

Steering Committee on District Governance convenes second meeting (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, chaired the second meeting of the Steering Committee on District Governance today (January 11). The Steering Committee received the work reports on the first meetings of the seventh-term District Councils (DCs) at the 18 districts, and formulated strategies to address district issues of people's concern.

Mr Chan said, "The seventh-term DCs took office on January 1 this year, marking the full implementation of the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong' in district governance. This is a crucial step to achieving good governance, as well as the long-term stability and security, of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The reformed DCs have got back on track to steadfastly safeguard national security, focus on livelihood issues, and assist the Government in tackling people's concerns and respond to their needs. The Government and the public at large have high expectations for the DCs, with a view to jointly translating the institutional strengths of 'patriots administering Hong Kong' into effective governance and opening a new chapter in district governance."

Mr Chan stressed that the District Officers in the 18 districts, as the Chairmen of the new-term DCs, should lead the DCs to fully perform their consultative and service functions. The DCs should serve as a connection between the Government and the people, and assist the Government in implementing and explaining policy initiatives to the people as well as gauging their sentiments, thereby ensuring the effective communication between the two. At the same time, the DCs should be people-oriented and work diligently to resolve people's daily problems through practical actions, thereby bringing about tangible improvements to the community.

During the meeting, the Steering Committee received the work reports on the first meetings of the 18 DCs and exchanged views with the Chairmen of the DCs. Mr Chan was pleased to learn that all the DCs promptly held meetings in the first week after taking office and achieved the following outcomes:

(1) establishing committees and working groups in different areas: The 18 DCs have each set up four specified committees, namely the District Facilities and Works Committee; the Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee; the Community Involvement, Culture and Recreation Committee; and the Traffic and Transport Committee; and also a Working Group on Boosting Local Economy. In addition, individual districts have set up other committees and working groups to handle consultation matters related to housing, social welfare, development planning, youth and other issues in view of their local circumstances. The committees will be consulted by the Government on district matters; assist the Government in publicising and promoting district

projects; encouraging local residents to participate in activities organised by the Government and the DCs; and, at the request of the DC Chairmen, collect views of local residents on district matters, and submit relevant summaries and proposals to the Government;

(2) establishing arrangements of the Meet the Public Scheme: Members of the 18 DCs take turns, according to the duty rosters approved by the DC Chairmen, to be on duty at the DC offices starting this January. They will handle or make referrals about complaints or requests for assistance from the public;

(3) conducting research into issues of district concern: The Chairmen of the 18 DCs have invited the DC members to collect views on issues of district concern from local residents, and conduct research and suggest possible measures for the Government's more effective follow-up. These issues are closely related to the daily lives of the people. They include addition and renovation of district facilities, improvement of district environmental hygiene, and enhancement of the transportation network and mobility facilities;

(4) conducting caring activities and district clean-ups before the Lunar New Year: The 18 DCs will co-operate with the District Services and Community Care Teams within their respective districts to carry out caring activities of various types before the Lunar New Year. They will also co-operate with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in conducting district clean-ups at public markets, cooked food markets, alleys, etc, in their respective districts;

(5) organising activities to boost the local economy: The 18 DCs, together with the Home Affairs Department (HAD), will organise "Day and Night Vibes" activities with district characteristics and traditional cultural connotations across 18 districts to attract the locals and tourists alike, thereby contributing to boosting the local economy; and

(6) setting up distinctive landmarks with local characteristics: The 18 DCs, together with the HAD, will set up distinctive photo-taking landmarks with particular themes and design elements across 18 districts to showcase district uniqueness, with a view to attracting the locals and tourists alike to check in and take photos there.

Mr Chan stressed that all the 18 DCs should keep district issues, be they big or small, close to their hearts; understand the most imminent concerns of the people; and take concrete actions for the well-being of the people, with a view to enhancing their sense of security, achievement and satisfaction. He requested the Chairmen of the 18 DCs to take forward the various initiatives as planned to bring tangible benefits to the people. He also requested the Directors of Bureaux to lead their departments to steadfastly discharge good governance at the district level and maintain exchanges and co-operation with the 18 DCs.

During the meeting, the Steering Committee also followed up the work progress of the five district issues identified by it previously (Note) and

discussed two new ones, namely enhancing the walking experience for citizens and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment, and improving the environment of public housing estates and creating comfortable homes. Initiatives of the first new district issue include selecting footbridges or pedestrian subways for renovation and beautification works, and installing on a trial basis bench railings at suitable locations for citizens to sit and rest briefly; and those of the second new one include selecting public housing estates for external wall redecoration works and minor estate improvement works, and conducting designs for theme-based improvement works. The Task Force on District Governance will formulate implementation details accordingly. Mr Chan requested the Task Force on District Governance to continue co-ordinating bureaux and departments in ensuring the orderly implementation of the initiatives of the various district issues to build a better community together across all the 18 districts.

Note: The five district issues are expanding after-school care service and enhancing support for parents; caring for the elderly and enhancing community support; fostering clean markets and mobilising the community to participate in anti-rodent work; enhancing public order and combatting crimes on all fronts; and improving pedestrian facilities and ensuring road safety.

