

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)238/07-08
(These minutes have been
cleared with the Chairman)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 11 October 2007, at 11:30 am
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Clerk in attendance : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Mrs Vivian KAM
Assistant Secretary General 2

Mr Chris LAI
Senior Council Secretary (2) 7

Ms Maisie LAM
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the 2007-2008 session
[Appendixes III and IV to LC Paper No. CB(2)1/07-08]

Election of Chairman

Miss CHAN Yuen-han, the incumbent Chairman, called for nominations for the chairmanship of the Panel. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was nominated by Miss CHAN Yuen-han and the nomination was seconded by Ms LI Fung-ying. Dr CHEUNG accepted the nomination.

2. As there was no other nomination, Miss CHAN Yuen-han declared Dr Fernando CHEUNG elected as Chairman of the Panel for the 2007-2008 session. Dr Fernando CHEUNG then took the chair.

Election of Deputy Chairman

3. The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship. Miss CHAN Yuen-han was nominated by Ms LI Fung-ying and the nomination was seconded by the Chairman. Miss CHAN accepted the nomination.

4. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman declared Miss CHAN Yuen-han elected as Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2007-2008 session.

II. Schedule of meetings for the 2007-2008 session

5. Members agreed that regular meetings of the Panel would be held on the second Monday of each month at 10:45 am. Since 12 May and 9 June 2008 were public holidays, members agreed that regular meetings in May and June 2008 would be held on 16 May 2008 at 10:45 am and 12 June 2008 at 4:30 pm respectively. Members also agreed that the regular meeting in February 2008 would be held on 14 February at 10:45 am.

III. Items for discussion at the next meetings

[Appendixes V and VI to LC Paper No. CB(2)1/07-08]

Regular meeting on 12 November 2007

6. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting to be held on 12 November 2007 –

- (a) a project for residential homes for people with disabilities (PWDs);
and

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- (b) creation of posts to provide support to the work of poverty alleviation in the Labour and Welfare Bureau.

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7. The Chairman said that the Administration should be requested to provide an update of the provision of residential homes for PWDs in its discussion paper under item (a) above.

Items for discussion at future meetings

The Lump Sum Grant Subvention System

8. The Chairman said that the welfare sector had expressed grave concern about the problems arising from the implementation and operation of the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system. Noting that the LSG Steering Committee would discuss the subvention mode of welfare services at the meeting scheduled for early November 2007, the Chairman said that a special meeting should be held before the next meeting of the LSG Steering Committee to discuss with the Administration and the welfare sector the LSG arrangement. Members agreed that a special meeting would be held on 29 October 2007 at 10:45 am to discuss the matter.

Support services for young drug abusers

9. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that in the Policy Address 2007-2008, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of a high-level inter-departmental task force headed by the Secretary for Justice to combat juvenile drug abuse. He suggested that the Panel should discuss the support services for young drug abusers, and hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Security. Members agreed to include Dr KWOK's proposal in the list of items for discussion by the Panel at future meetings.

The pilot Transport Support Scheme

10. Pointing out that the Administration would conduct a review of the pilot Transport Support Scheme at the end of the one-year pilot, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that members should discuss the implementation progress of the scheme in November or December 2007, i.e. about six months after the launch of the pilot scheme. He was, however, uncertain whether the issue should be followed up by the Panel. Mr Frederick FUNG took the view that Mr LEE's proposal could be followed up by the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty as the subject matter had been followed up closely by the Subcommittee. Members raised no objection.

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IV. Any other business

Proposal for formation of a Subcommittee on Elderly Services

11. Expressing disappointment at the absence of concrete measures in the Policy Address 2007-2008 to address the problems faced by the ageing population and the elderly in poverty, Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel to monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to elderly services. However, as two subcommittees were already operating under the Panel, she was concerned that the subcommittee, if formed, could not commence work shortly. Under such circumstances, the Panel might have to consider including the subject as a standing item for discussion at its regular meetings.

12. The Chairman, who was also Chairman of the Subcommittee on Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, envisaged that the Subcommittee would complete its work by the end of 2007 after holding further discussions on a few outstanding issues, such as the annual adjustment of the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme.

13. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed support for Miss CHAN's suggestion of forming a subcommittee. He said that he had reservations about including the subject of elderly services as a standing item for discussion at regular Panel meetings, given the limited discussion time for each meeting.

14. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan supported the early appointment and activation of a Subcommittee on Elderly Services. He said that the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme could conclude its work at an earlier date, as it had already held in-depth discussion on various issues of concern. Miss CHAN Yuen-han shared a similar view.

15. Responding to members' enquiry, the Clerk explained the activation mechanism for subcommittees relating to policy issues or Council business. Members noted that information on the proposed terms of reference, time frame, work plan, and any other relevant material should be provided to the Panel for seeking approval for the appointment of a subcommittee. Assistant Secretary General 2 (ASG2) added that while it was for the Panel to decide whether a subcommittee should be formed under the Panel, any subcommittee formed would be put into a waiting list and the House Committee would act as the clearing house for the activation of subcommittees on the list, if the total number of subcommittees on policy issues in operation had reached eight.

16. Considering that welfare services and medical services were two major issues of concern to the elderly, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether it was

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necessary to form a joint subcommittee under the Panel on Welfare Services and the Panel on Health Services. ASG2 said that under the Rules of Procedure, two or more Panels might, if they considered appropriate, appoint joint subcommittees to study any matter of common interest to the relevant Panels. Alternatively, a subcommittee formed under the Panel might consider inviting members of other relevant Panel(s) to join the discussion on an issue of common interest.

Clerk

17. After discussion, members supported the proposal for the Panel to set up a Subcommittee on Elderly Services. The Panel would discuss the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the subcommittee at the next regular meeting scheduled for 12 November 2007, and would seek the agreement of the House Committee to activate the subcommittee.

Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme and Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence

18. The Chairman said that two subcommittees had been formed under the Panel, namely the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme and the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence. The Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme would complete its work and provide a report to the Panel shortly while the Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence would continue its work in the 2007-2008 session.

19. The Chairman added that the membership of the two subcommittees would be re-opened to Panel members and it would be for the subcommittees to decide at their respective first meetings whether there should be a re-election of their Chairmen.

Distribution of work between the Panel and the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty on poverty issues

20. Mr Frederick FUNG said that the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty was tasked to study issues relating to poverty alleviation. Following the review of the terms of reference of the Panels in the light of the re-organization of the Government Secretariat, the policy areas of poverty and social enterprises (SE) had been placed under the Panel on Welfare Services. Mr FUNG advised that the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty had completed studies on working poverty, women in poverty and elderly in poverty and made a number of recommendations for the Administration's consideration, and it was currently working on the development of SE. According to the Subcommittee's work plan, it would then follow up the implementation of various recommendations made in its reports with the Administration. Having regard to the fact that the Subcommittee had not

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completed its work, Mr FUNG sought members' views as to whether issues relating to the subject of poverty and SE would continue to be followed up by the Subcommittee in the current legislative term. Mr FUNG added that the recommendations in the Subcommittee's report on elderly in poverty could be followed up by the new subcommittee on elderly services under the Panel, if formed.

21. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that he had no strong views but considered it appropriate for the Panel to follow up on the recommendations in the Subcommittee's reports after the latter had completed its studies and presented reports to the House Committee.

22. Ms LI Fung-ying was concerned about possible overlap between the Panel and the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty when discussing issues relating to poverty. She suggested that consideration be given to setting up of a subcommittee on poverty under the Panel.

23. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed reservations about the formation of a new subcommittee on poverty under the Panel, given that members had just agreed to form a Subcommittee on Elderly Services. She considered it appropriate for the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty to continue to follow up on poverty issues.

24. Members agreed that issues relating to elderly in poverty would be taken up by the Panel and its Subcommittee on Elderly Services, if formed, whereas the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty would follow up on the implementation progress of its recommendations made in the other three reports, viz. working poverty, women in poverty and the development of SE.

25. The Chairman reminded members that the Panel would hold a special meeting on 15 October 2007 at 9:30 am to receive briefings by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and the Secretary for Home Affairs on the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2007-2008.

26. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:03 pm.