

For Discussion
on 5 May 2005

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence

Government's Responses to Views Expressed by Members

INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence held on 3 March 2005, Members expressed the views that the inter-bureau and inter-sectoral collaboration in the planning of welfare and other supporting facilities / services in new towns as well as developed areas need to be strengthened. Some Members commented that the existing mechanism established by the District Offices and District Councils to discuss town planning, community development and district needs, to reflect the views to the relevant departments, and to monitor the provision of facilities and services in the districts concerned, did not appear to have functioned effectively. Some Members also suggested that schools in Tin Shui Wai area should make their school halls available after school hours for use by community groups on a regular basis.

2. This paper sets out the Administration's responses to the comments made by the Members.

DETAILS

Town Planning and Community Building

3. For new town development, the role of town planning is to ensure adequate and suitable land has been reserved, for the provision of various

Government, institutional and community facilities, so as to serve the future population of the new town. The actual provision and implementation programme of the various community facilities are determined by the concerned policy bureaux and the service-providing departments, taking into account local circumstances and available resources.

4. In the case of Tin Shui Wai (TSW) New Town, adequate land for various community and recreational facilities has been set aside in the town plan to serve the community. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has deployed resources in the provision of various leisure and cultural facilities to meet the local aspiration in new towns. Major facilities provided in TSW area include TSW Swimming Pool, TSW Sports Centre, TSW Sports Ground, TSW Park and five other TSW parks and playgrounds, TSW Public Library and a TSW mobile library stop. According to the Planning Department, TSW has a projected population of around 265,000 in 2005. Using the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines as a general reference, the existing provision of sports ground and public library facilities should have met the basic requirements of residents in TSW area.

5. TSW is a newly developed new town within the Yuen Long District with housing development began in the southern part. The Government has planned the provision of leisure and cultural facilities for the TSW area as a whole and the major leisure and cultural facilities are as far as possible situated in the central part of TSW. In addition, an Indoor Sports Centre in TSW Area 17, which is situated in TSW South near Tin Shui Estate, is under construction, for completion in early 2007. In the interim, the existing TSW Sports Centre at Tin Pak Road in TSW South near Tin Tsz Estate should be able to absorb the new demands given the average usage rate of the basketball / volleyball / badminton courts in 2004 is about 74%. LCSD is going to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council soon for the proposed local open space in central TSW Areas 25, 25A and 25B. A 7-a-side soccer pitch in TSW North Area 107 will commence construction in mid-2005 as minor works project, for completion in mid-2006.

6. Projects under active planning in TSW area include District Open Space in TSW North Area 107 (with 4 basketball courts, 1 volleyball court, children's play area, elderly exercise equipment, pebble walking trails and

a jogging trail with fitness stations), and TSW Public Library cum Indoor Sports Centre in TSW South near West Rail TSW Station, the scope of which is being drawn up in consultation with Yuen Long District Council. Under the current land use requirement, LCSD would consult other government departments on potential use of the site in order to attain the plot ratio. LCSD aims to bid the necessary resources in the 2005 and 2006 Resource Allocation Exercise respectively to take the projects forward. Arrangements are being made to provide additional mobile library services to TSW North area as soon as possible.

7. LCSD has been subsidizing National Sports Associations to organize sports training classes for local school students using school facilities over the territory. For TSW North area alone, a total of 171 programmes were organised for 6,879 students from 11 schools in 2004-05. The programmes include badminton, table tennis, and basketball. The Department is liaising with school principals in TSW North area with a view to hiring specific time slots of their school facilities to conduct training courses for the public.

8. As a service to the community and a means to foster collaboration between schools and the community, it is Education and Manpower Bureau's policy to encourage schools to open up their school facilities / premises and hire out their school premises to community organizations. Though schools should charge hirers on a full-cost recovery basis as far as possible, if circumstances warrant, they may apply a concession rate, or waive the charge altogether.

