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22 February 2010

Clerk to Finance Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Anita Sit)

Dear Ms Sit,

Finance Committee Meeting on 22 January 2010
FCR(2009-10)43 on “Enhancing Diversified Community Activities”

I refer to your letter of 25 January 2010. Our responses are set out below for members’ information.

(a) *Request for checking information on itemized expenditure of DC-funded activities*

It was reported that a Member asked for information on the itemized expenditure of two large-scale events funded by the Kwai Tsing District Council (K&TDC) but his request was not acceded to.

We would like to confirm that itemized expenditure of DC events is available for public inspection at the secretariat offices of the District Councils. According to the funding application form of the current Manual of the Use of District Council Funds (the Manual), the applicant organisations are required to give consent to the Government to release all information contained in the application form and the subsequent reports for general information, should the application be successful. As such, expenditure statements of the CI projects, approved by DCs may be publicized on request since the commencement of the current DC term in 2008.

We understand that the case mentioned by the Member occurred in 2006. We note that the District Officer concerned handled the case in accordance with the then established practice and kept the parties concerned informed of the procedures of seeking the relevant information.

(b) *Employment of temporary staff by DC-funded activities*

Members also asked about the employment of temporary staff under the existing regulations on the use of DC Funds for organising community involvement (CI) projects, including employment of serving assistants of DC members taking up such temporary jobs.

The current Manual on the Use of DC Funds stipulates that an amount of not more than 25% of the approved project fund may be used to cover staff costs directly and specifically incurred on the project, including temporary or casual workers.

The Manual does not prohibit assistants of DC members from taking up such temporary jobs. However, if full-time staff of DC members wish to take up paid outside work, whether on a part-time or temporary basis, they are required to seek the approval of the DC members concerned. In exercising the authority as employers in approving their assistants' application, we trust that DC members will take into account such factors as workload and potential conflict of interest between the jobs concerned. For the above reason, the Government does not have statistics regarding the employment of serving assistants of DC members taking up temporary jobs.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Crystal Yip)
for Director for the Home Affairs