

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Policy Initiatives of Home Affairs Bureau

Introduction

The 2005-06 Policy Agenda just issued lists the Government's new and on-going initiatives over the next year. This note elaborates, where applicable, on the initiatives affecting the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) in the 2005-06 Policy Agenda.

2005-06 Policy Agenda

Effective Governance

Initiative (1)

- Introduce legislation to give effect to proposals to reform the betting duty system and the regulatory regime of horse race betting so as to combat illegal gambling activities more effectively.

A description account of initiative (1)

- We propose to reform the betting duty system on horse racing bets from one based on turnover to one based on gross margins. The objective is to enhance the competitiveness of authorised horse racing bets in combating against illegal gambling.
- We also propose to take the opportunity to rationalise the regulatory regime on horse racing betting, so as to bring it into line with authorised football betting and lotteries.
- We are planning to introduce the relevant legislative amendments later in the year.

Initiative (2)

- Preparing for the review of the role, functions and composition of District Councils. In doing so, we will take into account the experience of the operation of the second term District Councils. Public

consultation on the review is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2006.

A description account of initiative (2)

- It is Government's plan to commence the review of the role, functions and composition of District Councils (DCs) in the first quarter of 2006. The Constitutional Affairs Bureau and the Home Affairs Department have set up a working group to make preparations for the review.
- The review will pay due regard to the relevant legal provisions, the original rationale for introducing the district administration scheme, the recommendations put forward by Government in the Report of the Working Group on DCs Review published in 2001, and the experience of the operation of the second term DCs. A public consultation document will also be issued to facilitate discussion and to canvass views from different sectors of the community.
- The Working Group will study ways to enhance the role of DCs. Government plans to involve DCs in the management of some district facilities. The Working Group will work out the details of this proposal in consultation with DC members.

Initiative (3)

- Reviewing the issues involved in the existing system of advisory and statutory bodies, and exploring practical ways to streamline its structure and enhance its functions.

A descriptive account of initiative (3)

- We shall continue our ongoing review on the role and functions of public sector advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs) with a view to enhancing their representativeness, openness and efficiency so as to ensure that they can meet the needs of the community and new challenges. We have already submitted 14 interim reports on the review to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council, focusing on a wide range of issues relating to the classification system, the appointment system and the operation of ASBs. We shall continue to explore practical ways to streamline the structure and further enhance the functions of ASBs.

- On appointments to ASBs, bureaux will
 - ensure that a person will not serve in the same post of an advisory or statutory body for over six years nor serve on more than six ASBs at any one time;
 - strive to ensure a healthy turnover of ASB members and bring in more talents from a wide range of backgrounds to help the Administration in having a better grasp of public sentiments and improving governance;
 - seek to provide greater opportunities for women, young persons and the under-privileged to participate in the work of ASBs.

Initiative (4)

- Reviewing the arrangements for rural elections in the light of experience gained in 2003, and working on the way forward for the next cycle of elections in 2007.

A description account of initiative (4)

- We are conducting a comprehensive review of the arrangements for rural elections on the basis of experience gained and identify areas for improvement for the 2007 rural elections cycle. We will conduct consultation on the detailed proposals in due course.

Initiative (5)

- Implementing the existing gambling policy and regulating authorised gambling activities conducted by licensed operators.

A description account of initiative (5)

- We will continue to implement our gambling policy whereby we restrict gambling opportunities to a limited number of authorised and regulated channels only.
- We will continue to regulate the authorised betting activities conducted by the licensed operators in a way which strikes a balance between the need to ensure competitiveness of authorised betting operations vis-à-vis illegal bookmakers, and the need to minimise the adverse impact of gambling on the community.

Initiative (6)

- Working closely with the Football Betting and Lotteries Commission to ensure proper regulation of authorised football betting and lotteries.

A description account of initiative (6)

- We are working closely with the Football Betting and Lotteries Commission to ensure proper regulation of authorised football betting and lotteries.

Vibrant Economy

Initiative (1)

- Providing a platform for the sports sector to engage business partners in organising international sports events.

A description account of initiative (1)

- We will bring in more major international sports events. We aim at developing a strategy in which a platform will be provided for the sports community to engage business partners in organising and promoting such events in Hong Kong. Our strategy will be to :
 - promote the community's interest and capability in sports as an anchor in community building;
 - pool expertise and resources of the sports sector and the business sector;
 - provide international exposure and marketing network for sports events;
 - bring in more innovative and commercial approach; and
 - enhance Hong Kong's international profile and create new opportunities for economic growth.