District Administration Scheme

9. In addition, the District Administration Scheme also helps concerned departments better understand district needs in planning their facilities and services. Through the District Administration Scheme, the District Councils (DCs) and the District Offices (DOs) of the Home Affairs Department help ensure that public services and facilities are provided by relevant departments in an effective manner at the district level. Departments are required to consult DCs on local matters that affect the livelihood, living environment or well-being of residents in the districts. Each DC and DO have their mechanism to discuss with relevant departments on matters such as district town planning, community development and district needs. This is mainly through

discussions at meetings of the DCs (or their committees) and the District Management Committees (DMCs). The DCs and DOs reflect local views to the relevant departments and monitor the provision of facilities and services. In addition, the DMCs (chaired by the District Officers and comprising representatives of the core departments in the district, the DC Chairman and Vice Chairman and committee chairmen) also provide a forum for tackling and resolving district issues among concerned departments.

10. There are dedicated committees under Yuen Long District Council (YLDC) responsible for different aspects of community development, e.g. Town Planning and Development Committee, Social Services Committee. With regard to the Tin Shui Wai case, the Review Panel on Family Services in Tin Shui Wai (“Review Panel”) recommended, among other things, the establishment of a standing mechanism in the DC to regularly review the town planning and community building of the district. In response to this recommendation, YLDC has further established a Working Group on Tin Shui Wai Town Planning and Community Building since last December. The Working Group is chaired by the DC Vice-chairman and meets regularly to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Panel and the provision of services and facilities in Tin Shui Wai by departments.

District Welfare Planning and Coordination

11. The Government recognizes the importance of coordination of the joint efforts of different departments, professionals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in preventing and tackling family violence. There are well-established mechanisms to ensure effective collaboration.

12. The Working Group on Combating Violence, a dedicated multi-disciplinary committee, is set up since 2001 to provide high-level coordination amongst parties concerned to tackle family and sexual violence. One of its tasks is to map out strategies and approaches in handling the problem, from prevention, service provision to inter-sector collaboration etc. The Working Group is chaired by the Director of Social Welfare and comprises representatives from relevant policy bureaux, departments and NGOs. Similar committee / working groups are established to deal with child abuse and elder abuse in a coordinated manner.

13. At the district level, the District Coordinating Committee mechanism, led by District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), is in place to forge cross-sector and multi-disciplinary coordination and cooperation at the district level. There are a total of 13 District Coordinating Committees on Family and Child Welfare comprising representatives from Government departments, local NGOs, community leaders, etc. to co-ordinate service delivery related to family and child welfare services, including, among others, family violence, based on the specific needs in each district. To further strengthen district liaison relating to family violence, as undertaken in the 2005 Policy Address, District Liaison Groups, convened by the DSWO concerned, have been formed with participation of Family and Child Protective Services Units, Integrated Family Service Units, the Police and other relevant organisations as appropriate, to strengthen multi-disciplinary collaboration in handling family violence.

14. In addition, the DSWOs of the Social Welfare Department have been performing their roles at the district level in the assessment of district welfare needs, district welfare planning and service co-ordination through a variety of approaches and means. They would also facilitate the Department in identifying service needs and gaps as well as in implementing social welfare policies. Prior to the development of a district welfare planning protocol and a set of social indicators on district welfare needs, DSWOs have been adopting some commonly shared practices and approaches to facilitate district welfare planning. Factors considered for district welfare planning include district demographic and socio-economic data, district characteristics and dynamics, service provision in the district, policy directives, etc.

15. For instance, to facilitate the re-engineering exercise of family services to form Integrated Family Service Centres, a number of social indicators, among others, have been considered to assess the complexity of social problems in the district. They include new arrivals, elderly population, family service caseload, child abuse and battered spouse cases, CSSA cases under categories of single parent family, low earning and unemployment, youth crime, low educational attainment, etc.

16. The district welfare planning protocol now being developed aims to consolidate good practices currently exercised by DSWOs. It also sets

out a more standardised planning framework and approach for DSWOs to follow while at the same time allow flexibility for addressing specific characteristics and needs of individual districts. A set of social indicators are also incorporated as part of the protocol to provide consistent measurements of the multi-dimensional societal conditions at the districts and to serve as one of the means to map out district welfare needs profile and identify service gap. The draft protocol and the set of social indicators are to be made ready for external consultation during the first quarter in 2005-06.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau,
Education and Manpower Bureau,
Home Affairs Department,
Planning Department,
Leisure and Cultural Services Department and
Social Welfare Department
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