

HAD expresses regret over consumption of alcoholic drinks by SSPDC members at District Council meeting

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) expresses regret over the consumption of alcoholic drinks by four members of the Sham Shui Po District Council (SSPDC) at the SSPDC meeting yesterday (May 11).

Based on online videos and the discussion at the meeting, the four SSPDC members involved were Ms Ng Yuet-lan, Janet, Mr Ho Kai-ming, Calvin, Ms Chau Yuen-man, Eunice, and Mr Lau Wai-chung, Lawrence. Their consumption of alcoholic drinks at the meeting brought the reputation of SSPDC into disrepute and failed to fulfil the public's expectation of DC members.

The District Officer (Sham Shui Po) (DO) referred to the Sham Shui Po District Council Standing Orders (Standing Orders) at the meeting, pointing out that a DC member should ensure that his or her conduct must not be such as to bring the DC into disrepute, should not at any time or in any respect do anything which might compromise or impair his or her integrity, impartiality, objectivity or his or her ability to perform his or her duties, and should not place himself or herself in a position which might be contrary to the generally assumed standard of conduct expected of a member of DC. Moreover, DO also requested the SSPDC Chairman (the Chairman) to make a ruling in accordance with Order 15(2) of the Standing Orders over the behaviour of the four DC members, and consider issuing a warning to them or ask them to leave the meeting if the incident continued. However, the Chairman decided that it was not necessary to issue a warning to those members consuming alcoholic drinks at the meeting. DO then requested the Chairman again to make a ruling or issue a statement, so as to indicate that consumption of alcoholic drinks must not be allowed during the meetings of DC and its committees and working groups and reaffirm standards regarding the behaviour of DC members at meetings. Regrettably, the Chairman still declined.

The Government is of the view that consumption of alcoholic drinks in a DC meeting is an act of profound disrespect for other attendees and may compromise or impair DC members' impartiality, objectivity or ability to perform their duties, putting themselves in a position contrary to the generally assumed standard of conduct expected of a member of DC. Accordingly, such an act should not take place in a DC meeting. HAD expresses deep regret over the incident and the Chairman's ruling, and has written to the Chairman urging him to follow up on the incident in a fair and impartial manner as soon as possible by issuing warnings to members who contravened the Standing Orders.