

LCQ4: Curriculum Development Council

Following is a question by the Hon Au Nok-hin and a reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is mainly responsible for advising the Government on matters relating to the curriculum development of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Its tasks include reviewing the existing curriculum policies, compiling curriculum guides and syllabuses, and putting forward recommendations on reform of curriculum development. Some initiatives of CDC in recent years, such as the setting of a long-term vision that "Putonghua be used as the medium of instruction for teaching the Chinese Language Subject" and the compilation of the Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide, have given rise to controversies. CDC operates under a two-tier structure: the first tier being CDC and its Standing Committees, and the second tier being the Key Learning Area/Subject Committees and Functional Committees. All members of CDC and its committees are appointed by the Government, and their meetings are all held in camera. Some members of the education sector have pointed out that CDC lacks democratic elements in its composition and transparency in its operation, resulting in its decisions being prone to be questioned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the criteria adopted by the Chief Executive for appointing members to the first-tier structure of CDC; why none of the 22 incumbent members of CDC are frontline teachers but several of them are members of the business sector; whether it will, by making reference to the method of formation of the Council on Professional Conduct in Education, let practitioners of the education sector nominate candidates from teachers and elect among them CDC members;

(2) among the current members of the various committees in the second-tier structure of CDC, of the respective numbers and percentages of those who are teachers nominated by principals; and

(3) whether it will request CDC to allow the public to observe the proceedings of CDC's meetings, publish detailed minutes of meetings as soon as possible after the meetings, and increase the channels for gauging public opinion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) is an advisory body set up by the Government to give advice on matters relating to the curriculum development of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Currently, there

are three Standing Committees under the CDC (the first tier of the CDC), which are responsible for reviewing and advising on matters relating to the curriculum of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, as well as exploring and reviewing curriculum initiatives, curriculum resources and support services. Committees on Key Learning Areas/Liberal Studies and Functional Committees (the second tier of the CDC) have also been set up under the Standing Committees. The memberships of the CDC and its Standing Committees seek to represent "a wide spectrum of stakeholders" as the members not only need to be well versed in the work of curriculum development or other related areas (such as technological development), but also examine and formulate the directions, emphases and priorities of curriculum development in a holistic manner. The membership of the second tier of the CDC, on the other hand, is drawn from "specialised disciplines" as the members are required to provide concrete views on matters relating to the curriculum development of individual Key Learning Areas/subjects (such as languages and science). While performing their respective functions, the two tiers interact under a regular reporting and feedback mechanism with a view to facilitating the ongoing development of school curriculum effectively.

Like the appointment of non-official members of other government advisory and statutory bodies, members of the CDC and its Committees are appointed on the principle of meritocracy. All members of the CDC are appointed by the Secretary for Education under delegated authority of the Chief Executive for a term of two years. Members of the CDC and its Standing Committees, which represent a wide spectrum of stakeholders, can pool their wisdom together and give their views on the policy of curriculum development and the way forward in a holistic and impartial manner during discussions at meetings. The current CDC, chaired by a professional with enthusiasm in education, comprises a total of 20 non-official members and two official members. The other non-official members include five academics from post-secondary institutions, nine school personnel, one parent, three members from the business and technology sectors and one representative of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. Among the nine school personnel, apart from a representative of a school-sponsoring body, the rest are principals and teachers of kindergartens, primary, secondary and special schools. Besides, the curriculum must keep abreast with social, economic and technological changes, etc. At present, the CDC includes three members from the business and technology sectors. Building on their extensive experience and insights into areas such as human resources, vocational and professional education and training (VPET), innovation and technology, they can offer professional advice on how to equip students to meet the future development needs of Hong Kong and the world.

I must clearly point out to Members that the work of the CDC is very professional. Members of the CDC are required to have a high degree of professionalism, excellent performance in learning and teaching and/or extensive experience in public examinations, as well as capabilities for curriculum leadership. They can be school principals or teachers of other ranks. Therefore, assessing the representation of the CDC simply with reference to the number of teachers appointed will not provide a comprehensive perspective. Apart from nine school personnel, there are five

academics from post-secondary institutions who are educators with considerable experience and vision in areas such as teacher education, subject expertise (such as Chinese History and STEM education), educational research and VPET. Thus, together with the current Dean of Business and Management of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, who is serving as the chairperson of the CDC, 15 out of the 22 members come from the education sector. Members of the education sector form the majority of the membership of the CDC, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the total number of CDC members; while the proportion of members from the business and technology sectors, parents and official members is relatively lower. Therefore, we do not agree with the view, as presented in the question, that there are no frontline teachers involved in the first tier of the CDC. In fact, we should uphold the principle of meritocracy and appoint the most suitable persons as CDC members.

