

Appointments to Community Involvement Committee on Greening

The Development Bureau (DEVB) today (February 25) announced that 17 non-official members have been appointed to the Community Involvement Committee on Greening (CICG) for a term of two years from March 1, 2021.

The new non-official members are Miss Linda Choy Siu-min, Dr Caroline Law Man-yee and Ms Idy Wong Lai-yin. The re-appointed non-official members are Dr Johnnie Chan Chi-kau, Ms Chan Man-kuen, Ms Amy Chan May-ho, Mr Cheng Ka-ho, Dr Samuel Cheng Kin-tak, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, Mr Cheung Yung-pong, Dr Jeffrey Hung Oi-shing, Ms Una Lau Yuk-min, Mr Christopher Law Kin-chung, Mr Lo Cheuk-man, Dr Angie Ng Ying-sim, Miss Poon Wing-yi and Mr Matthew Sin Kar-wah.

A spokesman for the DEVB said, "The CICG comprises members from various sectors including community, public relations, construction, education and green groups, and will provide advice on community involvement matters related to greening, landscape design and tree management. The Committee plays a key role in the promotion of our greening efforts."

The spokesman also expressed his gratitude to Mrs Miranda Leung Chan Che-ming, Ms Ann So Lai-chun and Mr Yiu Vor, the three outgoing non-official members.

Appointed by the Secretary for Development, members of the CICG advise the DEVB on measures to encourage quality greening and to nurture a culture of tree care through civic education and community involvement activities. The membership of the new term of the CICG is set out below:

Chairman

Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Non-official members

Dr Johnnie Chan Chi-kau
Ms Chan Man-kuen
Ms Amy Chan May-ho
Mr Cheng Ka-ho
Dr Samuel Cheng Kin-tak
Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan
Mr Cheung Yung-pong
*Miss Linda Choy Siu-min
Dr Jeffrey Hung Oi-shing
Ms Una Lau Yuk-min
Mr Christopher Law Kin-chung
*Dr Caroline Law Man-yee
Mr Lo Cheuk-man

Dr Angie Ng Ying-sim
Miss Poon Wing-yi
Mr Matthew Sin Kar-wah
*Ms Idy Wong Lai-yin

Official Members

Secretary for Education or representative
Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation or representative
Director of Civil Engineering and Development or representative
Director of Environmental Protection or representative
Director of Home Affairs or representative
Director of Housing or representative
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services or representative
Deputy Secretary (Works) 1, DEVB

* New non-official members

[Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

[Government responds to time of arrival of Comirnaty vaccine](#)

A Government spokesman said today (February 24) that the Government has all along been maintaining close liaison with Fosun Pharma on the time of arrival of the Comirnaty vaccine in Hong Kong, with a view to striving for the early supply of the vaccine which was jointly developed by Fosun Pharma and BioNTech.

Fosun Pharma confirmed that the first batch of one million doses of the Comirnaty vaccine which will be supplied to Hong Kong has completed production and successfully passed the relevant safety and quality testing. The Government has been actively making preparations for the arrival of the Comirnaty vaccine in Hong Kong with all preparatory work made with a target to having the vaccine delivered to Hong Kong in late February.

As notified by Fosun Pharma today, the procedures for export of the vaccine have yet to be completed, thus the vaccines cannot be shipped from Germany today for arrival in Hong Kong tomorrow. It does not involve any issues related to the export restrictions on COVID-19 vaccines by the European Union. The first batch of one million doses of the Comirnaty vaccine will be delivered to Hong Kong from Germany via two flights as soon as possible.

"We will continue to actively follow up with the vaccine supplier, with a view to commencing the administration of the Comirnaty vaccine as soon as possible after delivery of the vaccines from BioNTech's production factory in Germany to Hong Kong," the Government spokesman added.

[Transcript of remarks by FS at Budget press conference \(with photos/ video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury), Ms Alice Lau; and the Government Economist, Mr Andrew Au, at the Budget press conference at Central Government Offices, Tamar, today (February 24):

Reporter: I hope you may clarify to us on and answer the questions regarding the national security funding. Just now you said that it could be spent on personnel, and could you clarify do you mean the office for safeguarding the national security or for the Police, and can you say the exact number of years the fund involved? The second question is on the consumption vouchers. What is the Government's plan for the elderly or anyone who does not use a smartphone or any form of digital payment? And can service sectors like beauty parlours, film rooms accept the vouchers? And also, how do the Government address the security concerns of online payment platforms? And the third question is because, in the Budget, you will offer the unemployed low-interest loans, but can the Government explain the logic why there are no emergency funds for them despite repeated demands from different groups? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: On national security expenditure, we have set aside \$8 billion for that purpose. That amount is for multiple years. It was incurred in December last year and published in the quarterly accounts of the Government at the beginning of February. In the coming financial year, year 2021-22, we have not provided for any additional provisions. The expenditure is not just for the Police; it is for national security purposes and there are other government departments involved. So it is a fund, a special fund, set aside according to the national security legislation for that purpose.

As to the consumption voucher, we hope the scope could be as wide as possible so long as it is to be incurred in domestic consumption. For online purchases, if it is for online purchases from local merchants it is okay. We are not going to allow those consumption vouchers to be spent on overseas purchases.

On unemployment, on your question about the government guarantee personal loan, we acknowledge that under this prolonged economic recession, many members of the public have been suffering dearly, suffering badly, and some of them might want to have more financing options in order to tide themselves over. So the personal loan is meant for that purpose, an option available to those unemployed to consider. The amount to be borrowed from the bank is six times of his salary up to a cap of \$80,000. This is an option for them to consider, and it is also available to freelancers who can prove they have lost their income for a consecutive period.

Reporter: First question on the spending voucher, can the Secretary tell us what are authorities planning to do for the elderly people or people who don't have smart phones, as like a question that was put forward by another reporter just now? And why not just store up cash directly, when kind of coming up with a new system to dole out these spending vouchers could cost a lot of administrative costs as well? Second question regarding the unemployment loan, would this measure kind of be putting the unemployed people into debt, in essence, because you're giving them an option to get loans? And third question about the forecast for economic growth, with the pandemic still raging on around the world and in Hong Kong, is that focus a bit too optimistic even though you're expecting growth to come back in the second half, the pandemic is still continuing in Hong Kong as of now? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: Thank you. On the consumption voucher we are conscious of the need of the elderly. Taking the Cash Payout Scheme as an example, for those elderly individuals, they can have their relatives or caretakers to help them to apply for the cash payout. On the consumption voucher, it seems to me that a lot of people are quite familiar of using Octopus cards, which is the most common stored value facility in Hong Kong. If we could use Octopus as one of the means to effect this consumption voucher, I think it would also be acceptable by our elderly members of the public. We are working on it. Definitely, Octopus is one of our obvious choices.

On the personal loan, we are not encouraging people to borrow. We just reckon that in the community, during this prolonged period of economic



HA announces a staff member of HA Head Office tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for the Hospital Authority (HA) made the following announcement today (February 24) regarding a staff member of HA Head Office (HAHO) tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A staff member of the Information Technology and Health Informatics Division of HAHO presented with symptoms of infection on Monday evening (February 22). She obtained specimen collection pack yesterday (February 23) and the specimen test result was preliminary positive for COVID-19. The staff is mainly responsible for administrative work and has no contact with patients. Her last duty day was yesterday. According to contact tracing, three staff members from HAHO who had meals with the staff concerned are identified as close contact and will be quarantined.

Thorough cleaning and disinfection have been arranged for the office concerned located in Block R of Kowloon Hospital. The HA will continue to closely monitor the health condition of other staff members and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on latest progress.