



PRESS RELEASE

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN COUNCILS ACT

The Ministry of National Development (MND) invites the public to provide feedback on the proposed amendments to the Town Councils Act (TCA). The public can send their feedback to MND between 18 October 2016 and 17 November 2016.

Review of the Town Councils Act

2. Town Councils (TCs) were introduced in 1989 by an Act of Parliament to serve two objectives. First, TCs were set up to give elected Members of Parliament (MPs) the authority and responsibility to take charge of their constituents' estate and allow each Town to develop its own distinctive character under the MPs' leadership. Second, MPs were made directly accountable to their voters for the running of their estates, as the voters could then take into account the MPs' performance in running the TC when they go to the polls.

3. The TCA and subsidiary legislation gave the elected MPs latitude to run the TCs within broad rules laid down to ensure proper governance and safeguard public interest. TCs otherwise had significant autonomy to manage their affairs. For example, each TC had the power to make its own by-laws, set its service and conservancy charges (S&CC) and determine its enforcement policy. In the administration of the Act, latitude has always been given to MPs, across political parties, to exercise autonomy and judgement on how best to perform their core functions and serve their residents' needs and interests.

4. The review of the TCA was first mooted in May 2013 by then-Minister for National Development Mr Khaw Boon Wan. In a Ministerial Statement on TCs, Minister Khaw said that although TCs had largely fulfilled the original objectives for which they were set up, it was timely after more than 20 years of TC operations to review and update the administrative and regulatory framework for TCs.

Proposed Amendments to the TCA

5. MND is proposing to amend the TCA to:

- (a) Clarify the roles and functions of TCs;
- (b) Improve TC governance;
- (c) Strengthen financial management in TCs; and
- (d) Enhance MND's regulatory oversight.

6. The proposed amendments seek to ensure that TCs deliver essential public services in a consistent, fair, and sustainable way that serves the interest of residents, while retaining the autonomous nature of TCs. The review also recognises that the public

expects transparency and accountability from TCs as they manage public funds and take responsibility for maintaining a good living environment for residents.

Public Feedback

7. Details of the proposed amendments are available on the REACH portal at <https://www.reach.gov.sg>. Members of the public can submit their comments and suggestions by 17 November 2016, via the following channels:

- Email to: feedback@mnd.gov.sg
- Fax to: 6325 7254
- Post to: Ministry of National Development
5 Maxwell Road #21-00
Tower Block MND Complex
Singapore 069110
Subject: Proposed Amendments to the Town Councils Act

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