- The Major Sports Events Committee will foster closer partnership with local sports community and private sector in planning more large-scale sporting events in Hong Kong.

Initiative (2)

- Further facilitating the development of creative industries, pursuant to consultation with local creative industries and organisation of various activities to arouse public interest.

A description account of initiative (2)

- Culture and creative industries refer to industries with value added through creativity and interest protected under intellectual property rights. Many of these industries already exist in Hong Kong. They would have significant development potentials if they could attract new investments, open new markets, and stimulate a free flow of talents and creativity. We will facilitate the further development of our creative industries to promote economic growth and our cultural features, and to provide more employment opportunities and room for creativity for our young people.
- In the past 12 months, we have organised and sponsored a number of activities, seminars and international events to promote creative industries. We have also facilitated the proposal to convert an empty factory building in Shek Kip Mei into a creative arts village. We will continue the work on this front with a view to providing a platform to facilitate the matching of business investors and creative talents.

Initiative (3)

- Organising various types of local community economy projects in collaboration with District Councils and local bodies.

A description account of initiative (3)

- We will continue to implement various projects in collaboration with District Councils, other relevant departments and the private sector, and strengthen our efforts in promoting the unique characteristics of districts with a view to enhancing local community economy and tourism.

Caring and Just Society

Initiative (1)

- Establish a pilot “Children’s Rights Education Funding Scheme” to support public education projects for the promotion of children’s rights.

A description account of initiative (1)

- The Scheme will operate on a similar basis to the existing Equal Opportunities Funding Schemes for projects to promote racial harmony and the rights of the sexual minorities. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations will be invited to submit proposals for projects to raise awareness of children’s rights at the community level. As with the existing Schemes, projects must be self-contained and capable of completion within the financial year in which funding is granted. We will invite proposals in the new financial year with initial funding of \$500,000; the upper limit of sponsorship for any single project will be \$100,000.

Initiative (2)

- Enhancing our network at district level, which has proved invaluable in implementing Team Clean initiatives.

A description account of initiative (2)

- We will continue to enhance our network at district level, which has proved invaluable in implementing Team Clean Initiatives and organising events to promote district characteristics, etc.
- We are :
 - forming district hygiene squads by recruiting volunteers from local groups to support Team Clean efforts;
 - mobilising volunteers to launch cleansing projects in public areas; and
 - partnering with NGOs to promulgate good hygiene practices.

Initiative (3)

- Providing continual researches, preventive education, remedial counselling and treatment services for addressing gambling-related problems.

A description account of initiative (3)

- We will, with the financial support from Ping Wo Fund, continue to conduct research, organise preventive education programmes, and provide remedial counselling and treatment services for problem and pathological gamblers, for the purpose of addressing gambling-related problems.

Initiative (4)

- Continuing our work on the promotion of human rights, including (among others) children's rights, racial harmony, and the rights of the sexual minorities.

A description account of initiative (4)

- Children's rights have been in focus with the hearing in September 2005 of our initial report under the United Nations Convention in the Rights of the Child. We have described - under initiative (1) above - our plans for the introduction of a Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme. A complementary measure, to be initiated in the current financial year, is the establishment of a 'Children's Rights Forum' to provide a regular and formal platform for the discussion of matters concerning children's rights. Membership will comprise children's representatives, NGOs, and Government officials.
- Public education remains an important priority and we continue to address discrimination and to promote racial harmony through the work of the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony and the Race Relations Unit. We have sponsored several initiatives including radio programmes in minority languages, language courses, and Sunday cultural programmes to foster the minorities' sense of belonging to Hong Kong while retaining their own cultural identities.

- The work of the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony and the Ethnic Minorities Forum (respectively established in 2002 and 2003) has continued to strengthen our ties with the minority communities. These efforts will continue.
- We established a Sexual Minorities Forum in September 2004 to provide a formal and regular channel of communication between the Government and sexual minorities. We have also set up a Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Unit in May 2005 to handle gender identity and sexual orientation issues and conduct activities to further promote equal opportunities of persons of different sexual orientation. The unit will maintain a hotline for enquiries and complaints about discrimination on the ground of gender identity and sexual orientation and will liaise with relevant NGOs and government departments.

Initiative (5)

- Introduce legislation to extend the prohibition of racial discrimination to the private sector.

A description account of initiative (5)

- In September 2004, we issued a consultation document to consult the public on our legislative proposals. The consultation period has been extended to 8 February 2005. The views received have been taken into account in drafting the bill. We originally hoped to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council in the 2004-05 legislative session. But the extension of the consultation period and the need to analyse the substantial number of submissions received has resulted in a few months' slippage. But drafting is now at a very advanced stage and we now hope to introduce the Bill within the current session.

