shed light on how to enhance district welfare planning and coordination in combating family violence.

28. Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that the design of CH should complement the development of social capital in combating family violence. She suggested that CH should provide rooms with independent entrances for use by local groups to run their services/businesses, such as a soup kitchen, aiming at developing social capital through fostering mutual help and serving vulnerable groups in the district. To conserve energy and save air-conditioning cost, CH should be built with more windows as the hot weather in Hong Kong only lasted several months in a year. Mrs LEUNG further said that more should be done by the Administration in creating an enabling environment for the operation of co-operatives providing after school child care service to promote women's social and economic participation. Noting the positive results of the CIIF projects in building social capital, Mrs LEUNG hoped that more experience-sharing sessions could be organised by SWD to disseminate best practice in building social capital.

29. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family and Women) (DSHWF(FW)) responded that the CIIF Committee was planning to organise several sessions this year to share the experience of past CIIF projects in promoting community building with other NGOs and groups interested in applying for the Fund. As regards creating an enabling environment for the operation of co-operatives providing after-school child care service, DSHWF(FW)

said that forming a co-operative was merely one form which local groups could take to build social capital while at the same time meeting a district need. Past experience showed that some after school child care service with a social enterprise nature might start up with other modes of operation and subsequently transformed into a co-operative. To her knowledge, many after-school care service with a social enterprise nature was presently funded by CIIF or through NGOs assistance. Nevertheless, DSHWF(FW) said that the Administration stood ready to assist any local group or NGO which wished to provide after school child care service of a social enterprise nature, regardless of whether it had to operate as a co-operative.

30. The Chairman urged the Administration to expeditiously review the Co-operatives Ordinance, as the nature of the co-operatives which the Ordinance sought to regulate was distinctly different from that of the co-operatives to build social capital, as evidenced by the fact that the Registrar of co-operative societies was the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation. Mrs Sophie LEUNG shared similar views, and said that the Women's Commission was presently in discussion with several Government departments on how to take this forward.

31. Responding to Mrs Sophie LEUNG's comments about the design of CH, ADH2 said that more flexibility had been provided to the design of the new CHs in that the hall and the 50-person conference room were provided with soundproof partitions to turn them into smaller compartments.

(c) *Centralised mechanism to handle family violence*

32. DSW briefed members on the existing three-tier mechanism to handle family violence. At the frontline level, there was close collaboration between social workers of SWD and the Police. At the district level, DSWOs worked in collaboration with NGOs, the Police and other stakeholders through their DCCs on Family and Child Welfare Services and the newly set-up District Liaison Groups on Family Violence. At the central level, there was a Working Group on Combating Violence (WGCV), comprising representatives from relevant Government bureaux or departments and NGOs, which was responsible for mapping out strategies and approaches to tackle the problem of spouse battering and sexual violence. Decisions made with regard to operational issues were referred to appropriate bodies for implementation and those relating changes to strategies and policies, such as amendments to the existing legislation, were referred to the relevant bureaux for consideration.

33. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked how often did the WGCV meet, as to his knowledge there were times when the WGCV did not meet for a stretch of nine

months. Mr LEE also asked about the new strategies which the WGCV had formulated recently.

34. DSW responded that the WGCV met as and when necessary. He pointed out that the frequency of meetings could not fully reflect the work of the WGCV as a lot of things were being done in between meetings, for instance, developing/reviewing the guidelines for handling sexual violence and battered spouse cases. As regards Mr LEE's second question, DSW said that the WGCV had recently completed its first round of deliberations on the establishment of a standing review mechanism on fatal child abuse cases.

35. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that to his knowledge, the WGCV and its working groups had only met a total of some 10 meetings from 2001 to 2004, which came up to appropriately one meeting in every five months.

36. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare) clarified that the WGCV was only one of the four centralised mechanisms on handling family violence. Apart from the WGCV which focussed on spousal abuse and sexual violence, three other committee/working groups viz: Committee on Child Abuse, Working Group on Elder Abuse and Working Group on the Publicity Campaign on Strengthening Families and Combating Violence, had also been set up to deal with child abuse, elder abuse and publicity campaigns in a co-ordinated manner. Chief Social Welfare Officer (Domestic Violence) (CSWO(DV)) supplemented that from 2001 to 2004, over 30 meetings had been held by these four committees/working groups, i.e. seven by the WGCV, eight by the Committee on Child Abuse (CCA), eight by the Working Group on Elder Abuse and 11 by the Publicity Campaign on Strengthening Families and Combating Violence. CSWO(DV) however pointed out that the aforesaid figures did not include the number of meetings held by the various task groups formed under the committees/working groups and the joint meetings of the WGCV and CCA.

37. Mrs Sophie LEUNG was of the view that the most important thing was not how many meetings the WGCV and similar committee/working groups had been convened. What count should be how best the community at large had become more aware and sensitive to the problem of family violence so that timely intervention could be provided to families-at-risk.

38. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan agreed that holding frequent meetings did not guarantee fruitful outcomes, but he could not see how holding meetings far and between was conducive to mapping out strategies to tackle the problem of family violence. Mr LEE then asked DSW whether he could provide a workplan/timetable to tackle the problem of family violence by the WGCV.

39. DSW responded that it was not practicable to provide a timetable as to when the job of tackling family violence could be achieved by the WGCV for the following reasons. First, the job of tackling family violence involved the participation of the whole Administration, NGOs and the community at large, apart from the WGCV. Second, there were many causes of family violence and it was difficult to measure whether the work performed by the WGCV had been effective in combating the problem. For instance, a rise in the number of family violence cases did not necessarily mean that the strategies mapped out by the WGCV were ineffective. This might be due to enhanced public awareness of the problem which gave rise to the increase in the number of family violence cases reported. Third, the job of combating family violence was an ongoing process, in view of the ever-changing social circumstances. Periodical reviews of the guidelines for handling battered spouse cases by the WGCV to better meet the changed social environment was a case in point.

40. The Chairman asked DSW whether consideration could be given to providing the Subcommittee with the minutes of meetings of the WGCV.

41. DSW responded that members would be duly advised of any concrete strategies formulated by the WGCV.

42. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested inviting NGO representatives from the WGCV, the Committee on Child Abuse and the Working Group on Elder Abuse to give views on the centralised mechanism to handle family violence, having regard to the comments made by the deputations on the matter at the meeting on 18 January 2005. Members expressed support.

III. Any other business

43. Members noted a list of proposed items for discussion prepared by the Secretariat tabled at the meeting.

44. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested to discuss the report of part one of the study on child abuse and spouse battering, conducted by the University of Hong Kong (HKU), in June or July 2005, before deciding on the future items for discussion in the next legislative session. DSW advised that the Administration would be in a better position to discuss the report in July 2005. Although HKU had already submitted the report to SWD, an advisory group, comprising representatives from NGOs, was presently studying the report to give advice.

45. Members agreed to tentatively discuss the report of part one of the study on child abuse and spouse battering in July 2005. Apart from agreeing to continue

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discussion on the centralised mechanism to handle family violence in June 2005, members further agreed to discuss the issue of the formulation of a strategic and long-term "zero tolerance" policy at the same meeting. The Clerk would fix the date of the June 2005 meeting, after consulting members and the Administration.

(Post-meeting note : The next meeting was scheduled for 20 June 2005 at 10:45 am.)

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:43 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 June 2005