

## LCQ8: Community development services

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-chun and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

Introduced by the Government in the 1970s, the Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) were implemented by non-governmental organisations in transient communities in which community facilities and welfare services were inadequate or non-existent. Since December 1995, the Government has, on grounds of the decrease in deprived communities, significantly reduced the number of NLCDP teams from the then 52 to the current 17 and it has not diverted the resources thus saved to district-based community development services. Moreover, according to the Policy Statement on Community Development drawn up by the Government in 2005, upon the termination of some NLCDPs, the resources thus saved will be deployed to finance other community projects having regard to community needs. Regarding the community development services subsidised and provided by the Government, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the annual and cumulative total amounts of reductions in the funding allocation for NLCDPs since the Government started to reduce NLCDP teams at the end of 1995 (set out in a table); among those savings, the respective annual amounts and the cumulative total amounts spent on (i) subsidising the Neighbourhood Mutual Help Programme and (ii) Care and Support Networking Team, and (iii) other service areas; and

(2) of the number of occasions on which the authorities held the NGO Forum on Community Development in the past five years, and the details thereof?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD), a consolidated reply to the question raised by Hon Shiu Ka-chun is provided as follows:

(1) The Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) were introduced in the 1970s by the Government to serve the deprived and transient communities where welfare services and community facilities were inadequate. As such, the target areas include temporary housing areas, squatter areas, boat squatters, cottage areas, etc.

Hong Kong has experienced significant improvement in the overall social welfare services and community building facilities since the 1970s. The context in which the need for NLCDPs was envisaged has likewise changed

significantly, as observed in the Director of Audit's Report No. 29 issued in October 1997. As a corollary, the Government reviewed the service needs and from 1997 to 2001 terminated or downsized NLCDPs with serving population falling below 3 000. There are currently 17 NLCDPs operated by eight non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and SWD do not maintain information on the resources released from NLCDPs terminated between 1997 and 2001.

The Government commissioned the Society for Community Organization to operate the Care and Support Networking Team with resources redeployed from an NLCDP that ceased service in 2003. A recurrent provision of about \$2.1 million is granted for its operation.

According to the Policy Statement on Community Development drawn up by the Government in 2005, upon termination of NLCDPs, resources released would be redeployed to finance other community projects having regard to community needs. Such projects would be consistent with the policy objectives of community development.

In this connection, HAD has implemented the Neighbourhood Mutual Help Programme (NMHP) since 2007-08 using resources released from three terminated NLCDPs. The resources released from the three terminated NLCDPs are about \$5.4 million per year.

(2) The Government attaches importance to communication with different stakeholders to exchange views on community development services through various channels, including the NGO Forum on Community Development, small group sessions, informal meetings, etc. The Government will continue to convene the NGO Forum on a need basis.

We do not maintain the number and details of the informal meetings. In the past five years, HAB organised three NGO Forums as detailed below:

Date	Venue	Major Agenda Item
October 5, 2015	Conference Room 1, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tamar	Resources released from terminated NLCDPs
March 7, 2016	Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tamar	Arrangement of NMHP projects to be launched in 2016-17
September 27, 2018	Conference Room 7, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tamar	Arrangement of NMHP projects to be launched in 2018-19