

民政事務總署  
香港灣仔軒尼詩道一百三十號  
修頓中心二十九及三十樓



**Home Affairs Department**  
29th and 30th Floors, Southorn Centre,  
130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai,  
Hong Kong.

本處檔號 Our Ref.: L/M in HAD HQ CH/11/60/10 Pt. 17  
來函檔號 Your Ref.: CB2/PL/HA  
電話 Tel. : 2835 1057  
傳真 Fax : 2573 7139

Fax : (2509 9055)

*(Total: 3 pages)*

Ms Alice Leung  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

8 April 2016

Dear Ms Leung,

### **Management of Community Halls/Community Centres**

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2016 to the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) which enclosed the letter from the Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok dated 29 March 2016 on the management of community halls (CHs) and community centres (CCs). SHA has instructed the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to follow up on the issue and our reply is as below.

At present, there are 64 CHs and 39 CCs in the 18 districts in Hong Kong. Owing to historical reasons, apart from providing the general facilities of CHs, CCs also lease out some premises to local social welfare organisations for the provision of various services to the residents. In order to enhance the utilisation rates of CHs/CCs and encourage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise various community activities for the public in CHs/CCs, HAD has launched an agency management scheme (the Scheme) since 1991 to delegate part of the management duties of CHs/CCs to NGOs. Under the Scheme, a CH/CC or certain areas therein may be leased to a local NGO under a tenancy agreement at a nominal rent in return for the NGO taking up some management and care-taking duties, e.g. opening and closing of the CH/CC, as well as overseeing the daily operation, etc. The NGO may also take up unallocated timeslots of the CH/CC for provision of service or activities for local residents. Since the launch of the Scheme, 11 NGOs have participated in the Scheme, six are given priority in booking certain facilities for specified timeslots in the CHs/CCs under their management.

From 2008 onwards, District Councils (DCs) have gradually begun to form District Facilities Management Committees (DFMCs) for actively participating in the management of CHs/CCs. As CHs/CCs in different districts started operation not at one time and different districts have varying needs for CH/CC facilities, in order to ensure optimal use of CH/CC facilities to meet the needs of local residents and organisations and in promoting cultural and sports development, there is no uniform arrangement for venue management across the districts.

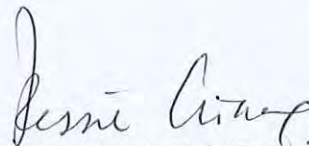
In 2011, HAD set up a Working Group to review the management of CH/CC facilities including the Scheme. Given the heavy demand of local organisations on the use of CH/CC facilities and the steady rise of the overall average utilisation rates of the multi-purpose halls, the Working Group was of the view that the Scheme's primary objective in boosting utilisation might no longer be relevant in view of the prevailing circumstances. The Working Group therefore recommended that the Scheme should be frozen, i.e. no more new applications should be accepted. It also recommended that priority booking of CH/CC facilities to NGOs participating in the daily management of these facilities should be abolished.

The Ombudsman mentioned in its Report that the continuation of privilege of priority booking for two remaining NGOs may easily lead to public misunderstanding of Government's favoritism towards certain organisations. As such, HAD was recommended to consider whether the practice should be discontinued or be retained with rationalisation to avoid such misunderstanding. The Ombudsman was of the view that if the practice was considered beneficial to the development of district cultural and sports activities, it should be rationalised to clear the misunderstanding of Government's favoritism towards certain organisations.

In response to the recommendations of the Ombudsman, HAD, together with the 18 District Offices (DOs), will examine the current demand of local organisations for CH/CC facilities and the actual local circumstances and needs in promoting cultural and sports development, and consider whether the existing practice should be retained and rationalised for reference by other districts. Owing to the varying circumstances of different districts and the potential impact of any changes to the booking arrangements on current hirers of CHs/CCs, we will consult the respective DCs and DFMCs on the recommendations in formulating the next step and the implementation details.

Since DCs' participation in the management of CH/CC facilities in 2008, DFMCs have been making suggestions from time to time on the timeslots and the booking arrangements etc. to address the need of the districts having regard to the changing demands of local residents and organisations for CH/CC facilities and the need of DCs in promoting district cultural and sports development. HAD have been maintaining close liaison with DCs and their DFMCs to ensure timely response to district needs and the optimal use of the limited CH/CC resources.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bessie Liang', written in a cursive style.

(Ms Bessie LIANG)

for Director of Home Affairs

c.c. Secretary for Home Affairs  
(Attn: Mr. Paul CHENG, Mr. Stanley WU) (by email)