

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1874/07-08
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 14 April 2008, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
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 LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Mrs Anson CHAN, GBM, JP

Members absent : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Public Officers attending : Item IV
Ms Carol YIP, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Miss Nancy LAW, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Mr NG Wai-kuen
Chief Social Security Officer 1
Social Welfare Department

Mr Kenneth NG Wing-cheung
Senior Statistician (Social Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Item V

Mr Stephen SUI
Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr FUNG Pak-yan
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)

Mrs Cecilia YUEN
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services)

Mrs Loretta CHAU
District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)
Social Welfare Department

**Deputations
by invitation**

: Item IV

Society for Community Organization

Mr NG Wai-tung
Community Organizer

Mr Sonny YAU
Community Organizer

Concern Group on Grassroots Housing Rights

Mr CHAN Yuen-ken
Representative

Concern Group on Low Income Families

Ms LEE Ping-kau
Representative

Homeless Concern Group

Mr KONG Ping-yiu
Representative

Elderly Rights League

Mr CHOW Kam-chuen
Representative

The Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong

Ms Kennex YUE
Chief Executive Director

Concerning Group for Women Poverty

Ms CHEN Min-zhen

Ms HO Foei-lin

港島單親互助社

Ms NGAN Wan
Member

Mr NG Tak-chi
Member

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse
(Kwan Fok)

Ms LIU Ngan-fung
Chairperson

Ms LAW Sai-mui
Member

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Mariana CHAN
Chief Officer, Policy Research and Advocacy

Christian Action

Ms Carol LEE Wing-chong
Assistant Manager, Social Services Department

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

Staff in attendance : Mr Chris LAI
Senior Council Secretary (2) 7

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1534/07-08]

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1535/07-08(01) and (02)]

3. At the suggestion of the Chairman, members agreed that the Panel would discuss the implementation of the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system at the next regular meeting on 16 May 2008. In anticipation of a large number of deputations attending the meeting, members agreed that only this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

4. The Chairman said that as a result of the sharp increase in food prices in the past few months, the provision of meal service by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had been affected adversely. He suggested that the Panel should hold a special meeting in late April or early May 2008 to discuss the matter. The Chairman added that as agreed at the last meeting, the Panel would discuss the progress on the introduction of a licensing scheme for rehabilitation care homes for people with disabilities (PWDs) at the regular meeting in April. At the request of the Administration, he had agreed to defer the discussion to May 2008. As the introduction of the licensing scheme was behind schedule, he suggested that the item should also be discussed at the special meeting. Members agreed.

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(*Post-meeting note* : The special meeting was scheduled for 8 May 2008 at 4:30 pm.)

IV. Review of rent allowance under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1289/07-08(01), CB(2)1535/07-08(03), CB(2)1583/07-08(01), CB(2)1592/07-08(01) and CB(2)1619/07-08(01) to (03)]

5. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DSLW(W)2) said that the maximum levels of rent allowance (MRA) under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme was adjusted in accordance with the established mechanism, which was discussed and agreed by the Legislative Council (LegCo), having regard to the movement of the Consumer Price Index (A) (CPI(A)) rent index for private housing. The rent index was compiled by the Census and Statistics Department on a monthly basis to measure the rental movements of private housing of the relatively low expenditure non-CSSA households. She further said that if the CSSA recipients lived in private housing and had been waitlisted for compassionate rehousing or admission to a subvented home for the elderly, the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) had the discretion to approve a rent allowance higher than the maximum level to cover the actual rent paid.

Meeting with deputations

Society for Community Organization
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1592/07-08(01)]

6. Mr NG Wai-tung said that according to a survey conducted by the Society for Community Organization, the upsurge in the rental expenses in the past few years had further aggravated the financial difficulties faced by CSSA households. He drew members' attention to the fact that some 22 000 CSSA households living in private housing were paying rent higher than MRA, and these CSSA households had to top up the difference by cutting expenditure on other daily necessities. Pointing out that the relatively low expenditure non-CSSA households being covered by the CPI(A) rent index ranged from \$4,100 to \$16,100, Mr NG expressed concern about the methodology for adjusting the rent allowance as the CPI(A) rent index excluded those non-CSSA households whose average monthly expenditure was below \$4,100.

