

LCQ8: Measures to enhance role and functions of District Councils

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Man-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (April 26):

Question:

Regarding the implementation of the measures proposed by the Government in mid-2001 to enhance the role and functions of the District Councils ("DCs"), the Government replied to a Member's question at the Council meeting on March 1, 2006. Regarding the reply, will the Government provide this Council with supplementary information, as follows:

- (a) as the authorities are studying and following up the 195 suggestions put forward by DCs in the past three years regarding district leisure and cultural facilities and services, of the details of such suggestions and the detailed reasons for not implementing them immediately, broken down by DCs;
- (b) as the authorities have indicated that, among the suggestions put forward by DCs in the past three years regarding district municipal facilities and services, 13 will be considered and reviewed from time to time, depending on the resources available and 11 have not been accepted, of the details of such suggestions, broken down by DCs;
- (c) of the titles of the electronic copies of Legislative Council Briefs issued by various government bureaux to the 18 DC secretariats in the past three years;
- (d) of the respective numbers of meetings that have been held by Directors of Bureaux and Heads of Government Departments with DC members since the commencement of the current DC term, with a breakdown by DC and indication for DC meetings among such meetings;
- (e) as the Steering Committees for Rural Public Works and for Urban Minor Works are currently chaired by the Director of Home Affairs, why the authorities did not implement their suggestion in 2001 that these Steering Committees be chaired by the chairmen or members of DCs;
- (f) of the number and names of the district consultative committees the existing memberships of which comprise no DC members and the reasons for that, and whether the authorities have any

plans and timetable to increase the percentages of DC members in these committees to a specified target; if they have, of the target; and

(g) of the names of the district consultative committees currently chaired by DC members, the names of the other district consultative committees, why some district consultative committees are not chaired by DC members, and whether the authorities have any plans and timetable for all district consultative committees to be chaired by DC members?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) The 195 suggestions put forward by District Councils (DCs) in the past three years that are being studied and followed up by the relevant Government departments are broadly categorised at Annex A.

(b) 13 suggestions are kept under constant review subject to the availability of resources and 11 suggestions were not accepted either because they were not supported by the stakeholders or they were not in accordance with existing policies. Details of these suggestions are at Annex B.

(c) The two electronic copies of Legislative Council Briefs issued by Government bureaux to the DC Secretariats in the past three years are “Electoral Provisions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2002” from the Constitutional Affairs Bureau and “Authorisation of Soccer Betting: the Way Forward” from the Home Affairs Bureau.

(d) Since the commencement of the current DC term in January 2004, a total of 160 meetings have been held between DC members and Directors of Bureaux as well as Heads of Departments. 60 of these meetings are DC meetings. A breakdown of these meetings is at Annex C.

(e) The arrangements for the Rural Public Works Steering Committee and Urban Minor Works Steering Committee will be re-examined in the context of the DC Review.

(f) Out of a total of 213 district consultative committees under the jurisdiction of the Home Affairs Bureau, 11 committees do not consist of DC members. A list of these committees is at Annex D.

These committees were set up in the first instance as inter-departmental working groups to

discuss the provision of services in the districts. We have been taking steps to appoint DC members to these district consultative committees as appropriate.

(g) Out of these 213 district consultative committees, 110 are chaired by DC members while 103 are not. A list of these committees is at Annex E and Annex F respectively.

The main reasons for these committees currently not being chaired by DC members are as follows –

- (i) some committee chairmen are returned by election among members of the respective committees; and
- (ii) the existing membership of some committees do not comprise DC members.

Apart from those committees which elect their own chairmen, we will consider appointing more DC members as chairmen of these committees when the opportunity arises.

End/Wednesday, April 26, 2006