

Date : 5 November 2021
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : 5/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices, Tamar

Mr John Lee Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)

Dr Law Chi-kwong Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW)

Dr Christine Choi	Under Secretary for Education (for Secretary for Education)
Mr Jack Chan	Under Secretary for Home Affairs (for Secretary for Home Affairs)
Dr Chui Tak-yi	Under Secretary for Food and Health (for Secretary for Food and Health)
Miss Cathy Li	Principal Assistant Secretary (Constitutional and Mainland Affairs) ⁵ (for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs)
Mr Gordon Leung	Director of Social Welfare
Dr Ronald Lam	Director of Health
Mr Howard Yam	Assistant Director (3) (for Director of Home Affairs)
Ms Chan Yuen-han	Chairperson of Women's Commission

Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong
Miss Kelly Cheng Hui-kiu
Mr Winson Chow Wai-chung
Mr Dennis Ho Chi-kuen
Dr Patrick Ip
Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan
Mrs Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai
Ms Shalini Mahtani

Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim
Ms Susan So Suk-yin
Ms Michelle Tam Chi-yun
Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man
Mr Gary Wong Chi-him
Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei
Ms Kathy Wong Kin-ho
Dr Wong Kwai-yau

Secretary

Ms Jeanne Cheng Principal Assistant Secretary for
Labour and Welfare (Commission on Children)

In attendance

Chief Secretary for Administration's Private Office

Miss Carrie Chang Administrative Assistant to Chief Secretary
for Administration
Mr Alex Chan Press Secretary to Chief Secretary
for Administration
Ms Kathy Siu Political Assistant to Chief Secretary
for Administration

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Ms Alice Lau Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr David Leung Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare)¹
Ms Terry Cheung Chief Executive Officer
(Commission on Children)

Department of Health

Dr Thomas Chung Consultant Community Medicine
(Family and Student Health)

Architectural Services Department (ArchSD)

Mr Victor Tai Project Director 3 (PD3)
[For item 3 only]
Mr Joe Lam Senior Project Manager 337
[For item 3 only]

Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

Mr Horman Chan Assistant Director (Leisure Services)1 (AD(LS)1)

[For item 3 only]

Ms Carrie Lee Chief Leisure Manager (Development)

[For item 3 only]

Ms Vivian Ho Senior Project Manager (Technical Section)

[For item 3 only]

Education Bureau (EDB)

Ms Ivy Wong Principal Inspector (Guidance & Discipline)

[For item 4 only] (PI(GD))

Ms Tao Pui Ki Senior Inspector (Guidance & Discipline)1

[For item 4 only]

Hong Kong Police Force (the Police)

Ms Yolanda Yu Chief Superintendent of Police (Crime Support)

[For Item 4 only] (Crime Wing) (CSP(Crime Support)(Crime Wing))

Members absent with apologies***Ex-officio Members***

Ms Melissa Kaye Pang Chairperson of Family Council

Non-official Members

Miss Bakar Fariha Salma Deiya

Ms Janus Cheng

Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam

Dr Halina Poon Suk-han

Mr Edwin Lee

Item 1: Confirmation of the Notes of the Eleventh Meeting held on 6 August 2021

2. The draft notes of the eleventh meeting were circulated to Members on 11 October 2021. A Member offered comments on paragraph 6. With CS' consent, the Secretariat would circulate the revised notes to Members for confirmation after the meeting.

[Post-meeting Note: The revised notes were circulated to Members on 3 December 2021 and confirmed without further amendment.]

Item 2: Matters Arising

3. There was no matter arising from the last meeting.

Item 3: Transformation of Public Play Spaces [Paper No. 19/2021]

4. Ms Kathy Wong declared interest prior to the meeting specifying that the organisation she was serving (i.e. Playright Children's Play Association (the Association)) was the play consultant of ArchSD in the transformation of public play space (PPS) in Tuen Mun Park. The Association provided advisory support to a firm awarded the project to transform over 170 PPS under LCSD, and was organising a public engagement exercise. The Association was also the play consultant of a number of other public play space projects not directly under LCSD's Transformation of Public Play Space programme.

5. On CS' invitation, AD(LS)1/LCSD and PD3/ArchSD briefed the meeting on the progress of the 5-year plan on transformation of PPS under LCSD.

6. Members' views and suggestions were summarised in accordance with the categories as follows –

(a) 5-year Plan on Transformation of PPS

- (i) Noting that there were two age groups for facilities in PPS in Tuen Mun Park, a Member asked whether other PPS in the 5-year plan would also adopt these two age groups and

how LCSD would address the needs of children beyond the target age groups.