Concern Group on Grassroots Housing Rights

7. Mr CHAN Yuen-ken said that consequent to the drastic reduction in CSSA standard payment rates and special grants in 2003, the current level of rent allowance was inadequate to cover the actual rental. Following the removal of

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rent control, the rental for private housing had risen sharply and this had further affected adversely the livelihood of low-income groups. Mr CHAN considered that the annual adjustment to the CSSA standard payment rates in the past few years and the proposed provision of one additional month of CSSA standard payment rates were too meagre to meet their financial needs.

Concern Group on Low Income Families

8. Ms LEE Ping-kau said that the sharp increase in private housing rental had aggravated the financial hardship faced by those new-arrival single mothers who did not meet the eligibility criteria for CSSA and had to rely on the CSSA payments of their native born children for a living. Given that the rent allowance was not adequate to cover the rental payment, Ms LEE said that some CSSA recipients had to meet the rental with part of the CSSA standard payments.

Homeless Concern Group

9. Mr KONG Ping-yiu held the view that the existing level of rent allowance was far from adequate to meet the rental at times of high inflation. He said that some CSSA recipients had to use their CSSA standard payments to cover the actual rent paid. Mr KONG strongly urged the Administration to restore the CSSA standard payment rates to the pre-2003 level immediately.

Elderly Rights League

10. Given the inadequacy of the rent allowance to meet the rising rental for private housing, Mr CHOW Kam-chuen said that some CSSA recipients were forced to live in dilapidated caged hostels or cubicle apartments. He considered that the Administration should adjust upward the rent allowance without further delay.

The Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1619/07-08(01)]

11. Ms Kennex YUE expressed concern about the financial difficulties faced by singleton elderly CSSA recipients at times of high inflation. She said that some 22 000 CSSA households living in private housing were paying actual rent higher than MRA, and the rent allowance failed to catch up with the inflation rate. In this connection, the Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong had put forth six suggestions in its submission. For instance, the Administration should adjust upward the CSSA standard payment rates and the rent allowance in accordance with the prevailing inflation rate, and ensure that the rent allowance would not be lower than the actual rental.

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Concerning Group for Women Poverty

12. Ms CHEN Min-zhen and Ms HO Foei-lin said that as the rent allowance for some CSSA households living in private housing was lower than the actual rent paid, these households had to top up the difference in rental by the CSSA standard payments. As a result, the social development of children in these households had been further hampered. They urged the Administration to restore the CSSA payments to the pre-2003 level and reimburse the rent allowance according to the actual rent paid.

港島單親互助社

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1583/07-08(01)]

13. Ms NGAN Wan highlighted the difficulties faced by CSSA recipients at times of high inflation as detailed in the submission. She considered that the Administration should adjust upward the rent allowance in accordance with the inflation rate, shorten the waiting time for public rental housing (PRH) flats and enhance the transparency of approving applications for early allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing.

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook)

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1619/07-08(02)]

14. Ms LAW Sai-mui said that the upsurge in private housing rental had aggravated the financial problems faced by those new arrival single parents who were not eligible for CSSA and had to rely on the CSSA payments received by their native born children for a living. She said that as the rent allowance was lower than the actual rent paid by her, she had to cut down her expenses on food items in order to save money for the rental. Ms LAW urged the Administration to adjust the rent allowance expeditiously.

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS)

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1619/07-08(03)]

15. Ms Mariana CHAN raised doubt about the methodology for adjusting the rent allowance in accordance with the movement of CPI(A) rent index for private housing. She said that the average monthly CSSA payments received by CSSA households ranged from \$3,539 and \$11,092, which were lower than the average monthly expenditure of the low expenditure non-CSSA households covered by the CPI(A) rent index for private housing (which ranged from \$4,100 to \$16,100). In her view, MRA should be determined based on the actual rent paid by 90% of the CSSA households living in private housing and reviewed half-yearly. The suggested mechanism had already been put forth in the last comprehensive review of CSSA conducted in 1996. Pointing out that about 60% of singleton CSSA recipients living in private housing were paying rent higher than MRA,

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Ms CHAN considered that the Administration should review the adjustment mechanism for MRA.

