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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 22 March 2021**

Animal management and animal welfare facilities in Hong Kong

The Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") and the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights ("the Subcommittee") formed under the Panel have not discussed specifically in detail the subject of animal management and animal welfare facilities in Hong Kong. However, members have express views at various Panel meetings and Subcommittee meetings regarding the services provided to the public by the Animal Management Centres ("AMCs") under the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") during discussions on issues relating to animal welfare.

2. AFCD operates four AMCs across the territory which provide services relating to vaccination and licensing of dogs, and temporarily housing imported animals during their quarantine periods, stray animals for owners to reclaim as well as animals surrendered by owners before they are arranged for adoption. A new Animal Management and Animal Welfare Building Complex ("AMAWBC") will be constructed in Kai Tak Development Area for re-provisioning the existing Kowloon AMC ("AMC(K)") in To Kwa Wan¹ and providing additional space and facilities to meet the operational needs of animal management. According to the Administration, the construction of AMAWBC, including the demolition of the existing AMC(K), is planned for completion in the second quarter of 2024.

¹ The existing site in To Kwa Wan will be released for public housing development.

3. When members were consulted on the proposed construction of AMAWBC at the Panel meeting on 12 November 2019, some members had enquired whether the Administration would consider establishing a public animal clinic/hospital in AMAWBC so as to provide pet owners with an option other than private veterinary clinics. The Administration advised that there were currently sufficient veterinary surgeons and clinics to provide various services in Hong Kong. In addition, AFCD had been subventing animal welfare organizations in support of their work on safeguarding animal welfare, including the provision of veterinary services. In view of the above, the Administration had no plan to provide public veterinary services in AMAWBC. Some members had also requested the Administration to review the design of AMAWBC with a view to making room for provision of more animal keeping facilities as well as other facilities in relation to animal welfare and animal management. The Administration advised that AMAWBC would provide about 270 animal keeping facilities for dogs, cats and other small animals, which was more than double the current number of similar facilities in AMC(K). AFCD would then be able to receive more stray animals or animals given by owners and extend the housing period of these animals where necessary, with a view to enhancing their chance of being adopted. In addition, a number of new and improved facilities would be provided in AMAWBC.²

4. During the previous discussion of the Subcommittee, some members had expressed the view that AFCD should provide adoption service at its AMCs or set up rehoming centres.³ According to the Administration's replies to Members' questions in relation to the 2020-2021 Budget, AFCD would not arrange for adoption by members of the public at the four AMCs due to biosecurity and public health reasons. Instead, they might do so through the arrangement of AFCD's rehoming partners. AFCD had strengthened collaboration with and provided support to rehoming partners in their rehoming services.

² Two inoculation rooms for dog vaccination and a larger waiting area, as well as eight individual multi-purpose rooms will be provided at AMAWBC. Other new and improved facilities will include a detention room, isolation wards for infectious or debilitated animals, a surgical room and a recovery room for injured animals after surgical treatment. Dedicated facilities for publicity and public education will also be available at AMAWBC.

³ The Subcommittee passed a motion at its meeting on 24 April 2017 urging the Administration to, amongst others, set up rehoming centres and allow members of the public to adopt animals directly from these centres. For wording of the motion and the Administration's response, please refer to LC Paper No. CB(2)1624/16-17(01).

5. When the Panel discussed the regulation of crematorium for animals at its meeting on 8 January 2013, some members strongly criticized the Administration for its handling of pet carcasses as solid waste and urged the Administration to review its provision for public cremation service for pets. These members were of the view that consideration should also be given to introducing green burial for pets. According to the Administration, it had no plan to add a service for the scattering of pet cremains in the Gardens of Remembrance or in Hong Kong waters while the provision of fee-charging cremation services for pets had ceased since the closure of the Kennedy Town Abattoir in 1999.

6. The Administration will provide more details regarding the animal management and animal welfare facilities in Hong Kong at the Subcommittee meeting on 22 March 2021.

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