

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Welfare Services**

**Provision of Subvented Community Services**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the community services currently subvented by the Government.

**Background**

2. The Government provides various community facilities for the integration of different sectors of the community as well as the promotion of social harmony. For example, the community halls and community centres under the Home Affairs Department (HAD) provide venues for district organisations to run activities for the community. Services for the public provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also available in some community centres. In order to encourage the public's participation in their local communities, HAD encourages owners to form owners' corporations for effective building management. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department provides public libraries, civic centres and swimming pools as well as other cultural, recreational and sports facilities throughout the 18 districts in Hong Kong. There is a wide variety of activities organised in these venues to encourage public participation. The Social Welfare Department runs Integrated Family Services Centres, Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres and provides diversified services for the elderly.

3. Furthermore, HAD advocates the promotion of district administration. Through District Councils (DCs) and their sub-committees, HAD encourages the involvement of residents in community affairs so as to enhance their sense of belonging. The public can express their views on matters affecting their well-being through DCs, area committees and residents'

organisations. District Offices (DOs) maintain close communication with the local community by means of their extensive liaison network, in order to reflect the needs of the districts to the relevant government bureaux or departments, with a view to improving the quality of life. DOs also seek to foster among residents a stronger sense of belonging and a spirit of mutual support through a wide range of community activities.

4. Introduced in the 1970s, Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) were implemented by NGOs in transient communities where the provision of community facilities and welfare services was inadequate or non-existent. Such communities include temporary housing areas, squatter areas, cottage areas and boat squatters. As Hong Kong has experienced significant improvements in the overall social welfare service and community building facilities, the demand for NLCDPs has gradually declined. In December 1995, the then Executive Council decided not to extend NLCDPs to rural areas, new towns and public housing estates not affected by redevelopment. In addition, according to the recommendations made in the Director of Audit's Report No. 29 issued in October 1997, where the population of a project area fell below 3 000, the Administration should review whether there were still sufficient justifications for the project to continue. In 2004, the Home Affairs Bureau released a Policy Statement on Community Development setting out the Government's policy on community development and the general development direction of community development services. It was announced in the Statement that existing NLCDPs would be terminated when the project area was cleared or when the target population of their serving areas fell below 1 800.

5. It was also mentioned in the Policy Statement on Community Development that upon termination of NLCDPs, the resources released would be redeployed to finance other community projects having regard to community needs. The NLCDPs in Shek Kip Mei and Wong Chuk Hang Estates were terminated in December 2006 and October 2007 respectively following the demolition and redevelopment of the project areas. Related financial resources were deployed into the operating expenditure envelope of HAD. These resources may be used by all districts for developing services to meet local needs, such as Neighbourhood Mutual Help Projects and Neighbourhood Child Care Service, having regard to the actual circumstances

in the districts. The Housing Department is expected to begin the demolition of the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate in March 2009. When the NLCDPs in the district terminates, the resources released will also go into HAD's envelope for the provision of community services. Apart from these, we have no plans at present to terminate the other 17 NLCDPs.

6. Over the past decades, Hong Kong has made remarkable development. The overall provision of community building and social welfare services has greatly improved. Transient communities served by NLCDPs have also undergone transformation. The Government and NGOs have worked and will continue to work together to provide a wide range of facilities and services in all districts for the benefit of more citizens. There are a variety of channels through which people from all sectors may participate in community affairs, display the spirit of mutual support, and foster community integration and solidarity. In view of these, the Government is certain that there is no further need to launch new NLCDPs.

**Home Affairs Bureau/Social Welfare Department**  
**July 2008**