

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)401/16-17(07)

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## **Panel on Home Affairs**

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 21 December 2016**

## **District-led Actions Scheme**

### **Purpose**

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on issues relating to the District-led Actions Scheme ("DAS").

### **Background**

#### District administration

2. According to the Administration, its policy objective in district administration is to promote community development to nurture civic responsibility and a sense of belonging. To this end, the Administration has since 1982 implemented the District Administration Scheme, which is underpinned by the District Councils ("DCs") and the District Management Committees<sup>1</sup> ("DMCs") established in the 18 districts in Hong Kong.

3. In the Administration's view, DCs play a pivotal role in district administration. They monitor the provision and delivery of district services, and advise the Government on matters relating to the local community. The Government also consults DCs on territory-wide issues. The functions of DCs as set out in section 61 of the District Councils Ordinance (Cap. 547) ("DCO") are in **Appendix I**.

4. The Administration conducted a comprehensive review of the role, functions and composition of DCs in 2006 ("the 2006 DC Review"). The

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<sup>1</sup> DMC is chaired by the respective District Officer and comprises the DC Chairman/Vice-Chairman, chairmen of DC committees and district representatives of the relevant frontline departments.

measures to enhance the role and functions of DCs as recommended in the 2006 DC Review had been fully implemented in the 18 districts from January 2008. These measures included, inter alia, inviting DCs to participate in the management of some district facilities, providing additional resources to DCs for carrying out community involvement programmes and district minor works projects, as well as strengthening the communication between the Administration and DCs.

### **District-led Actions Scheme**

5. At the Council meeting of 17 October 2012, the Chief Executive ("CE") put forward the concept of "addressing district issues at the district level and capitalizing on local opportunities" under which the Government sought to gradually relax its "all-embracing" hand on district affairs, encourage members of the community to play a more active role, and enhance the efficiency of district administration by leveraging the wisdom and power of local communities. To take forward this concept, CE announced in his 2013 Policy Address a package of policy initiatives to enhance the functions of and support to DCs.<sup>2</sup>

6. In his 2014 Policy Address, CE further announced the introduction of a pilot scheme in Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long ("the Pilot Scheme") to provide DMCs with the decision-making power to tackle specific management and environmental hygiene problems of some public areas. The Pilot Scheme was implemented from April 2014 to August 2015. A one-off allocation of \$5 million, including provision for the employment of non-civil service contract staff, was provided to each of the two districts to implement the Pilot Scheme. Details of the Pilot Scheme are set out in **Appendix II**.

7. In his 2016 Policy Address, CE announced that in the light of the success of the Pilot Scheme, the Government decided that the Pilot Scheme be extended to all 18 districts in the fifth-term DC (2016-2019) and be renamed as DAS.

### **Major concerns raised by Panel members**

8. Major views and concerns expressed by Panel members on issues relating to the implementation of the Pilot Scheme and DAS are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

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<sup>2</sup> These initiatives included earmarking a one-off allocation of \$100 million for each district to carry out the Signature Project Scheme, increasing the annual allocation for district minor works projects from \$320 million to \$340 million as well as providing an additional allocation of \$20.8 million under Community Involvement Fund to enhance the work of DCs in promoting arts and cultural activities at district level.

### Role and functions of District Councils/District Management Committees

9. Members in general expressed support for DAS which, in their view, would to a certain extent expand the power of DCs. Some members, however, held the view that the Administration should further enhance the role and functions of DCs by delegating more powers previously exercised by the two former Municipal Councils to DCs. They considered that DCs should be delegated with powers in decision-making and funding deployment as the former Municipal Councils had been. These members suggested that DCs could take up responsibilities like street management, management of culture and leisure facilities in districts, and organizing arts and cultural programmes to meet the needs of their districts. Some members suggested that to better take forward the concept of "addressing district issues at local level", DCs should also be allowed to implement projects including those which would incur recurrent expenditures to the Government, instead of implementing projects involving hardware construction only, such as rain shelters. These members considered that the role of DCs was limited as they only served as advisory bodies in district administration

10. The Administration advised that DAS sought to progressively take forward the concept of "addressing district issues at local level and capitalizing on local opportunities" as advocated by CE. Under DAS, relevant projects were to be initiated by DCs. Moreover, DCs would be fully engaged in the planning and implementation of their DAS projects. Inter-departmental efforts would also be made to assist in the implementation of the projects.

### Enhancing communication and consultation with DCs

11. Some members considered that Government officials should maintain more regular exchange with the 18 DCs to understand the community needs and issues. Other members opined that in the absence of a close partnership and collaboration with DCs, the attendance of senior officials at DC meetings was merely an act of formality. There was a suggestion that the Home Affairs Bureau should take the lead to coordinate with various bureaux/departments in tackling district issues requiring inter-departmental collaboration.

