

立法會
Legislative Council

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

**Minutes of the 10th meeting
held at the Legislative Council Chamber
on Friday, 1 February 2008, at 4:38 pm**

Members present:

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH

Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon KWONG Chi-kin
Hon Mrs Anson CHAN, GBM, JP

Members absent:

Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHIM Pui-chung
Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man

Public officers attending:

Professor K C CHAN, SBS, JP

Secretary for Financial Services and the
Treasury

Mr Stanley YING, JP

Permanent Secretary for Financial Services
and the Treasury (Treasury)

Miss Amy TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Mr Alfred FOK	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Miss Janet WONG Wing-chen, JP	Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)1
Mr Edwin TONG Ka-hung	Chief Assistant Secretary (Works)3 Development Bureau
Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP	Permanent Secretary for Education
Miss Vivian LAU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Education (6)
Ms Amy WONG Pui-man	Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education) Education Bureau
Mr FOK Kam-hung	Chief Systems Manager (Information Technology Management) Education Bureau
Mrs Mary MA	Commissioner for Rehabilitation Labour and Welfare Bureau
Mr Stephen FISHER, JP	Director of Social Welfare
Mrs Cecilia YUEN	Assistant Director (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) Social Welfare Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Miss Becky YU	Chief Council Secretary (1)1
Mrs Mary TANG	Senior Council Secretary (1)2
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

The Chairman advised that the current meeting was held to deal with items carried over from the last meeting scheduled for the same day at 3:00 pm.

Item No. 3 - FCR(2007-08)52**HEAD 159 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: DEVELOPMENT BUREAU
(WORKS BRANCH)****♦ Subhead 700 General non-recurrent****New Item “Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme”**

2. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that Members belonging to the Alliance supported the proposal, as they would not wish to see demolition of historic buildings for structural safety reasons. More efforts should be made to improve their structural integrity so that these buildings could be put into more versatile usages under the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (the Scheme). Professor Patrick LAU echoed that the Government should undertake maintenance works of these historic buildings, to alleviate the concern of non-profit-making organisations (NPOs) undertaking social enterprises (SEs) within these buildings about the maintenance costs. The Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)1 (DS(Works)) said that information on the historical background and conservation guidelines for each of these historic buildings would be provided to the applicants. While the Government would take up the maintenance and repair of slopes and the structural parts of these historic buildings, it would not be responsible for routine maintenance which would be undertaken by NPOs as tenants.

3. Dr KWOK Ka-ki held the view that public access to the revitalised buildings should be an important factor in assessing applications under the Scheme. For instance, historic buildings which were revitalised as museums should offer free admission for the underprivileged at certain days of the month in line with other museums operated by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. He also expressed concern that some NPOs which had not acquired the charitable status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112) (IRO) might not be able to join the Scheme. DS(Works) said that applications would be assessed on account of their social values, i.e., how the community would benefit from the SEs to be undertaken. The services provided by SEs should therefore be suitably open to the public taking into account the nature and modus operandi of the SE concerned. The Administration would also work out with NPOs regarding free admission to museums operated under the Scheme. As regards the requirement for NPOs to acquire charitable status under section 88 of IRO for participation in the Scheme, DS(Works) said that such requirement was also applicable to the Enhancing Self-reliance Through Partnership Programme for SEs organized by Home Affairs Department and was found to be an acceptable arrangement.

4. Ms Emily LAU was concerned about the financial viability of SEs to be undertaken by NPOs under the Scheme, and enquired if commercial enterprises with business experience could be allowed to participate in the Scheme. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung commented that commercial enterprises could be allowed to participate on condition that the SE were non-profit making. DS(Works) said that while SEs could seek the advice of commercial enterprises, they should not be run by commercial enterprises given the financial support from the Government. The

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Government had made substantial investment in the Scheme to develop SEs for the benefit of the general public, and not for ordinary commercial enterprises to conduct business. To achieve synergy, NPOs could submit joint applications to develop SEs within the same historic building. At members' request, the Administration would provide supplementary information on the policy on social enterprises and the rationale for excluding commercial enterprises from the Scheme.

5. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that in revitalising the Mei Ho House, which was formerly an old public housing estate, consideration could be given to re-creating the living environment in the early 50s so that the younger generation could have an idea on the life at that time. He therefore did not support that Mei Ho House should be used as youth hostel or art centre as proposed. DS(Works) said that the Housing Authority had indicated that in revitalising the Mei Ho House, efforts should be made to re-create an atmosphere which would be reminiscent of the past. Guidelines would be provided on the conservation of Mei Ho House so that it would reflect the living environment of public rental housing in the early 50s. In fact, part of Mei Ho House could be considered for development as a museum of public rental housing.

6. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 4 - FCR(2007-08)53

HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: EDUCATION BUREAU

◆ Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item “HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund”

7. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Education was consulted on the proposal to establish the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund at its meeting on 14 January 2008.

8. Mr Jasper TSANG, Chairman of the Panel on Education, said that the Panel generally supported the proposal. However, there was a suggestion that the Government should stipulate a ratio between local and non-local student awardees to ensure a reasonable balance between the two groups. Question was also raised on whether awardees should be required to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation to better achieve the objective of retaining talents.

9. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that Members belonging to the Civic Party supported the funding proposal. However, as the scholarships were provided by Government funds, priority should be given to local students rather than non-local students. He was concerned that in the absence of a ratio between local and non-local student awardees, more scholarships would be given to non-local students in an attempt to attract more students from abroad to study in some of the self-financing courses. His view was shared by Ms Audrey EU and Ms Emily LAU. The Permanent Secretary for Education (PS(Ed)) explained that as the award of scholarships was based on students' achievements, it would not be appropriate to set a

quota for different categories of students under the Fund. Besides, it might not be practicable to apply a pre-determined ratio across the board as the eligible institutions had different admission policies and student mix. Some of the institutions had their own scholarships, and had autonomy in the award of such scholarships. An annual report on the operation of the Fund would be submitted to the Steering Committee for endorsement and published for public information. Responding to Dr CHEUNG's further enquiry, PS(Ed) said that guidelines would be issued to the institutions to advise them of the need to maintain an appropriate balance between local and non-local students when awarding scholarships.

10. Noting that the Fund was intended to attract talented students from all over the world, Ms Audrey EU enquired about the type and country of origin of students to be attracted under the Fund. PS(Ed) said that it would be difficult to predict the type of students to be attracted under the Fund. Given the status and the quality of courses/programmes offered by the local institutions, they had been able to attract quite a number of non-local students applying to study in Hong Kong. To further develop Hong Kong as a regional education hub, there was a need to provide scholarships to attract more outstanding students to pursue studies in Hong Kong.

11. Ms Emily LAU was concerned that outstanding students from the Mainland would be competing with local students for scholarships under the Fund. She enquired if there were scholarships which were meant for local students only. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung also expressed concern that the scholarships would be awarded mainly to Mainland students who could not afford to study in the universities in their hometown. He suggested dividing the Fund into two parts, one for local students and the other for non-local students. The ultimate solution was for the Government to earmark more resources for tertiary education. PS(Ed) said that the Government had invested substantially in tertiary education. As the Fund was meant to provide scholarships rather than subsidies, awards would be based on merits to attract more outstanding students. The Deputy Secretary for Education (6) (DS(Ed)6) added that there were scholarships from private organizations which were awarded to local students studying abroad. There were however no Government-funded scholarships which were only intended for local students. At members' request, the Administration would provide supplementary information concerning scholarships awarded to local and non-local students studying in University Grants Committee-funded institutions over the past few years.

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12. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked how the Fund could achieve the objective of retaining outstanding local and non-local students in Hong Kong after graduation. PS(Ed) explained that the establishment of the Fund was part of a basket of measures introduced to further develop Hong Kong as a regional education hub. The award of scholarships would attract more outstanding students to pursue their studies in Hong Kong. To retain talents in Hong Kong, the current immigration control over taking up of employment by non-local students after graduation would be relaxed. The period for non-local fresh graduates to stay in Hong Kong after graduation would also be extended from three months to one year, with a view to facilitating them to find employment. As to whether conditions should be set requiring the awardees to stay

in Hong Kong for a certain period after graduation, PS(Ed) responded that the Fund would become less attractive to talented students if too many conditions were imposed, in particular when Hong Kong was facing competition from other cities in attracting talents. Besides, it would be difficult to enforce requirements for mandatory stay after graduation.

13. Mrs Anson CHAN enquired about the timeframe for conducting the review of the award of scholarships under the Fund. PS(Ed) said that the review would be conducted after the Fund had been in operation for one to two years. He agreed to report to the Panel on Education on the progress of operation of the Fund one year after its establishment.

14. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 5 - FCR(2007-08)54

CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND

HEAD 710 – COMPUTERISATION Government Secretariat: Education Bureau

♦ New Subhead “Upgrading of the Web-based School Administration and Management System”

15. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Education was consulted on the proposed upgrading of the Web-based School Administration and Management System (WebSAMS) at its meeting on 14 January 2008.

