

Sixth-term Commission on Poverty convenes first meeting, visits To Kwa Wan Community Living Room (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, this afternoon (October 3) chaired the first meeting of the sixth-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) and led members to visit the To Kwa Wan Community Living Room (CLR).

The To Kwa Wan CLR, which officially commenced operation in September 2024, provides a saleable floor area of some 6 900 square feet. It is the largest CLR among the four in operation and the second flagship project under the Pilot Programme after the Sham Shui Po CLR. The implementation of the To Kwa Wan CLR is led by the Government with operating costs supported by the Community Care Fund for engaging an experienced non-governmental organisation (NGO) as operator, while the rental cost of the venue is sponsored by Long Caring of CR Longdation Company Limited, which also shouldered the basic fitting-out works and related costs. The project is truly a reflection of the qualities and strengths of the tripartite collaboration among the Government, the business sector and the community under the current-term Government's targeted poverty alleviation strategy.

During the visit, CoP members were briefed about the additional facilities that the To Kwa Wan CLR offers, including a children's playing and reading corner, physical training facilities, shower rooms, group activities space, health-check devices, a band room and a multimedia room, in addition to the essential facilities such as a shared pantry, dining room, living room, study room for students, and self-service washing machines and dryers. It is expected to serve at least 600 subdivided unit (SDU) households, with about 90 000 attendances a year. Members took the opportunity to have discussions with beneficiary households and were pleased to note that the users complimented the attractive facilities and heartwarming services of the CLR.

As the Chairperson of the CoP, Mr Chan also extended a warm welcome to members of the new term. Mr Chan stated that the current-term Government steadfastly upheld the strategy of targeted poverty alleviation by directing resources to those most in need. He added that he looked forward to working closely with CoP members to implement various targeted poverty alleviation projects catering to the needs of the target groups. At the meeting, members noted the progress and exchanged views on the following items:

(1) Strive and Rise Programme – The Programme has been well-received and gained active support from all quarters since it was launched. The graduation ceremony for the First Cohort cum inauguration of the Alumni Club of the Programme was held in November last year. The enhanced Second Cohort of the

Programme was launched in October last year. Enhancement measures include increasing the number of mentees from 2 800 to 4 000, with an extension to cover Secondary Four students, enriching the variety of group activities (such as organising more Mainland study and exchange tours), and introducing mentorship groups. The number of benefited mentees of the Second Cohort, together with the alumni of the First Cohort of the Programme, was 6 800. It is expected that the total number of student participants who have benefited would double to 12 000 in the 2025/26 school year.

(2) Pilot Programme on CLR – The first project under the Pilot Programme, the Sham Shui Po CLR, has received favourable feedback since its commencement. The Government further launched CLRs in To Kwa Wan, Hung Hom and Nam Cheong, for a period of three years each. The four CLR projects were projected to serve at least 1 750 SDU households, with about 270 000 attendances a year.

(3) School-based After School Care Service Scheme – The scheme was launched in the 2023/24 school year. Fifty-nine primary schools located in Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long Districts were recruited in the first year of the scheme. Venues were provided by participating schools and NGOs were engaged to run the scheme, providing nearly 3 000 service places. The scheme has received positive feedback since its launch. The pilot period of the scheme has been extended to the 2024/25 school year, covering all 18 districts in Hong Kong. As of the end of August this year, over 110 primary schools had been recruited for the second year of the scheme.

(4) Care for Elderly Households – In March this year, the Social Welfare Department engaged the District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) in Tsuen Wan and Southern Districts as pilots to identify households with singleton/doubleton elders and carers of elderly persons/persons with disabilities in need through visits or contacts, and referred these cases to social welfare service units for follow-up actions. As of the end of August this year, the Care Teams have visited or contacted over 4 200 households of elderly and carers of elderly persons/persons with disabilities in need, and referred 144 elderly persons and persons with disabilities from 107 households to install emergency alarm systems with subsidies. Subject to the review of the effectiveness of this project, the Government might consider extending the services to other districts.

Members also took note of the relevant government officials' reports on the implementation of the Community Care Fund and the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund, as well as the progress and financial position of various assistance programmes of relevant funds.

Mr Chan said that the Government, jointly with the CoP, would continue to unite the forces of the Government, the business sector and the community to implement various targeted poverty alleviation projects to support the targeted groups, with a view to building a caring and inclusive community.

