

## **THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY**

### **Memorandum for the Human Resources Committee**

#### **Strategic Review of Staff Welfare**

#### **PURPOSE**

To inform members of the findings of a strategic review of staff welfare in Housing Department (HD), and to seek Members' views on the proposed strategies and action plan.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. This paper, on staff welfare, is one of the four review papers on staff relations in HD. Members have been briefed of the background in Paper No. HRC 51/97 issued together with this paper.

#### **REVIEW FINDINGS**

3. Staff welfare includes social, recreational, charitable and sports activities and departmental functions organised for staff and their families. The provision of relief to staff in distress is also classified as staff welfare. Staff's morale and loyalty to a department will be greatly enhanced through the provision of welfare activities. Their support and commitment are essential attributes for achieving the goals of the department.

#### **Welfare Schemes/Facilities in the Civil Service**

4. As a good employer, the Government considers it important to provide welfare and recreational facilities to staff in maintaining staff morale, enhancing their loyalty and esprit de corps. The following are schemes and facilities that help to achieve this -

- a) Staff Welfare Fund (Note<sup>1</sup>)
- b) Staff Relief Fund (Note<sup>2</sup>)
- c) Staff Recreation Room/Club (Note<sup>3</sup>)
- d) Holiday Bungalows (Note<sup>4</sup>)

## **Existing Staff Welfare Activities in HD**

### **The Welfare Section**

5. The Welfare Section is responsible for organising welfare activities for staff and their families. These activities are usually organised on behalf of the two Housing Department recreation clubs, details of which are described in paras. 7-8. The Section also handles welfare cases/enquiries when staff encounter misfortune. Examples are -

- a) handle enquiries about personal problem, financial assistance, education, housing, employment etc and take follow up actions
- b) present retirement gifts
- c) pay hospital visits/home visits to staff
- d) process applications for the grant of loan under the Staff Relief Fund
- e) counsel and provide assistance to family members of deceased staff

The Welfare Section is also responsible for the sales of souvenirs, organising sales of festive goods, such as mooncakes etc.

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Note <sup>1</sup> : Staff Welfare Fund, currently at \$22 per staff per year, is used for organising welfare/sports activities, buying wreaths/retirement souvenirs, and purchasing/maintaining recreational facilities for staff.

Note <sup>2</sup> : The Staff Relief Fund is an interest-free loan to help those staff who are in need, e.g. family member in sickness, loss of properties in calamity, etc.

Note <sup>3</sup> : The provision of staff recreation room/club is subject to the availability of resources in a department.

Note <sup>4</sup> : These holiday bungalows are open to all civil servants. The allocation is by drawing lots and its use will attract the payment of a nominal rent.

## **The Recreation Clubs in HD**

6. There are two recreation clubs in the Department, namely, the HD Staff Club and the Hackers Club. Their features are described below -

### *The HD Staff Club*

7. Occupying an area of 1,060 m<sup>2</sup>, the HD Staff Club is located at the Basement of Block II, Housing Authority Headquarters Building. According to its constitution, all the 15,000 staff working in the Department are its members. Members do not need to contribute any membership fee but are required to pay nominal fees for using the Club's facilities, e.g. billiard room, karaoke room, canteen, etc. Through the Welfare Section, the Club organises the following activities -

- a) social functions (e.g. fun fair, annual dinner, various parties etc)
- b) sports activities (e.g. ball games competition, fishing competition etc)
- c) participation in inter-departmental activities (e.g. dragon boat race, swimming gala etc)
- d) interest courses and talks (e.g. health talks, social dance course etc)
- e) charitable functions (e.g. Civil Service Walk for a Million)

### *The Hackers Club*

8. With a size of 494 m<sup>2</sup>, the Hackers Club's premises are situated at 10/F, Block II, Housing Authority Headquarters Building. Apart from HD staff, membership is also open to the Housing Authority and its committee members, ex-staff, and some associated organisations e.g. Housing Society, Open University. An annual membership fee of \$150 (Individual) / \$300 (Corporate) is payable. The Club's facilities include a VIP room, a canteen, a bar, a stage (for holding functions) and a reading corner. Besides serving food and beverage, with the assistance of the Welfare Section, the Club also organises the following activities -

- a) social functions (e.g. oldies night, snake banquet, etc)

- b) sales of promotional items (e.g. jewellery, honey, wines etc)
- c) inter-organisation sports events (e.g. Dragon Boat Race)

### **Proposed Strategies for Staff Welfare**

9. The existing club premises for both the Hackers Club and HD Staff Club in HAHQ Building will be reprovisioned in Phase I of the Homantin South Development, which is scheduled for completion in 1999. This project has also been taken into account in formulating the proposed strategies. After examining the current level of activities and services provided under staff welfare, it is proposed to adopt the following strategies -

- a) maintain existing level of social, recreational, charitable and sports activities at department-wide level;
- b) organise staff functions on individual branch basis to foster coherence and understanding among staff within the same branch;
- c) enhance services to staff in distress; and
- d) merge the Hackers Club and the HD Staff Club to form a new staff club with reprovisioned facilities.

### **Proposed Action Plan**

10. Based on the above strategies, the following are recommended -

	<b>Time-table</b>
a) continue to co-ordinate department-wide functions by the Welfare Section	Immediate
b) allocate funds to individual branch for organising welfare activities	April 98
c) issue a pamphlet on services available to officers' surviving spouse	December 97
d) form working group(s) to co-ordinate	May 97

the merger of the two clubs and the operation of the new staff club

- e) collect feedback from participants on their views on the activities/services provided and suggestions for improved or new services On-going

## **PRESENTATION**

11. This paper is presented for Members' views on paragraphs 9 and 10 on 9 October 1997.

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