16. Mr Jasper TSANG, Chairman of the Panel on Education, said that the Panel generally supported the proposal.

17. While supporting the proposal, Ms Emily LAU enquired whether the proposed upgrading of WebSAMS would be able to replace obsolete software in teaching. DS(Ed)6 said that the strategy on information and technology development in education was discussed at a special meeting of the Panel on 31 January 2008. However, the subject was not related to the present proposal under consideration. She explained that WebSAMS was a computerized tool to support the management planning and administrative processes of schools. The system was used by schools in filing their survey returns to the Education Bureau. The proposed upgrading of WebSAMS would better serve the users and improve the efficiency of the system.

18. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

Item No. 6 - FCR(2007-08)55**LOTTERIES FUND
HEAD 341 – NON-RECURRENT GRANTS**

19. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Welfares Services (WS Panel) was consulted on the proposed allocations from the Lotteries Fund to set up two new Integrated Rehabilitation Centres in Shatin and Kwun Tong at its meeting on 12 November 2007.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Chairman of WS Panel, said that the Panel was supportive of the proposal. However, there was concern about the long waiting times for residential care service for persons with disabilities (PWDs). The Administration was urged to provide more subvented residential care places for PWDs, and to set specific targets to shorten the waiting time for such services, which ranged from three to seven years. Dr CHEUNG enquired about the progress in this respect. He pointed out that the waiting time would get longer as a result of increasing demand for residential care places for PWDs and insufficient places to meet such demand. He was also concerned about the remote locations of the residential care places to be provided, making it difficult for PWDs to integrate with the community. Expressing similar concerns, Ms Emily LAU stressed the need for the Administration to set a time frame on the provision of sufficient residential and day care places for PWDs to reduce the waiting time, particularly in view of the fiscal surplus.

21. The Director of Social Welfare (DSW) said that the Administration was well aware of the long waiting time for subvented residential care places, and priority had been accorded in the allocation of resources to improve the situation. However, with the resources presently available, it was not possible to set a target for the provision of subvented residential care places, given the significant recurrent costs arising from operating residential care homes. Nevertheless, it was worth noting that while awaiting the allocation of subvented residential care places, PWDs were well provided for through day care and training services. Priority would be given to allocating subvented residential care places for PWDs requiring emergency care services. The Administration would assist voluntary organizations to develop self-financing residential care homes for PWDs.

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that some PWDs did not receive any day care services. Besides, those who were awaiting day care services had to wait between 18 to 23 months for the services, which was unreasonably long for PWDs who were in desperate need for the services. DSW said that PWDs had to go through an assessment on the degree of disability before they could be included in the waiting lists for subvented residential care places. Since some PWDs would prefer residential care over day care, it would not be possible to set a target to reduce the waiting time for such services. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue to identify suitable sites for the provision of subvented residential care places for PWDs, and seek additional funding for their provision. The process of developing residential care homes was very often prolonged on account of the need to resolve

local objection. Legislation would be introduced to govern the operation of private residential care homes for PWDs.

23. Ms Emily LAU asked if local objection against the provision of residential care centres would constitute discrimination against PWDs. DSW said that in planning for new public rehabilitation centres in the districts, the usage of sites for the provision of these centres would be publicized so that residents would be well aware of the usage before intake. For example, residents were made aware of the provision of a new Integrated Rehabilitation Centre in the Lei Yue Mun Estate before moving in. However, for rehabilitation centres to be provided at vacated estates/buildings, consultation would be held with the residents and district councils concerned, with a view to resolving any objections they might have, and the process would take more time. As for the provision of private residential care centres or self-financing care centres in private/commercial premises, the operators would need to seek consent from the management of the buildings and/or owners' corporation. Though local objection against the provision of residential care centres might constitute discrimination against PWDs, the Administration would try to resolve these objections as far as possible before resorting to introduction of legislation.

24. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the nature of emergency care services required by PWDs and the number of such cases. DSW explained that emergency care services would be provided to PWDs on a temporary basis, if the persons taking care of the PWDs concerned were hospitalized or would be away from Hong Kong. In some cases, home care services would be arranged on a temporary basis. The Commissioner for Rehabilitation supplemented that temporary residential care places for a period of 14 days could be provided to PWDs whose family members taking care of them had to go on trips. Priority in the allocation of residential care places would be given to those PWDs whose family members could no longer take care of them.

25. Mrs Selina CHOW remarked that members should focus discussion on the funding proposal for the provision of the two new Integrated Rehabilitation Centres rather than the policy on the provision of residential care places for PWDs.

Admin 26. At members' request, the Administration would provide the design of the fitting-out works, particularly environment friendly and energy conservation measures, of the two new Integrated Rehabilitation Centres upon receipt from the operator, the targets and time tables of the Administration's measures to reduce the waiting time for subvented residential care, and the number and nature of cases where emergency care services had been arranged over the past few years.

27. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

28. The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 pm.