Enlightened People with a Rich Culture

Initiative (1)

- Join hands with all sectors in the community to prepare for the hosting of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events. We will make use of this opportunity to showcase Hong Kong and enrich the sports culture in Hong Kong. We will make the Events a success to

bring pride to our home and our nation.

A description account of initiative (1)

- In October 2005, the Equestrian Committee, which makes policy decisions and gives directions for the organisation of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events, held its first meeting. An executive body in the form of a limited company to implement the organisation work for the Events will be set up very soon.
- We will consider to set up a trust fund to publicise the Events and to promote the community participation. It is hoped that through various activities, an Olympic atmosphere will be created in Hong Kong to prepare for and welcome the Events.

Initiative (2)

- Formulate the way forward for the integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district in West Kowloon.

A description account of initiative (2)

- The Government has a firm policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's position as a centre of arts, culture and entertainment in Asia. We have earmarked a waterfront site of about 40 hectares at the southern tip of the West Kowloon reclamation for an integrated development of arts, cultural, entertainment, commercial and residential facilities. On 5 September 2003, we launched an Invitation for Proposals to invite submissions of Proposals from the private sector for the planning, design, financing and construction of an integrated arts, cultural and entertainment district in West Kowloon – the West Kowloon Cultural District. We have received five proposals by the submission deadline on 19 June 2004. Three of them met the mandatory requirements and have been screened in. Between mid December 2004 and end June 2005, we conducted a large-scale public consultation exercise on the project. On 7 October 2005, the Administration briefed the LegCo on the results of the consultation and our next steps. In response to public concerns, we intend to introduce new development parameters and conditions under the existing development framework. Taking into account the views of LegCo, the Town Planning Board, the general public and the screened-in proponents on these additional parameters

and conditions, we hope to decide the way forward of the project early next year.

Initiative (3)

- Working closely with the Sports Commission in pursuit of a new vision for sports development in Hong Kong, and a long term re-development plan for the Hong Kong Sports Institute.

A description account of initiative (3)

- The Sports Commission was established on 1 January 2005. It has three functional committees under it, namely, the Community Sports Committee, the Major Sports Events Committee and the Elite Sports Committee, with a view to pursuing the new vision for sports development in Hong Kong. HAB and Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will provide support to the future Sports Commission and its committees.
- On 1 October 2004, the Hong Kong Sports Development Board was dissolved. On the same date, the Hong Kong Sports Institute Limited was established as the delivery agent for high performance sports services in Hong Kong.
- A Sports Funding Office was set up on 1 April 2004 under LCSD to provide one-stop subvention service for National Sports Associations and other sports organizations. The new funding structure aims to streamline the administrative procedures and efficiency for subvention.

Initiative (4)

- Launching the second phase of public consultation exercise to seek the views of the public on the policy of heritage conservation in Hong Kong and review the policy in the light of the views received.

A description account of initiative (4)

- We intend to adopt a holistic approach in assessing the cultural significance of the built heritage in Hong Kong for conservation. This will not only give appropriate protection to heritage buildings and their cultural ambience, but also maintain the diversity of our architecture,

enhance the community's sense of belonging and widen the citizens' exposure to our unique history.

- We launched a public consultation exercise from February to May 2004 on broad policy issues. The public's response was overwhelming, with over 500 views received. Having studied these views and suggestions, we have started mapping out possible implementation measures. We hope to further consult the public in the first half of 2006.

Initiative (5)

- Reviewing the current market situation and studying relevant overseas models to determine the way forward on the two Private Sector Finance projects on leisure and cultural facilities in Kwun Tong and Tseung Kwan O.

A description account of initiative (5)

- The Private Sector Finance (PSF) approach, which is in line with the Government's policy of "big market, small government", would
 - allow greater flexibility in the development and management of leisure and cultural facilities;
 - tap the creative ideas of the private sector in the design, and its expertise in the construction and management of these facilities;
 - generate more business and job opportunities for the private sector; and
 - help contain the size of the civil service.
- The PSF approach is a complex concept. We need to carefully examine the optimal extent and possible modes of private sector involvement in the design, construction, financing, maintenance and monitoring aspects of the two pilot projects. We will study the relevant overseas models to determine the way forward.

Initiative (6)

- Planning the development of a stadium complex in South East Kowloon.