Christian Action

16. Ms Carol LEE pointed out that there was a sharp increase in private housing rental in the past year, especially in Sheung Shui and Yau Tsim Mong. She said that some property owners had converted the cubicles into "suites" and charged a higher rental. Given that the rent allowance was unable to cover the actual rental, some CSSA recipients had to use part of the CSSA standard payments to meet the rental. She urged the Administration to review the mechanism for adjusting the rent allowance.

Discussion

17. DSLW(W)2 said that the Administration fully understood the financial difficulties faced by CSSA recipients at times of high inflation. Responding to deputations' views and concern, she made the following points –

- (a) the CSSA standard payment rates were adjusted downward in 2003 in a bid to make up for the over adjustments as a result of a significant over-estimation when the forecast methodology was used to adjust the social security payments;
- (b) the Administration was mindful that it would not be prudent to use public money to guarantee that MRA would be increased in accordance with the actual rental paid by CSSA households in the private housing rental market. The latter is a free market and an increase in MRA might induce an increase in the private housing rental;
- (c) to alleviate the problems faced by CSSA households at times of high inflation, the Administration had proposed to adjust the CSSA standard payment rates in accordance with the existing mechanism ahead of the normal schedule this year, and provide one additional month of standard rate payments for CSSA recipients; and
- (d) individuals or families with genuine and pressing housing problems which could not be resolved on their own might apply to the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing. Having regard to the circumstances of individual applicants, including their financial conditions, SWD might recommend waiving some of the eligibility criteria for PRH application.

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18. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (DDSW(A)) added that the MRA levels had been frozen since 2003 despite the continuation of deflation until 2005 and there being room for downward adjustment of MRA by around 9%. To address the pressing housing needs of CSSA recipients and low-income households, SWD would make every effort to expedite the process of making recommendations for allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing.

19. Noting from the submission of HKCSS that CPI(A) rent index for private housing recorded an increase of 2.3% between 2003 and 2007, the Chairman enquired about the rationale behind the Administration's advice that there was still room for downward adjustment of MRA by 9%. Senior Statistician (Social Welfare), SWD (SS(SW)/SWD) explained that the base year for comparison was 2001-2002, and MRA was adjusted in accordance with the 12-month moving average of CPI(A) rent index for private housing. The rent index in 2001-2002 was 121.0. The rental of private housing continued its fall until 2004-2005 before rising, and the 12-month moving average of the CPI(A) rent index for private housing in February 2008 was 110.5. As compared with the corresponding figure in 2001-2002, the latest rent index represented room for downward adjustment of 8.7%, i.e. around 9%.

20. Dr YEUNG Sum said that now that Hong Kong was experiencing inflation, it was inappropriate to make reference to the price level in 2003 when Hong Kong experienced an unprecedented deflation brought about by the Asian financial crisis in that year.

21. Noting that 22 345 CSSA households were living in private housing and paying rent higher than MRA, Dr YEUNG Sum said that the Administration should attach more importance to solve the problem. Ms LI Fung-ying, Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Miss CHAN Yuen-han shared a similar view. Dr YEUNG said that while some CSSA households preferred to live in private housing owing to proximity to work, as a matter of principle, the CSSA recipients should not have to top up the actual rent payment by the CSSA standard payments. Given the rapid increase in private housing rental and the improving fiscal position of the Government, the Administration should take immediate action to assist those CSSA households who were receiving rent allowance lower than MRA. Dr YEUNG considered that the HKCSS's suggestion of adjusting the rent allowance in accordance with the actual rent paid by 90% of the CSSA households living in private housing worth further study.

22. DSLW(W)2 responded that the Administration recognized that about half of the CSSA households living in private housing were paying rent higher than MRA. As explained earlier, the Administration had to be cautious that increasing the rent allowance in accordance with the actual rent paid by CSSA households might induce an increase in the rentals for private housing. The

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Administration should ensure the prudent use of public money to help those in need. DSLW(W)2 stressed that individuals or families in genuine or pressing housing needs might apply for allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing.

