

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1241/02-03  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Tuesday, 21 January 2003 at 4:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members Present** : Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP (Chairman)  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Bernard CHAN, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum  
Hon CHOY So-yuk  
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP  
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP  
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung  
Hon WONG Sing-chi
- Members Absent** : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
- Public Officers Attending** : Item IV  
Mrs Carrie LAM, JP  
Director of Social Welfare

Mrs Kathy NG  
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Elderly)

Ms Annette LEE  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food  
(Elderly Services) 1

Item V

Mr Robin GILL, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Welfare)

Mrs Grace NG  
Project Management Officer

**Clerk in Attendance** : Ms Doris CHAN  
Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in Attendance** : Miss Mary SO  
Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 8

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)789/02-03)

The minutes of meeting held on 9 December 2002 were confirmed.

**II. Information paper issued since the last meeting**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)810/02-03(01))

2. Members noted the above information paper on splitting of public rental housing tenancy and housing assistance to divorced couples provided by the Administration and did not raise any queries.

### **III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)833/02-03(01) and (02))

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next meeting scheduled for 10 February 2003 -

- (a) Update on strategies and measures to prevent and tackle family violence;
- (b) Review of the provision of services and support for people with disabilities; and
- (c) Update on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

### **IV. Progress report on re-engineering community support services for elders**

(LC Paper No. CB(2)833/02-03(03))

4. The Chairman declared that he was a member of the consultancy team on the "Consultancy Study on the Review of Day Care Centres, Multi-service Centres and Social Centres for the Elderly and Development of Integrated Care Services for Elders". The Consultancy Study was commissioned by the then Health and Welfare Bureau in 2000 with a view to improving service integration, cost-efficiency and accessibility to elders. The findings and recommendations of the Consultancy Study were one of the driving factors to re-engineer the community support services for elders.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Director of Social Welfare (DSW) highlighted the salient points of the Administration's paper detailing the progress of the re-engineering exercise on community support services for elders. DSW further said that the very satisfactory outcome of the re-engineering exercise fully demonstrated the spirit of the district-based approach advocated by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the give-and-take attitude adopted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the process. DSW added that in addition to the follow-up actions set out in paragraph 18 of the paper, a study would be made on the feasibility of implementing a system whereby cardholders could gain access to all District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) throughout the territory. DSW also advised members that the Community Chest (the Chest) had decided on 20 January 2003 to continue its funding support for all those social centres for the elderly (S/Es) hitherto receiving top-up funding from the Chest and which would stay put as S/Es.

6. Dr YEUNG Sum expressed support for the re-engineering exercise. Dr YEUNG further said that he was happy that the exercise was not about savings and that a "standard cost", instead of a competitive bidding, approach had been adopted. Dr YEUNG then asked whether any difficulty had been encountered by SWD in the re-engineering exercise.

7. DSW responded that the re-engineering exercise had gone very smoothly, as both NGO boards and management had given this exercise very serious attention and had adopted a give-and-take attitude in the process. In view of the growing ageing population and the fact that there would be very little chance of the Government allocating additional resources for community support services for elders, the greatest challenge was how to make the best out of the new infrastructure for supporting elders living in the community.

8. Dr YEUNG Sum expressed concern that the re-engineered community support services for elders would inevitably be undermined, in the light of the Government's goal to achieve a 10% saving in government spending by 2006-07 to help eliminate the fiscal deficit.

9. DSW responded that it was highly unlikely the Government would do things to wreck the improved community support services for elders brought about by the re-engineering exercise. However, she could not rule out the possibility that funding to 59 S/Es which would continue to operate as S/Es might be reduced to achieve the Government's goal to cut public spending by 10% in 2006-07 to help eliminate the fiscal deficit. DSW further said that no decision had yet been made on how much savings each policy bureau and government department needed to achieve to address the deficit problems.

10. Mr WONG Sing-chi declared that he ran two S/Es which would stay put as S/Es. Mr WONG further said that due to fiscal constraint, competition for Government funding amongst NGOs had become increasingly fierce. In the light of this, Mr WONG asked about the measures which would be taken by SWD to ensure that the partnership between NGOs would not be adversely affected.