The term of office of the eight Committees on Key Learning Areas and Liberal Studies and the five Functional Committees under the CDC is also two years. To identify the most suitable persons for participation in the work of curriculum development, the Education Bureau (EDB) issues a circular memorandum every two years inviting schools to nominate their teachers as members of the second tier CDC's Committees. The selection exercise is administered by the CDC in accordance with the established mechanism. Except for the Committee on Applied Learning, which must consist of a certain proportion of members from the professional and vocational sectors owing to its unique curriculum design, members of the second tier of the CDC are mostly experienced educators with subject expertise and extensive experience, as well as profound knowledge of the Key Learning Areas/subjects and curriculum areas concerned. Most of them are educators from primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, while some are experienced teaching staff members from post-secondary institutions. They account for over 70 per cent of the total number of members of the Committees. Though individual Committees have different functions and needs and therefore the total number of members and the number of members from various sectors may vary, teachers nominated by schools have been appointed to serve on the eight Committees on Key Learning Areas and Liberal Studies, accounting for about 30 per cent to 35 per cent of the total number of members.

To increase the transparency of its operation, currently the membership lists, agendas and gist of meetings of the CDC and its committees are uploaded to its website for public access. However, in view of the fact that sensitive and confidential issues such as new curriculum development, textbook publishing, resource deployment and information on public examinations may be involved in the discussions, and to ensure that members can freely and candidly express their views in an environment which is free from any external interference and pressure, the meetings of both tiers of the CDC are not open to the public and the minutes of the meetings are not uploaded to the CDC website. This arrangement is made having regard to the need to strike a balance between enhancing the transparency of the CDC's operation and ensuring its effective operation. In fact, the EDB and the CDC have been directly collecting the views of the school sector on the ongoing renewal of curriculum through different channels including briefings, school

surveys, focus group discussions, etc. For instance, when we updated the eight Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides and the General Studies Curriculum Guide for Primary Schools in 2017, questionnaires were distributed to all primary and secondary schools across the territory and the drafts of the relevant guides were uploaded to the EDB website for public information. Furthermore, 22 large-scale consultation sessions were organised for the school sector and there was a total attendance of over 5 300. As regards the Revised Curriculum Frameworks of Junior Secondary Chinese History and History, a two-stage consultation exercise was conducted in 2016 and 2017 respectively to forge a broad consensus in the school sector. All these are proof that the work of curriculum development in Hong Kong is indeed highly transparent and that it is implemented after thorough consultation with the school sector. Members of the public who have any views or suggestions on matters relating to curriculum development may forward them to the EDB through the existing channels or the CDC Secretariat for our follow-up.

Thank you, President.

Lifesaving services at Cafeteria Old Beach resume

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that the lifesaving services at Cafeteria Old Beach in Tuen Mun District resumed today (May 29). The lifesaving services at the beach were suspended earlier due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty.

Auction of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on June 15

The Transport Department today (May 29) announced that the auction of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on June 15 (Saturday), in

Meeting Room S421, L4, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 340 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public auction. The list of marks has been posted at the department's website, www.td.gov.hk," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

(a) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

(i) the identity document of the successful bidder;

(ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;

(iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and

(iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)

Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

(b) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.

(c) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(d) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.

(e) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction

of Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk.

LCQ11: Work of Urban Renewal Authority

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai, and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Question:

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) commenced in May 2017 a district planning study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok to explore effective modes of urban renewal for old districts with limited redevelopment potential (i.e. currently having a high development density or not much residual developable plot ratio). On the other hand, the residential units under the Starter Homes Pilot Project for Hong Kong Residents offered for sale by the URA early this year received very good response. Regarding the work of the URA, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following details about each of the redevelopment projects expected to be completed by the URA in the coming five years: (i) the address, (ii) the total floor area, (iii) the number of units (and among such units, the number of those with an area of 400 square feet or above), and (iv) the expected completion date;

(2) whether it will request the URA to allocate some of the units under the redevelopment projects mentioned in (1) for the purpose of subsidised sale housing; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it knows the latest progress of and expected completion date for the aforesaid study; whether the URA will conduct similar studies for the various old districts in Kowloon East (e.g. San Po Kong and Ngau Tau Kok), and expedite the urban renewal work for such districts, so as to tie in with the development plans under the Energizing Kowloon East initiative; if the URA will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

To explore sustainable ways of addressing the problem of urban decay, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) commenced in May 2017 the district study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok (Yau Mong District Study). The Yau Mong District Study aims to explore ways of enhancing the efficiency of existing land use and the redevelopment potential in the two districts. The findings would

also serve as the basis for the URA to identify more effective and efficient ways for urban renewal as well as practical and feasible ideas and modus operandi for adoption in the work strategy of urban renewal in future. The efficacy of various initiatives under the 2011 Urban Renewal Strategy would also be examined in the context of the study.