23. Expressing disagreement with the Administration, the Chairman said that the number of successful applications for compassionate rehousing was on the low side.

24. Given the small number of successful applications for compassionate rehousing, Ms LI Fung-ying expressed concern about the effectiveness of the arrangement in meeting the imminent housing needs of CSSA households who were paying rent higher than MRA. To address the financial hardship faced by these CSSA households, Ms LI urged the Administration to give a pledge on the allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing. Ms LI also urged the Administration to review and restore the provision of special grants to cover rent deposit.

25. DSLW(W)2 advised that there was no allocation quota for compassionate rehousing application. If the CSSA recipients lived in private housing and had been recommended for compassionate rehousing or admission to a subvented home for the elderly, DSW had the discretion to approve a rent allowance higher than the maximum levels to cover the actual rent paid. DSLW(W)2 added that special grant for rent deposit was payable to elderly and disabled persons. Able-bodied CSSA recipients might apply for the special grant to cover the rent deposit, which would be considered on the merits of individual cases.

Admin

26. The Chairman requested and the Administration agreed to provide information on the number of cases in which singleton able-bodied CSSA recipients were granted special grants for rent deposit at the discretion of DSW in the past year.

27. Given that nearly half of the CSSA households living in private housing were paying rent higher than MRA, Ms LI Fung-ying said that the Administration should review the stringent criteria for PRH application under compassionate rehousing. Mr TAM Yiu-chung shared Ms LI's views. Mr TAM said that the Administration should take immediate measures to help those CSSA households with genuine and pressing housing needs. Specifically, he took the view that the Administration should adjust upwards the rent allowance, review the adjustment mechanism for rent allowance, and increase the supply of and shorten the waiting time for PRH flats.

28. DSLW(W)2 said that a total of 5 046 families had been allocated PRH flats under compassionate rehousing in the past three years. However, the consideration factors for compassionate rehousing were not necessarily confined

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to the financial difficulties in rental payment. DDSW(A) added that 114 cases were granted discretion in receiving rent higher than the maximum levels in 2007.

Admin

29. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the number of CSSA households who lived in private housing and had been recommended for compassionate rehousing or admission to a subvented home for the elderly in the past year, and the number of cases which were paying rent higher than MRA.

30. Mrs Anson CHAN said that the removal of rent control in 2004 had resulted in a sharp increase in private housing rental, and this had affected adversely the livelihood of CSSA recipients living in private housing. To resolve the problem, Mrs CHAN urged the Administration to consider restoring the rent control policy or increasing the supply of PRH flats.

31. Miss CHAN Yuen-han agreed that the removal of rent control had resulted in rapid rise in the rental for private housing. She took the view that the Administration should take immediate action to address the financial problem faced by CSSA households whose rent allowance was lower than the actual rent. The problem was particularly acute in respect of the singleton CSSA recipients. Although the Administration's intention was to address the problem by accommodating those with housing needs in PRH flats, some CSSA households preferred to live in private housing because of proximity to work and less expensive transport costs, not to mention the long waiting time for PRH flats and the stringent criteria for PRH allocation under compassionate rehousing. Miss CHAN echoed the HKCSS's suggestion of providing additional subsidies for CSSA recipients who were living in private housing and were paying rent higher than MRA.

32. DSLW(W)2 said that as requested by members, she would follow up with the relevant policy bureau on members' views on the rent control policy. She noted that issues relating to the Government's measures to provide assistance to low-income people in meeting their housing needs was discussed by the Panel on Housing in March 2008. Members might wish to consider holding a joint meeting with the Panel on Housing to further discuss the matter. DSLW(W)2 reiterated that to uphold the principle of prudent use of public money, it was inappropriate for the Administration to adjust upward the rent allowance in a bid to cover the actual rental for the private housing market. She reiterated that the Administration was very concerned about the impact of recent rise in inflation on CSSA households. Apart from the additional one-month CSSA standard rate payments, the Administration also proposed to adjust the CSSA standard payment rates in accordance with the existing mechanism ahead of the normal schedule this year.