A description account of initiative (6)

- We have completed a follow up consultancy study which reaffirms the need for a multi-purpose stadium to facilitate the long term sports development in Hong Kong. This proposal is included in the Kai Tak Development which is under review. Subject to the outcome of the review, we will work out a revised timetable for the multi-purpose stadium project in South East Kowloon.

Initiative (7)

- Preparing for the organisation of the 5th East Asian Games to be held in 2009. A Planning Committee with wide representation has been established in June 2004.

A description account of initiative (7)

- A Planning Committee with participation of the sports sector and the community has been set up to plan for the organization of the 5th East Asian Games. We will also work closely with sports sector to bring sports development in Hong Kong to a new horizon and to lift the standards of our athletes. At community level, we will continue to promote the benefits of regular participation in physical activities and encourage the active involvement of the community in sports.

Initiative (8)

- Considering the best option to strengthen tertiary visual arts training in Hong Kong.

A description account of initiative (8)

- A number of post-secondary institutions have taken proactive steps to develop programmes and courses in visual arts at degree level. Assistance will be offered to these institutions.

Initiative (9)

- Developing a cultural, arts and sports network in the Pearl River Delta.

A description account of initiative (9)

- We have held summit meetings with the major cities in the Greater Pearl River Delta, Shanghai and Hainan including the State Sport General Administration and reached formal agreement with cultural and sports authorities on the overall strategies, areas of co-operation and the framework of co-operation in the development of the network. Exchange and Cooperation Agreements have been signed.
- The Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Cooperation mechanism has been firmly established. There are good progresses in the front of museums, libraries, ticketing system, cultural exchanges and Cantonese Opera.

Initiative (10)

- Facilitating the promotion of major arts and cultural events and festivals in Hong Kong, highlighting our status as an international city.

A description account of initiative (10)

- As Asia's world city, Hong Kong has a rich and vibrant cultural scene which enhances our quality of life and attracts visitors from around the world. We will strive to stage more world-class events and festivals in Hong Kong and continue to support local performing arts groups in order to strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international city.
- The Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum 2005, to be attended by Cultural Ministers from 8 Asian countries; senior cultural officials from the Mainland and cultural celebrities from the international arena, will be held from 9 to 12 November.

Initiative (11)

- Improving the governance and operation of cultural services in Hong Kong, including libraries, museums and performance facilities; and encouraging stronger involvement of the cultural sector and the community in the process.

A description account of initiative (11)

- We have established since November 2004 three committees on cultural services, namely Committee on Performing Arts, Committee on Museums and Committee on Libraries, to assist Government in formulating strategies and plans for the development of cultural facilities and services, based on the Culture and Heritage Commission policy recommendations as well as the consultancies on the respective services. We will work in collaboration with the committees with a view to continuing fostering community support and partnership with different sectors; enhancing public interest and understanding in performing arts, visual arts and literary arts; as well as further enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery.

Initiative (12)

- Continuing consultation on measures to provide protection to the most meritorious historical buildings, and to assess the heritage value of selected historical buildings.

A description account of initiative (12)

- We have put in place an internal alarm mechanism for Government departments to forward any demolition or development proposals affecting graded historical buildings and pre-1960 buildings to the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department for comments.
- On the basis of the findings of a previous territory-wide survey on pre-1950s buildings conducted by the AMO, we have commenced a further in-depth study on the heritage value of selected buildings. We will consult the Antiquities Advisory Board of the results in due course.

Initiative (13)

- Enhancing the work on the promotion of youth development in conjunction with the Commission on Youth, particularly on civic and social participation of young people.

A description account of initiative (13)

- In partnership with the Commission on Youth, we will continue to promote the holistic development of our young people, encouraging their social participation in particular, so that they would become contributing and responsible members of the community.
- We have commissioned a local university to conduct the first-ever comprehensive benchmark study on civic engagement and social networks of youth in Hong Kong. The study results in the first stage would establish a baseline for future tracking and trend surveys on this subject, and develop a set of useful indicators for evaluating youth services in Hong Kong. The results of this benchmark study are expected to be available later this year.
- We are working closely with the Commission on Youth to set up district youth forums made up of young people from the relevant districts. The forums seek to provide young people with a platform to deliberate on, and express views on social issues, thereby enhancing their civic awareness and social participation.

Initiative (14)

- Providing young people with appropriate non-formal education and training through supporting the activities of youth uniformed groups.

A description account of initiative (14)

- We would continue to work in close partnership with uniformed groups and other youth organisations in developing appropriate and timely non-formal education, training and development programmes for young people.

