

## Comments on DC Review 2006 – Government Consultation Document

### 1. Overlapping of work ambits

The terms of reference of the proposed District Facilities Management Committee (DFMC) are suggested as follows in the Government consultation paper:

*"In respect of those district facilities the management of which involves DCs and with a view to better meeting district needs and aspirations –*

*(a) to consider and endorse proposals relating to the operation, management and maintenance of the facilities;*

*(b) to initiate or endorse proposals on programmes and activities to be undertaken at the facilities; and*

*(c) to prioritise works projects to improve and upgrade existing facilities or to establish new facilities to be funded from the district facility capital works block vote."*

These t.o.r. are wide and, to a considerable extent, overlap with those of existing committees of the DC. (For example: Housing and Infrastructure Committee; Community Building Committee; Culture, Recreation and Sports Committee; Urban Renewal Committee.)

**Suggestion:** A review of the t.o.r. of existing committees vis-a-vis those proposed for the DFMC is necessary.

### 2. Transparency and Accountability

The enhanced role of the DC by virtue of the proposed DFMC's ambit and authority should be matched with a commensurate degree of transparency and public accountability.

**Suggestion:** For public scrutiny, project and programme funding allocations by the DFMC should be published on DC websites no later than 2 weeks from the date of decision on allocation. The same publication should be done for all awarding of project and programme contracts by any form of tender.

### 3. Co-opted Members in Committees

Some DC committees have co-opted members. These co-opted members, especially if they are experts or specialists in a certain field or advocates of a certain lobby, could exert considerable influence on the DFMC indirectly.

**Suggestion:** Appointment of co-opted members should be carefully balanced in terms of advocacy. All appointments should be approved by the DC full council.

### 4. Financial and Procedural Audits

The Government's Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRF) is currently one of the 75 Government funds subject to audit by the Audit Commission. No doubt that the \$300m block vote proposed to be created under the CWRF will be subject to audit similarly.

However, the operation of the DFMC as well as its interface with Government departments, in particular the LCSD, will be brand new and untested. The DFMC's operation procedure and interface with Government departments ought to be carefully formulated and implemented, lest any unfortunate mishaps, malpractice or even scandalous happening could mar the success of the pilot implementation of the DFMC.

**Suggestion:** That the ICAC's Corruption Prevention Department be invited to examine the operational procedure of the DFMC and interface with Government departments. Having presented its report to the HAD for consideration and implementation, the ICAC should continue to monitor the validity of implementation and come up with Monitoring Reports on a yearly basis.

### 5. Pilot Implementation

The Government consultation paper says:

*"... We are therefore proposing implementation on a pilot basis. Initially, we may select a few districts with a good mix of district facilities, including community halls, libraries, mobile libraries stops, parks, playgrounds, sports centres, swimming pools and sports grounds for implementation..... the pilot may start in January 2007....."*

Which districts to be selected for the pilot implementation will be strategically important for the DC election in those districts in end 2007. Clearly, the chairmen and certain members of the selected DCs will take full advantage of the pilot to gain public attention, score political mileage and win votes.

**Suggestion:** Wan Chai, Central & Western, and Sham Shui Po may not be good candidates, for obvious reasons. Definitive suggestions on districts to be selected, playing on the above-said criterion of *"a good mix of district facilities, including community halls, libraries, mobile libraries stops, parks, playgrounds, sports centres, swimming pools and sports grounds"* should be made to the Government for selection. Eastern, Yau Tsim Mong and Tsuen Wan may be better choices.