- (ii) When engaging contractors for the transformation projects, LCSD should give more weight to the technical aspects (such as play value, safety and designs of PPS, etc.), in addition to the fee proposals. LCSD should also provide clear service requirements of PPS to the contractors.
- (iii) LCSD could collaborate with the arts and cultural sectors in the design of PPS, which would help promote the appreciation of arts and culture at the district level.
- (iv) The design of PPS should take into account the needs of carers such as providing rest areas and shelters. A friendly and inclusive play environment and facilities should also be provided to children with special needs.
- (v) A Member enquired about the selection criteria for venues to be transformed and how the Government would support neighbourhood without innovative PPS. The Member also suggested that public space should cater for users of different ages.
- (vi) As a small scale PPS in the neighbourhood would likely be most visited by local children, LCSD should include these PPS into the 5-year transformation plan and conduct public engagement on their design in the same way as large-scale PPS.

(b) Management and Maintenance of PPS

- (i) Some Members were concerned about the lead time, manpower and resources support for the management and maintenance of facilities in PPS, and urged LCSD to arrange repair of damaged equipment timely.
- (ii) LCSD should step up cleansing of PPS, in particular water and sand play facilities, to maintain them in a hygienic condition.

- (iii) Training should be provided to strengthen the knowledge of contractors and frontline venue staff on the management of facilities and proper use of play equipment in PPS.
 - (iv) LCSD should consider relaxing restrictions on the use of facilities to allow flexibility for the carrying out of different types of play and physical activities in the venues. Besides, the Government should be creative in the use of open space, such as allowing children to play and carry out physical activities in open space outside kindergartens (KG) and child centres in a safe manner.
- (c) Public Engagement and Promotion
- (i) The Government should promote community participation and engagement through different channels to reach out to local users. Children should also be engaged in the design of PPS. It was useful to use mobile applications for interaction with the public and achieving wider publicity. Production of videos comparing PPS before and after their transformation could also enhance the PR impact.
 - (ii) Working parents of deprived families could be engaged through the network of non-governmental organisations.
 - (iii) As the consulting firms had adopted various approaches in conducting public engagement, the Government should provide clear service requirements for their reference.

7. AD(LS)1/LCSD made the following response –

- (a) LCSD would arrange prompt repair of damaged play equipment as far as practicable. The lead time depended on the extent and complexity of the damage and the availability of spare parts locally.
- (b) Facilities in PPS normally targeted at children aged below five and those from five to 12 years old. To enhance the inclusiveness of PPS, LCSD would provide diversified facilities for users of different ages having regard to the location, site conditions and scale of PPS concerned.

- (c) LCSD had closely monitored the water quality of water play equipment in PPS, which should achieve the same standard as swimming pools. The Department also maintained sand facilities in a hygienic condition, though they were closed during the pandemic.
- (d) LCSD had strengthened manpower to cope with surge in the use of certain venues after transformation, and to speed up the progress of transformation projects. Training was provided to staff having regard to the needs and conditions of individual venues. Professional contractors would also be engaged in the maintenance and management of PPS if necessary.
- (e) Taking into account the scale and environment of individual venues, LCSD had relaxed the restrictions in some venues. For example, bike rides were allowed in some venues. LCSD would also ensure that proper rest areas and shelter were provided in PPS to meet public needs.
- (f) LCSD took into account the utilisation rate, existing conditions and location in selecting venues for transformation. The transformation projects covered both large and small PPS.
- (g) In response to a Member's suggestion, LCSD would provide guidelines to the consulting firms in taking forward the public engagement activities as far as possible.

8. PD3/ArchSD responded that the Government considered the play equipment bids in a holistic manner including both the technical proposals and price offers. Regarding the design of PPS, contractors could make reference to the report of the Consultancy Study on the Design of Children Play Space in Venues on the design framework, as well as the good examples and relevant research papers written by local academic institutions. ArchSD was conducting a study on the design of public space which would include a chapter on children play facilities. Design guidelines and toolkits would be available upon completion of the study.

9. Some Members were concerned about the plan of enhancing PPS in public housing estates and suggested a briefing to be arranged for Members on the subject. CS advised that the suggestion might be followed

up by a Working Group (WG) under CoC.

**Item 4: Prevention and Handling of School and Cyber Bullying
[Paper No. 20/2021]**

10. On CS' invitation, PI(GD)/EDB briefed Members on the measures taken by EDB in the prevention and handling of school bullying. CSP(Crime Support)(Crime Wing)/Hong Kong Police Force (Police) briefed Members on measures taken by the Police in the prevention and handling of school and cyber bullying.