12. According to the Administration, while District Officers would consult DCs on specific district issues to ensure that district needs were promptly met, Principal Officials and Heads of Departments were mainly engaged in exchanging views with DC members on territory-wide policy issues. In the Administration's view, the Steering Committee on District Administration chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs was able to facilitate effective coordination among government departments to deal with district issues. The Administration undertook to further strengthen this mechanism

with a view to resolving issues raised by DCs as far as possible and practicable. In addition to the regular briefings conducted by the Home Affairs Department, a new arrangement implemented in the fifth-term DC was the organization of a series of briefings by the relevant Principal Officials for all DC members for exchange of views on district administration and other district matters. The series was kicked start by the Chief Secretary for Administration's briefing held in February 2016 during which she briefed DC members on the development of district administration over the years and answered questions on district and DC-related issues.

### Level of support to districts under DAS

13. Some members considered that as the level of support required by individual districts might vary, the Administration should review and adjust the level of support, in the light of the experience gained from the Pilot Scheme and having regard to the unique situation and characteristics of individual districts. Many members were of the view that initiatives/programmes that had been proven as successful under the Pilot Scheme should eventually become a policy that would be implemented across the territory.

14. When DAS was launched in the fifth-term DC in 2016, the Administration informed members that it envisaged that the 18 districts would propose about 30 DAS projects. The projects were expected to be related to district issues such as tackling environmental hygiene problems, stepping up anti-mosquito efforts and curbing shop-front extension. The Government had reserved an annual recurrent funding provision of \$63 million for the 18 districts, and would create additional civil service posts and employ contract staff to support the implementation of DAS.

### **Relevant motion at Council meeting**

15. At the Council meeting of 23 November 2016, Hon LAU Kwok-fan moved a motion on "Strengthening the role and functions of DCs". The motion was passed.

### **Latest development**

16. The Administration will brief the Panel on the progress of DAS at the next meeting on 21 December 2016.

**Relevant papers**

17. A list of the relevant papers on Legislative Council's website is in **Appendix III**.

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Legislative Council Secretariat  
15 December 2016

**Functions of District Councils**

According to section 61 of the District Councils Ordinance (Cap. 547), the functions of a District Council are:

- (a) to advise the Government on:
  - (i) matters affecting the well-being of the people in the District;
  - (ii) the provision and use of public facilities and services within the District;
  - (iii) the adequacy and priorities of Government programmes for the District; and
  - (iv) the use of public funds allocated to the District for local public works and community activities;
- (b) where funds are made available for the purpose, to undertake:
  - (i) environmental improvements within the District;
  - (ii) the promotion of recreational and cultural activities within the District; and
  - (iii) community activities within the District.

**Enhancement of District Administration**

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Pilot Scheme on Enhancement of District Administration through District Management Committees ("Pilot Scheme")

15. According to the Administration, the 17-month Pilot Scheme was introduced in Sham Shui Po ("SSP") and Yuen Long ("YL") districts from April 2014 to August 2015 to empower their District Management Committees ("DMCs") chaired by District Officers to tackle some specific management and environmental hygiene problems. The Scheme was proven highly successful and well-received by the local communities as it responded actively to public aspirations.

16. In SSP, the Pilot Scheme helped 65 street sleepers to leave the streets and 26 of them had not returned to the street for more than six months. In addition, seven cleansing exercises were conducted at locations where street sleepers gathered, clearing more than 30 tonnes of abandoned items and improving the environmental hygiene of these locations. As for strengthening support for 103 target "three-nil" buildings, a contractor was engaged through the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to provide 159 sessions of cleaning services at the public areas of these buildings and 113 sessions of cleaning services at 40 nearby rear lanes, clearing about 9 tonnes and 11 tonnes of garbage respectively. In addition, 13 Owners' Corporations were formed and 148 Resident Liaison Ambassadors were recruited to help the Government promote the message of proper building management.

17. In YL, the Pilot Scheme tackled 209 shops with shop-front extensions in several rounds of inter-departmental operations which covered four action locations involving six streets. On clearing illegally-parked bicycles, over 1 900 bicycles were confiscated in 63 joint operations. In addition, anti-mosquito and grass-cutting efforts were stepped up at 68 action locations proposed by YL DC members.

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*Source: Extract from the Administration's paper entitled "Enhancement of District Administration" [LC Paper No. CB(2)1228/15-16(03)]. The paper was discussed at the meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs on 12 April 2016.*

## Appendix III

### Relevant papers on issues relating to the District-led Actions Scheme

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	17.2.2016 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	12.4.2016 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	23.11.2016	<a href="#">Official Records of Proceedings Pages 23 to 104 (Motion)</a>

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