

Hong Kong, 26 March 2013

Clerk to Bills Committee on District Councils (Amendment) Bill 2013  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

By fax: 2509 9055 and email: ftsang@legco.gov.hk

Dear Sir,

**Re: Bills Committee on District Councils (Amendment) Bill 2013**

Designing Hong Kong Limited supports the abolishment of the DC appointment system. We support the decision not to have appointed DC seats from 2016 onwards.

We are disappointed though that the Bill does not deal with ex-officio membership.

To further the democratic development of Hong Kong, we request the abolishment of ex-officio members from 2016 onwards for the following reasons:

- Maintaining the ex-officio membership system would jeopardise the credibility and representativeness of district councils.
- The interests of constituents living in rural area are already represented by their respective elected DC members. It would be unfair to urban constituents that rural constituents have additional votes and representation in decisions on resources allocation and other issues decided on by District Councils. An example is the Islands DC where there are 21 DC members, of which there are 10 elected members, 8 ex-officio members and 3 appointed members. Residents in areas covered by Rural Committees are represented twice.
- The unrepresentative nature of ex-officio members is reflected in the exclusion of ex-officio DC members from nominating candidates for the DC FC (II) constituency. This decision indicates that it is assumed that the views and interests of rural constituents are already adequately represented by elected DC members.
- Abolishing 27 ex-officio members will result in an annual saving between \$14.7 million to \$17.1 million for honoraria and other expenses, and an additional saving of \$4.4 million for end-of-term gratuities.
- In addition, the selection process of chairmen across 27 rural committees varies as it is not governed by law, nor are they subject to strict election regulations such as limits on election related expenses. Questions can be raised over the representativeness of rural committees chairmen.

Here we submit our request and justifications for your consideration.

**Paul Zimmerman – Chief Executive Officer**  
**Designing Hong Kong Limited**