11. Members' views and suggestions were summarised as follows –

(a) On education measures

- (i) A Member suggested that EDB should develop a set of reference materials with focus on prevention and handling of bullying involving students with special educational needs (SEN), and put them on the “SENSE Website” managed by EDB for supporting parents of children with SEN. The Member was also concerned about teachers' feedback on the teaching resources related to bullying and various other subjects that aimed to nurture students' positive values.
- (ii) Some Members suggested that EDB should evaluate the effectiveness of different supporting measures.
- (iii) A Member commented that the curriculum of Understanding Adolescent Project (UAP) launched in early 2000s was outdated and could not cope with the challenges of bullying faced by students nowadays. It was important to adopt indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing happy school policy and zero tolerance policy. The bullying problem could also be addressed through the collaborative efforts of various parties and government bureaux/departments by, for example, launching a campaign on the subject.

- (iv) EDB should instil positive values into children and enhance their digital literacy starting from pre-school stage by allocating adequate teaching time, and strengthening parent education on the importance of value education for children.

(b) On preventive measures

- (i) Making reference to overseas experience, more protection should be provided to children in the use of internet, such as exploring the regulation of access to internet by underaged children and penalising social media companies for breaching the duty of care through legislation.
- (ii) Victims of bullying might become perpetrators. It was important to understand the root cause of bullying behaviour of the perpetrators, and to give the chance for victims to talk about their feelings. Adequate support should be provided to them for recovery, and preventing the victims from becoming perpetrators.
- (iii) As teachers were under tremendous work pressure, EDB should review if the school system could facilitate teachers in catering for the various needs of students, including addressing the bullying problems. EDB should also allocate more resources to enhance school social work service in primary and secondary schools.
- (iv) A Member shared overseas experiences in addressing the bullying problem. Since school bullying could cause severe physical harm or even fatality, the Member suggested that serious cases should be investigated to understand the causes and facilitate formulation of policy.

(c) On handling of bullying cases

- (i) Citing a case associated with cyber bullying through a student's school email account and another case of potential cyber sex crime outside the school environment, some Members were concerned about the existing mechanism in handling bullying cases, and how EDB and the Police supported the schools in helping the victims and their

parents.

- (ii) A Member suggested that the Police should provide support to victims of cyber bullying by removing their relevant photos and videos from the internet platform.

(d) Others

- (i) Some Members were concerned about the distribution of bullying cases in schools including those involving students with SEN; the trend of school bullying; cases successfully handled; and the relationship between school bullying and student non-attendance/suicide cases.
- (ii) Parents and teachers should be taught to identify various types of drugs in order to facilitate early identification, intervention and prevention of their children/students from taking drugs.
- (iii) A Member suggested that data on children's bullying cases could be incorporated into the central databank on children in future.

12. USEd and PI(GD)/EDB made the following response –

- (a) A whole school approach was adopted to combat school bullying. Through the guidance and discipline system of the school and subject to the needs of individual cases, class teachers, student guidance personnel, school social workers and school-based educational psychologists (EPs) would work as a team to support students in need and follow up on the bullying cases. Schools would keep close communication with parents. The school crisis management team was set up to handle critical incidents including serious bullying cases.
- (b) The UAP was a long-established programme that aimed at helping students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes when facing adversities. The programmes and teaching materials would be reviewed and updated as appropriate to meet the changing needs of students.

- (c) The statistics on school bullying kept by EDB were drawn from serious bullying cases reported by schools and the annual survey on student guidance and discipline submitted by schools. The number of school bullying cases increased drastically in 2019/20 school year to over 300 cases and declined in 2020/21 school year to around 200 cases. Besides, the number of cases involving cyber bullying showed a visible upward trend in recent years and reached 105 cases in 2020/21 school year. The figures of school bullying covered SEN students under the integrated education, accounting for 12% and 17% in 2019/20 and 2020/21 respectively. It was noted that students with SEN were seldom involved in cyber bullying.
- (d) EDB attached great importance to positive value education for strengthening students' resilience against bullying, and had implemented different preventive measures and programmes targeting students at different developmental stages. The UAP was one of these measures.
- (e) EDB encouraged schools to promote caring culture and inclusiveness of students with diverse needs and background, with the support of relevant learning resources and training to teachers.
- (f) Teachers were facing many challenges in the dynamically changing environment. EDB had enhanced the support to schools by providing different professionals including school social workers, educational psychologists, mental health professionals, etc. to handle the bullying related issues.
- (g) In respect of the mechanism of handling school bullying, EDB had provided schools with clear guidelines on how these cases should be handled. The ultimate aim was to achieve reconciliation between victims and perpetrators and instil positive values into them. Assistance would be sought for cases requiring professional input from other expertise.
- (h) As far as the effectiveness of measures in combating school bullying was concerned, EDB observed in recent years an enhanced public awareness of anti-bullying and an accumulation of experience and school-based resources in handling bullying

cases amongst schools. There was also a declining number of school bullying cases in the last school year.

