

Youth Development Commission convenes fifth meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairman of the Youth Development Commission (YDC), Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the fifth meeting of the Youth Development Commission today (December 16). At the meeting, members were briefed on the new measures related to and the latest progress of the Youth Hostel Scheme (YHS). Members also discussed the new measures related to youth development and enhancing the work of the YDC in the 2019 Policy Address.

Members noted the new measures related to the YHS in the 2019 Policy Address. They welcomed the initiatives to allow youth hostel tenants to submit or retain their applications for public rental housing and to roll out a new seventh project under the YHS. Moreover, the non-governmental organisation (NGO) responsible for the first YHS project in Hong Kong, namely the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG), also briefed the YDC on the latest progress of the Tai Po youth hostel PH2, as well as its vision, application details and services to be provided to tenants in the future. Members expressed appreciation for the HKFYG's planning of the Tai Po youth hostel and offered suggestions on the future operation and services of the hostel for the HKFYG's consideration.

Mr Cheung thanked the HKFYG for its efforts devoted to taking forward the project, and pointed out that the community has much anticipation for the completion of the first-ever YHS project. He said he was confident that under the HKFYG's operation and management, the Tai Po youth hostel PH2 will be able to provide working youths in Hong Kong with independent living space at affordable rent and ancillary services to support their personal development. The HKFYG announced details of the Tai Po youth hostel PH2 in the afternoon today and officially invited applications from young people for admission.

The 2019 Policy Address announced enhancing the operation of the YDC, so that it could participate, at an earlier stage and in a more concrete manner, in policy discussion relating to education, career pursuit and home ownership as well as young people's participation in politics, public policy discussion and debate, and communicate with young people in a more open, direct and interactive manner. After in-depth discussion, the YDC agreed to roll out a new measure. Starting from the first quarter of 2020, the YDC will arrange policy thematic meetings to enable relevant policy bureaux, members and young people to be engaged in focused discussion on specific policy issues, particularly those that are related to education, career pursuit and home ownership as well as young people's participation in politics, public policy discussion and debate. To enhance transparency and enable more young people to understand the work of the YDC and various bureaux, live online broadcast will be arranged and a certain quota will be reserved for online open application by young people to participate in the policy thematic meetings. Depending on the effectiveness of the relevant measures, the Government will,

in collaboration with the YDC, continue to formulate other suitable enhancement measures to strengthen the role of the YDC in policy co-ordination and reflecting young people's views.

In addition, members took note of the new youth development measures in the areas of education, housing, employment and entrepreneurship, as well as broadening young people's horizons, as promulgated in the 2019 Policy Address, and provided various comments on the implementation details.

The Task Forces under the YDC have made considerable progress in their work. A range of enhancement measures have been implemented for the three funding schemes for internship and exchange. The Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland and the Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland have received around 190 and 370 applications respectively. Relevant assessment work is now under way. Meanwhile, the new round of application for the Funding Scheme for International Youth Exchange will be launched this month. The two new funding schemes under the Youth Development Fund were met with enthusiasm and received applications from more than 40 NGOs in total. Assessment has entered the final stage and the Secretariat will announce the assessment results shortly. Moreover, the YDC has allocated additional resources to enhance the Funding Scheme for Youth Life Planning Activities. NGOs sponsored by the scheme have commenced their services in the 2019/20 school year, covering more than 360 secondary schools throughout the territory.

Since the establishment of the YDC in April last year, the YDC and its three Task Forces have arranged more than 100 meetings and youth exchange sessions in total. Relevant information of the past meetings and activities has been uploaded to the YDC's website so that the public can better understand the work of the YDC.