11. DSW responded that having an element of competition in the bidding exercise was conducive to attracting more quality proposals. DSW, however, pointed out that price was not the sole factor for allocating new service units or project funding and emphasis was also placed on how innovative a proposal was vis-a-vis other competing proposals. This was made clear to the applicants from the outset, and as such, there should be no cause for concern about any cut-throat competition which might engender mistrust or animosity amongst NGOs. DSW further said that to promote greater cohesion amongst agencies, the bidding procedures were made as open and transparent as possible. For instance, a

debriefing was conducted to apprise NGOs of the bidding results and successful bidders were encouraged to share their experience with other NGOs on why their proposals won out. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), with its role of promoting agency development and partnership, amongst others, should also help in this regard. Such a role played by HKCSS would be enhanced, as the implementation of the Lump Sum Grant from 1 January 2001 had necessitated HKCSS to re-think its role to better serve the welfare sector. To this end, SWD was presently in discussion with HKCSS on how HKCSS should be positioned from 2003-04 onward. DSW added that although she could not see there was a phenomenon of growing mistrust amongst NGOs brought about by competitive bidding, SWD would be happy to do more in promoting greater cohesion and mutual trust amongst agencies, say, by disseminating information on best practices and organising training for NGO operators.

12. Mr WONG further enquired whether consideration would be given to setting up a co-ordinating committee on elderly services, so as to promote better mutual trust and co-operation amongst agencies. DSW responded that this had been done. Under each of the 13 SWD districts, five or more co-ordinating committees on different types of welfare services, including one on elderly services, had been set up.

13. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked whether users of multi-service centres for the elderly (M/Es) and S/Es had been consulted on the upgrading of these centres into DECCs and NECs respectively. Noting that two S/Es located in Mong Kok and Sau Mau Ping would be closed as a result of the re-engineering exercise, Miss CHAN further asked whether service users had been consulted.

14. Responding to Miss CHAN's first question, DSW said that the NGOs and District Social Welfare Officers concerned had consulted the service users after the transformation plans had been firmed up. To ensure a smooth transition, further consultation with the affected users would be made in the next few months. As regards Miss CHAN's second question, DSW said that users of the two S/Es which would be closed were agreeable to the impending closure, as arrangements had been made for them to use the new NECs, which was a mere five-minute walk from their existing S/Es.

15. Miss CHOY So-yuk said that due to the ageing of residents in many old public housing estates, kindergartens and/or youth centres located thereat had moved away. In the light of this, Miss CHOY was of the view that SWD should discuss with the Housing Department (HD) on turning the vacated space into elderly centres.

16. DSW responded that Miss CHOY's suggestion was discussed by the

Elderly Commission (EC) at its meeting held that morning. At the EC meeting, representative from HD indicated that HD had no objection to renting empty space in public housing estates to NGOs to operate elderly centres. DSW, however, pointed out that no additional resources would be provided to NGOs for operating elderly centres, in the light of the fact that S/Es and M/Es would be upgraded into NECs and DECCs respectively. SWD would be supportive if these elderly centres were used as a place for elders to chat and socialise and managed by elders themselves, thereby obviating the need for SWD to use public funds to hire social workers to organise activities for them. DSW further said that SWD had in the past converted space vacated by a particular welfare service, which was closed down because of diminished demand arising from the ageing population, to operate another welfare service. For instance, spaces made idle by the closure of a nursery was used as an extension of a care and attention home. DSW, however, considered that ideas to best utilise empty space in public housing estates should come from the district, such as the District Council, rather than from SWD under centralised planning, as the former was in a better position to understand the needs of the local community.

17. The Chairman asked whether SWD would subsidise the rent and rates of the 40 S/Es which would be transformed into self-financing units. The Chairman further asked whether funding from the Chest to the S/Es concerned had a time limit.

18. DSW replied in the positive to the Chairman's first question, as every year SWD would invite bona fide NGOs operating on a self-financing basis to apply for reimbursement of rent/rates/Government rent under a subsidy scheme. As the scheme had a fixed provision, it was not possible for SWD to guarantee meeting in full the assessed requirements of the eligible applications every year. In some instances, SWD could meet 80% to 85% of the assessed requirements of the eligible applications. However, SWD was prepared to re-deploy other under-utilised funds within its annual budget for this purpose, and in the past year SWD could meet the requirements in full. DSW further said that since the last financial year, assessment of the applications would no longer be based on the financial situation of the applicant organisation, but only assessed on the basis of the self-financing unit, i.e. subsidy would be granted regardless of whether the applicant organisation had money to bear the rent and rates of the applicant.

19. As to the Chairman's second question, DSW said that she could not give an answer to it at this point in time as the Chest's decision to continue to fund the S/Es was relayed to her at the EC meeting that morning by a EC member who happened to also sit on the funding committee of the Chest. DSW further said that she had already written a letter to the Chest to confirm the matter, and would revert to members upon receiving a reply from the Chest.