13. CSP(Crime Support)(Crime Wing)/the Police made the following response –

- (a) To address cyber bullying, the Police carried out online patrol and enhanced education to children on knowledge of cybercrime and ways to seek help. The Police had set up the CyberDefender platform and a web application (www.childprotection.gov.hk) on children protection to provide relevant information to different stakeholders including children, youths and adults.
- (b) Police's School Liaison Officers maintained close contact with schools. When a bullying case was reported and identified as a criminal case, the Police would proceed to investigation following the established procedures.
- (c) The Police could request the relevant internet service provider to remove intimate image showing an individual who was connected to a proceeding in relation to a criminal offence.
- (d) The Police attached great importance to drug hazards and launched the "Anti-Drugs Month" in July 2021 to raise public awareness on the harms associated with drug abuse. The "Drug Smell Simulator" was available during anti-drug seminars or workshops to let the public or teachers know how to identify various drugs for crime prevention.

14. CS thanked Members for their comments and stressed that early intervention was important to prevent bullying. The Government would strengthen policy execution and enhance various measures in preventing and handling bullying on a continuous basis.

Item 5: Progress Reports of the Working Groups [Papers No. 21 – 24/2021]

15. The Convenors/Vice-convenors of the four WGs reported the progress of the respective WG. The Meeting noted the progress reports of the WG on Children with Specific Needs [*Paper No. 21/2021*], WG on

Children Protection [*Paper No. 22/2021*], WG on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity [*Paper No. 23/2021*] and WG on Research and Public Engagement [*Paper No. 24/2021*].

16. The Meeting endorsed the recommendations on the applications under the Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development 2021-22.

17. Referring to the stakeholder engagement session on "Promotion of Children's Joyful Learning and Healthy Development" held on 22 October 2021, a Member shared that the participants looked forward to Government's feedback on their views, and that the Commission should also enhance the publicity of its work and raise its profile through different channels.

18. In response to Members' concern on the recent student suicide cases, CS advised that the WG on Children Protection could deliberate the item and report the observations and recommendations to the Commission. CS thanked the WGs for their work and invited the WGs to make recommendations on issues that required attention of the Meeting when reporting the progress of their work to the Commission in future.

Item 6: Any Other Business

19. On CS' invitation, SLW updated Members on the following items which were mentioned in the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address –

- (a) LWB would consider assigning a suitably ranked officer for taking up the post of Commissioner for Children with due consideration to operational needs, manpower deployment and resources management.
- (b) LWB would take forward the legislative work on the mandatory reporting mechanism for child abuse cases, with the target of introducing a bill into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2023. Practitioners in the relevant professions would receive appropriate training to enhance their capacity for early identification and handling of child abuse cases.
- (c) LWB would study and consider the recommendations of the final

report by the Law Reform Commission on causing or allowing the death of a child.

20. Members generally welcomed the creation of the Commissioner for Children post. Some Members looked forward to the Commissioner taking up a proactive role in coordinating cross-bureau and cross-department child-related policies and measures. A Member suggested that after the creation of the new post, the Government should consider formulating a comprehensive child policy as the next step to better safeguard the well-being of children.

21. On the proposed mandatory reporting mechanism for suspected child abuse cases, Members looked forward to more implementation details on the proposed legislation and further consultation exercise to collect stakeholders' views. Some Members expected that the existing support services and resources on identification, reporting, early intervention and rehabilitation services for child abuse cases would be improved in terms of quality and quantity.

22. CS thanked Members for their comments and suggestions.

23. Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 17 February 2022. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:35 p.m..

[Post-meeting Note : The original date used to be changed to 28 February 2022 having regard to the dates of the motion debate on the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address at the Legislative Council. The meeting was subsequently re-scheduled to 19 May 2022 in view of the scale and pace of the fifth wave of the outbreak and the need for the Government to focus on fighting the COVID-19 epidemic.]

**Commission on Children Secretariat
December 2021**