Initiative (15)

- Enhancing the work on the promotion of civic education outside schools in conjunction with the Committee on Promotion of Civic Education, particularly on promotion of national education and corporate citizenship.

A description account of initiative (15)

- The annual funding application scheme - the Community Participation Scheme - has, since 2004, been focused on a single topical theme (rather than a range of civic education themes). The topical theme for 2004 was social participation and commitment, that for 2005 was social harmony, and that for 2006 would be building a harmonious society, with particular emphasis on harmony in the family, school and workplace.
- In response to community concerns about the need to enhance national education amongst the general public in Hong Kong, we set up a Working Group on National Education comprising members from both the Committee on Promotion of Civic Education and the Commission on Youth. The primary objective of the Working Group is to draw up plans and programmes to increase the sense of national identity amongst the general public. The first-ever API featuring the national anthem was produced in close consultation with this Working Group. In June 2005, we announced the results of a survey on national identity and national pride in Hong Kong, and organised the first-ever International Symposium on National Education in Hong Kong.
- We would continue to strengthen our collaboration with district-based civic education committees and other concerned parties in the community including particularly the education sector, the professional sectors and the media, so as to enhance the effectiveness of our promotional efforts.
- We will sustain our efforts in promoting Basic Law in the local community through the organisation of focused publicity programmes.
- We are planning to re-convene the Working Group on Human Rights Education for the purpose of sustaining our efforts in promoting the human rights concepts to the community.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Initiative (1)

- Implementing a comprehensive green policy for Hong Kong through

the collaboration of different departments and with the input of experts and specialists in the field, and aiming to develop a sustainable greening programme for the urban areas. We have set up a high level Steering Committee on Greening, completed the planting of 14 million trees, shrubs and annuals in 2004-05, and will complete the planting of another 10 million in 2005-06. We have completed the greening master plans for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central in mid 2005 and will continue to produce greening master plans for Sheung Wan/Wan Chai/Causeway Bay and Mong Kok/Yau Ma Tei by end 2006. For implementation of greening enhancement measures, six pilot schemes in Tsim Sha Tsui commenced in July for completion by end 2005. We will continue to implement greening works in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central for completion by end 2006. The Community Garden Programme has been extended to cover 18 districts in 2005-06. We will continue to organise various greening and horticultural activities to promote greater public awareness and support for a green environment.

A description account of initiative (1)

- We are enhancing the work on greening through the implementation of “Community Involvement Scheme on Greening” in close partnership with government departments, district organisations, NGOs and schools. We also strive to enhance public awareness of the importance of greening through civic education and campaign in the 18 districts.
- To enlist community participation in greening activities at neighbourhood level, LCSD will provide suitable facilities in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories for the public to practise gardening with guidance from qualified instructors. The community garden programme commenced in February 2004. The programme has been extended to cover all districts in 2005-06.
- We have organised about 2 800 greening and horticultural activities for about 1 200 000 participants in 18 districts in the past 12 months. We will continue to organise these activities in 2006.

Initiative (2)

- Refining the Building Management Ordinance to improve certain provisions in the legislation for the benefit of owners’ corporations and

property owners.

A description account of initiative (2)

- An extensive public consultation exercise was conducted from May to July 2003.
- The aims of the proposed amendments are to assist owners' corporations (OCs) in performing their duties and exercising their powers, rationalise the procedures for appointing a management committee and its members, and safeguard the interests of property owners.
- We have introduced the amendment bill into the Legislative Council on 27 April 2005. A Bills Committee has been formed to scrutinise the Bill.

Initiative (3)

- Continuing to closely work with the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Urban Renewal Authority to assist owners of older buildings to properly manage and maintain their buildings through the two bodies' rehabilitation programmes. We are also continuing our efforts to enhance building management and maintenance of private housing through public education, publicity and participation of professional bodies.

A description account of initiative (3)

- Management and maintenance of private buildings is the responsibility of property owners. It has always been the Government's policy to encourage and assist owners to form OCs to achieve effective building management. The Government has taken on the role of "facilitator" in this aspect. We have set up District Building Management Liaison Teams (DBMLTs) in each of the 18 District Offices to provide outreach services to property owners.
- In addition, four Building Management Resource Centres (BMRCs) have been set up in the territory to provide information, advice and service on building management. The BMRCs also provide, in collaboration with professional bodies, free professional advice to the

OCs and property owners.

- The DBMLTs and BMRCs have organised training courses, workshops, seminars and various publicity activities to promote effective building management. We will continue Organising these activities in the coming years.

Home Affairs Bureau

October 2005