Having consulted the URA, my reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) Details about each of the redevelopment projects expected to be completed by the URA in the coming five years (2019-2023) (including the location of the project, total floor area, number of units to be provided, date of completion, and number of units with an area of 400 square feet or above) are listed at Annex.

(2) Of the projects listed in Annex, apart from the redevelopment project in Ma Tau Wai Road named "eResidence" which will be the Starter Homes Pilot Project for Hong Kong Residents, other projects will not be converted to subsidised sales flats. In fact, development agreements for development of these projects as private housing have been signed with joint venture developers.

As a statutory body with the function of promoting urban renewal, the URA has all along maintained an appropriate division of labour with the Hong Kong Housing Authority/Hong Kong Housing Society in terms of their roles and ambits, with the latter two being responsible for providing public housing. That said, the URA has also contributed to the provision of subsidised sales flats under its Kai Tak "flat-for-flat" project and "eResidence", the Ma Tau Wai Road Redevelopment Project. The Government has also invited the URA to identify one or two clusters of sites formerly developed under the Civil Servants' Co-operative Building Society Scheme for redevelopment under the URA's programme, and consider earmarking some of the redevelopment area for public housing development. As to whether the URA will continue to provide public housing in future, both the Government and the URA have to carefully consider the impact of this fundamental change on the supply of private housing (including the impact on replenishing the number of private housing affected by redevelopments) and the URA's self-financing mode of operation.

(3) The URA is taking forward the Yau Mong District Study progressively. The URA has earlier completed the assessment on the scale of urban decay, development density, transport and infrastructure capacity, and environmental issues of the study area, and will identify opportunities and constraints based on the study findings to address the key issues and problem areas. In addition, a selection framework for identification of "Potential Urban Renewal Opportunity Areas" will be developed. Selected opportunity areas will be consolidated into options of "Master Renewal Concept Plans" (MRCP) in subsequent stages. After the MRCP options have been formulated, public engagement will be carried out to solicit views on the options. The URA has also been reviewing the existing institutional framework and implementation mechanisms, and will incorporate the proposed implementation strategies into the MRCP options for testing. The Yau Mong District Study is expected to be

completed in end-2019 or early 2020.

As mentioned above, the findings of the Yau Mong District Study will serve as the basis for the URA to identify more effective and efficient ways for urban renewal as well as practical and feasible ideas and modus operandi for adoption in other districts, including various old districts in Kowloon East.

Meanwhile, the URA has been carrying out urban renewal efforts in various old districts in Kowloon East. Through its various building rehabilitation schemes, the URA has provided assistance services to the owners of over 80 buildings in the area for improving building conditions and living environment. The URA will also continue to follow the Urban Renewal Strategy and take into account a host of factors such as building conditions, living environment, land resources available in the district for relocating affected residents, planning gains that the redevelopment project can bring about to the entire community, as well as the financial and manpower resources of the URA, in reviewing and working out the scopes and priorities of projects requiring redevelopment and rehabilitation in various districts.

Retailer convicted of supplying unsafe laser pointers

A retailer was convicted and fined \$5,000 today (May 29) at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts for supplying unsafe laser pointers, in contravention of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO) and its subsidiary legislation, the Consumer Goods Safety Regulation (CGSR).

Customs officers earlier conducted a test-buy operation on two models of laser pointer from a retailer for safety testing. Test results revealed that the products were not equipped with the safety device components required under the relevant safety standard, such as a warning device, beam stop or attenuator. The laser pointers were also marked with a warning with respect to use in English only.

Customs reminds members of the public to avoid eye contact with the light dots emitted by such laser pointers under any circumstances as the beam emitted by the type of laser pointer can pose eye and skin injuries to users.

Under the CGSO, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import into Hong Kong consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirements for consumer goods. Under the CGSR, where consumer goods or their packages are marked with any warning or caution with respect to their safe keeping, use, consumption or disposal, such a warning or caution shall be in both the English and Chinese languages. The maximum penalty is a fine

of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the CGSO or the CGSR to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).