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Panel on Home Affairs

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 12 December 2014**

**Pilot Scheme on Enhancement of District Administration
Through District Management Committees**

Purpose

This paper provides background information and summarizes the concerns of Members of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") about the Pilot Scheme on Enhancement of District Administration Through District Management Committees ("the pilot scheme") launched in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts.

Background

2. In his 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced the introduction of the pilot scheme in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long to provide the District Management Committees¹ ("DMCs") chaired by the District Officers with the decision-making power to tackle the management and environmental hygiene problems in some public areas. The District Councils ("DCs") concerned would advise on work priorities. The Government would provide additional manpower and resources to implement the pilot scheme, which would help consolidate experience and shed light on effective ways to progressively take forward the concept on district administration of "addressing district issues at local level and capitalizing on local opportunities" on a larger scale.

¹ At present, DMC provides a regular platform to discuss and resolve district problems, follow up on the advice and recommendations of DC and co-ordinate the work of various departments at the district level. DMC is chaired by the District Officer and comprises DC Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Chairmen of committees under DC, and district representatives of relevant departments.

3. According to the information provided by the Administration for the special meetings of the Finance Committee ("FC") to examine the Estimates of Expenditure for 2014-2015, the pilot scheme would be implemented in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts from April 2014 to August 2015 under which the relevant DMCs would be provided with the decision-making power to tackle the management and environmental hygiene problems of some public areas. DMCs would take into account the views of the respective DCs in the decision-making process. While the two DCs would identify the specific local issues to be tackled and advise on the work priorities, the decisions of DMCs would be carried out by the relevant departments as far as practicable. In other words, the relevant District Officers, in consultation with DCs, would have the power to determine the issues to be covered by the pilot scheme, the detailed measures to tackle the problems, the work priorities and the control of the necessary resources to achieve results. They may also consider the need to consult professional bodies in taking forward the measures as appropriate.

4. According to the Administration, a total of \$10 million had been earmarked in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 for implementation of the pilot scheme, i.e. \$5 million for each of the two districts. The details of expenditure would be worked out by DMCs in consultation with the DCs concerned. Additional time-limited non-civil service contract staff might be engaged for implementing the pilot scheme.

Members' concerns

Adequacy of resources

5. At the special meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs on 24 January 2014 at which the Secretary for Home Affairs gave a briefing on the new and on-going initiatives in CE's 2014 Policy Address relevant to the policy portfolio of the Home Affairs Bureau, Members were informed of the proposed implementation of the pilot scheme. While Members were in general supportive of the pilot scheme that empowered DMCs to tackle local problems involving management and environmental hygiene of public areas, information was sought on additional manpower and resources to be allocated to Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long District Councils for launching the pilot scheme. In response, the Administration advised that the relevant District Offices would be provided with additional manpower and resources for addressing the work priorities set by DMCs.

Objective and operational details of the scheme

6. At the special FC meeting on 2 April 2014 to examine the Estimates of Expenditure for 2014-2015, enquiries were raised on how the decision-making power of District Officers would be enhanced and why the Administration

suggested hiring additional non-civil service contract staff instead of permanent staff to support the scheme.

7. The Administration explained that the objective of the pilot scheme was to explore how to more effectively implement the concept of "addressing district issues at local level and capitalizing on local opportunities". In addition to the \$10 million provided for the two districts, all government departments concerned would be informed of the scheme so that District Officers in the two districts could exercise additional decision-making power in tackling district issues involving the management and environmental hygiene problems in some public areas. Upon completion of the pilot scheme, the Administration would conduct a review on whether the scheme should continue, and if so, the required staffing requirements.

Latest development

8. According to the Administration, at the mid-term and after the completion of the pilot scheme, the Administration would review whether the pilot scheme had been smoothly implemented in the two districts. Having regard to operational experience and the review results, the Administration would consider whether to extend the pilot scheme to the other 16 districts.

9. The Administration will brief members at the Panel meeting on 12 December 2014 on the progress of the pilot scheme in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts.

Relevant papers

10. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the **Appendix**.

Relevant papers on

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Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs (<i>Special meeting</i>)	24.1.2014 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Finance Committee (<i>Special meeting to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-2015</i>)	2.4.2014	Administration's replies to Members' initial written questions (Reply Serial Nos. HAB119, HAB129, HAB148, HAB361, HAB389 and HAB410) Minutes