*(Post-meeting note : The Administration advised the Secretariat on 13 February 2003 that it has received formal response from the Chest confirming its agreement to continue to provide funding support to all those S/Es hitherto dependent on the Chest for top-up funding that would stay put as S/Es in the re-engineering exercise. The Administration also clarified that S/Es falling in this category amounts to a total of 18 centres run by 14 Chest member agencies. The earlier figure of 22 such centres mentioned in the Administration's paper has wrongly included four centres that were not in receipt of Chest funding. As the Chest decides on its funding allocations on an annual basis, the Administration was advised that the above continued support is applicable for 2003-04.)*

**V. Community Investment and Inclusion Fund**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)833/02-03(04))

20. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (DSHWF) updated members on the progress of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

21. Miss CHOY So-yuk asked why only 14 out of 227 applications for CIIF were successful, and whether the CIIF Committee would support duplication of a project in other districts. Noting that over half of the successful applicants were established welfare agencies and community groups, Miss CHOY expressed concern that this had turned the Fund into a continuation of subvention.

22. DSHWF explained that the reason why so few applications were successful on this occasion was due to the fact that social capital development was a new concept in Hong Kong. Despite numerous briefing sessions held to familiarise organisations with the Fund's objectives and criteria, as expected, some of them still had a little way to go in understanding the concept. It was therefore not surprising that only 14 proposals from this initial batch of applications had fully met the criteria set out in paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper. In the light of this, the CIIF Committee had made special efforts to identify projects with "demonstration" potential with regard to social capital development and which could serve as "benchmarks" for other applicants. It was part of the CIIF Committee's strategy to use practical examples generated from the local community to incrementally promote the social capital development concept.

23. DSHWF said that the Fund was not a "continuation of subvention". Special efforts were made during the assessment process to consult with relevant departments to rule out service and resource duplication risks. He pointed out

that some existing subvented organisations were indeed recipients of the Fund, but this was only to be expected during the initial phases given their interest in social capital issues. In the final analysis, most of the approved projects involved a partnership with local community groups and individuals who were not subvented.

24. As to whether a project could be duplicated in other districts, DSHWF said that this was a matter which the CIIF Committee would examine when processing future applications. DSHWF surmised that the CIIF Committee would probably support an existing type of project for implementation in other districts, if the project had proven tangible benefits for the local community. There was, however, no hard and fast rule for duplicating a project in other districts, given the varying characteristics and social issues in each district.

25. Miss CHOY further said that another reason why so few proposals were approved by the CIIF Committee was because many applicants did not understand what types of projects the Committee was looking for. In the light of this, Miss CHOY was of the view that the CIIF Secretariat should sit down with applicants individually to familiarise them with the Fund's objectives and criteria and help them to improve their applications. Miss CHOY said that if left unassisted, many unsuccessful applicants would become disheartened and never apply for the Fund again.

26. DSHWF responded that prior to applying, applicants had been given assistance in a variety of ways, i.e. briefing sessions, partners, the district officers of SWD, as well as by the CIIF Secretariat. After submission, the CIIF Secretariat had also met individual applicants to go over their proposals to see how they could be improved to meet the Fund's objectives and criteria. For instance, some of the 14 successful applicants had revised their original proposals after detailed discussion with CIIF Committee members and the Secretariat. Although only 14 applications from the first batch were successful, over 40 other applications showed potential in promoting social capital development. These applicants would be invited to revise their proposals, with support from the Secretariat, for re-submission. DSHWF further said that a series of briefing sessions involving successful applicants would be held in January 2003 to provide feedback and to facilitate experience sharing amongst current and future applicants. The first of these sessions had been scheduled for 22 January 2003.

27. Mr WONG Sing-chi declared that an organisation under his supervision was unsuccessful in seeking funding from CIIF. Mr WONG further said that to his knowledge, very little support had been provided to the applicants, despite the adoption of the four-pronged approach to provide support for applications mentioned in paragraph in 17 of the Administration's paper. For instance, no support through the Partnership scheme had been provided by the Secretariat to

the less well-established applicants to turn their ideas into viable projects.

28. Project Management Officer (PMO) explained that considerable support had been provided to applicants who actively sought help. For instance, a total of 17 briefing sessions had been organised by CIIF Secretariat to familiarise potential applicants with the Fund's objectives and application procedures between August and September last year. 12 of these sessions were customised for different sectors. Around 1 000 representatives from over 600 different community groups, NGOs and professional groups attended the sessions. Potential applicants having difficulties in preparing their proposals were able to approach staff of CIIF Secretariat, SWD and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (both headquarters and district branches) as well as HKCSS for assistance during the application process. As regards the Partnership scheme, 60 CIIF partners were available. 15 requests for partner support had been received from first batch applicants and successful matching had been provided by CIIF Secretariat. PMO further said that support for applicants did not necessarily mean that it had to be initiated from CIIF Secretariat and from the Administration automatically. In view of the fact that not all applicants would have difficulties in preparing their proposals, it was incumbent upon applicants in need to come forward to request for assistance and support.

29. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that four of the 12 approved projects contained "employment" related components, and queried whether these projects would overlap with projects administered by the Administration to help the unemployed find jobs.

30. PMO clarified that the aim of the four approved projects containing "employment" related components was not set up as a job placement project, but to help the unemployed build capacity and self-confidence so that they could move towards self-reliance and mutual help in their local communities. PMO then took members through the features of the 12 approved projects, details of which were set out in Annex D of the Administration's paper.

31. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked the following questions -

- (a) Whether the reason why there were so few approved projects was because there was no agreed definition of social capital amongst members of the CIIF Committee;
- (b) Whether the fact that the duration of the Fund was three years would cause projects to be commercialised; and
- (c) What percentage of the Fund was used for meeting the costs for

running the Fund.

32. DSHWF replied in the negative to Mr LEUNG's first question. He pointed out that despite the definition of social capital made in the CIIF Guide, the CIIF Committee had deliberately adopted a more inclusive definition of social capital that had enabled it to take a more embracing approach in selecting projects to be funded. He added that he could not see that the three-year duration of the Fund would cause projects to be commercialised, as one of the funding criteria was that the project should be able to sustain itself through self-help and mutual help capacities built and networks established in the long run. As to the costs of administering the Fund, DSHWF said that these were met by internal savings identified from within the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau.

33. Mr LEUNG Yiu-ching said that it was inconceivable that projects funded by CIIF could be sustained on their own without further injection of funds from CIIF or the Administration, as there were expenses still needed to be met, such as telephone bill. Mr LEUNG asked whether the Administration would fund projects worthy of support after the expiry of the three-year operation of the Fund.

34. DSHWF responded that if resources permitted and if there were projects still worthy of support at the end of the three-year period, the duration of the Fund could be extended. Notwithstanding this, another possibility was to solicit sponsorship from the corporate sector and to encourage volunteerism from within the relevant local community.

35. Mr Bernard CHAN declared that he was the Chairperson of HKCSS and it was HKCSS which had suggested the idea of establishing a CIIF to the Administration. Mr CHAN also declared that he was a member of the CIIF Committee. Mr CHAN further said that the CIIF Secretariat should step up its efforts in disseminating information about the Fund to organisations outside the welfare sector, so as to better achieve the objective of the Fund to involve cross-sector collaboration in developing social capital and promoting social participation in the community.

36. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked about the relationship between funded projects containing an employment related component and Government's initiative to help middle-aged people to find jobs.

37. Miss CHOY So-yuk reiterated that more support for applicants should be provided, and suggested that the CIIF Secretariat should set up a telephone hotline to answer queries from potential applicants. Miss CHOY further said that the assessment criteria should be made clearer, such as setting a ceiling on expenses, so that applicants could better prepare their proposals. Miss CHOY also asked

whether the CIIF Committee would monitor the performance of the approved projects to see whether they could achieve their objectives.

38. DSHWF responded that more efforts would be made to disseminate information about the Fund to organisations outside the welfare sector, say, through HAD (headquarters and District Offices) and local community groups. On providing support for applicants, DSHWF said that briefings by successful applicants and others would be held in January 2003 to provide feedback and to facilitate experience sharing. Radio Television Hong Kong would also run a series of programmes on the funded projects between January and April 2003. These, together, would enhance understanding about the Fund and its objective of developing social capital in Hong Kong. Later on, a community forum would be organised to facilitate experience sharing and for the organisers of the funded projects to report on the outcomes they had achieved. The Partnership scheme would also help in this endeavour, in view of the increasing interest expressed by people from various sectors of the community to volunteer their services either as mentors or by providing practical advice or technical assistance to interested community groups. DSHWF further said that telephone numbers and Internet address for applicants requiring assistance in completing the application form were set out in the CIIF Application Guide and Form.

39. As regards making the assessment criteria clearer, DSHWF said that the CIIF Committee was in the process of developing a set of practical criteria, such as the maximum amount which could be paid to volunteers for expenses incurred in carrying out the volunteer work, such as transport fares. It was envisaged that the Committee would firm up these after receiving more applications. As regards monitoring of the funded projects, DSHWF said that the Sub-Committee on Evaluation and the Development of Social Capital (SCEDSC) formed by the CIIF Committee was tasked with this responsibility. For instance, SCEDSC would work closely with the applicants to set down basic outcome measurements, which would provide a basis for evaluation if their proposals were approved for funding.

40. Responding to Miss CHAN's question, PMO said that the purpose of the funded projects containing an employment related component would complement rather than duplicate Government's initiative to help middle-aged people to find jobs, as the former was aimed at helping the unemployed to build up self-confidence so that they could help themselves and others in the community.

41. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:15 pm.