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33. Mr Albert HO said that when the proposal to remove rent control and security of tenure was discussed by the LegCo in 2004, the Democratic Party had expressed concern about the adverse impact of the proposal on the low-income households. While understanding the Administration's stance of not intervening in the operation of the property rental market, Mr HO commented that the Administration had failed to take concrete measures to resolve the problems faced by those CSSA households living in private housing and paying rent higher than MRA. Pointing out that the CPI(A) rent index measured the rental movements of private housing of non-CSSA households, notably the employed population whose average monthly expenditure was higher than CSSA households, Mr HO questioned whether the CPI(A) rent index was an equitable reference for adjusting MRA. To keep pace with inflation, Mr HO urged the Administration to review the adjustment mechanism, including the methodology and schedule of review.

Admin

34. At the request of Mr Albert HO and the Chairman, SS(SW)/SWD agreed, in about two weeks, to model on the CPI(A) rent index for private housing and simulate a rent index for CSSA households.

35. Mr Frederick FUNG said that as the rent allowance was lower than the actual rent paid by most CSSA households, the Administration should review expeditiously the rent allowance to ease the impact of inflation on the recipients. Having regard to the fact that rentals for private housing varied across districts, Mr FUNG suggested that specific CPI(A) rent indexes for different districts should be compiled for the purpose of adjusting the rent allowance. DSLW(W)2 said that the Administration would study the feasibility of Mr FUNG's suggestion.

36. Mr Frederick FUNG said that to his knowledge, only a very small number of PRH application under compassionate rehousing were approved on the ground of difficulties in meeting the rental. DDSW(A) responded that SWD would give due regard to the financial difficulties faced by the applicants in meeting the rental expenses, especially the elderly CSSA recipients, when recommending the allocation of PRH flats under compassionate rehousing.

37. The Chairman added that some CSSA households were allocated a larger PRH flat above the minimum allocation standard to meet the special needs of the disabled family members. He considered it unreasonable for these CSSA families to pay rent higher than MRA owing to their special but genuine needs.

38. DDSW(A) said that the number of CSSA households receiving rent allowance and who were living in public housing and paying rent higher than MRA was 3 429 as at February 2008. Some of them paid rent higher than MRA because they lived in PRH units which were larger than the standard floor areas

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due to special needs or individual preference. At the Chairman's request, the Administration would provide the reasons for those CSSA households who had to pay rent higher than MRA in the past year, if available.

Admin

39. The Chairman concluded that members expressed grave concern about the impact of the rapid rise in the private housing rental on the CSSA households and the adjustment mechanism for rent allowance and MRA. The Chairman suggested that the Panel should further discuss the matter at the special meeting to be scheduled for late April or early May 2008. Members agreed.

V. Setting up an Integrated Community Mental Health Support Services Centre and a Long Stay Care Home in Tin Shui Wai Area 109

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1535/07-08(04)]

40. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) (DDSW(S)) briefed members on the Administration's proposal to construct a joint-user complex in Tin Shui Wai (TSW) Area 109 for the provision of primary health care and welfare services, as detailed in the Administration's paper. DDSW(S) said that the welfare facilities comprised an integrated community mental health support services centre (ICMHSSC) and a long stay care home (LSCH) for discharged chronic mental patients, and the construction cost, estimated at \$153 million, would be funded by the Lotteries Fund. DDSW(S) further said that following consultation with the Panel, the Administration would seek the funding approval of the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee in June 2008. Subject to funding approval, the construction works would commence in mid-2009 and the project was targeted to complete by the end of 2011.

41. Dr YEUNG Sum supported the proposal. Expressing concern about the potential opposition from the local communities, Dr YEUNG said that the Administration should fully consult the affected residents in the vicinity.

42. DDSW(S) said that the relevant committee of the Yuen Long District Council was consulted and it supported the proposal. District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long), SWD added that apart from a private residential development of some 3 000 households, the proposed joint-user complex was at a distance from residential areas, including public housing estates.

43. Miss CHAN Yuen-han welcomed the Administration's proposal and expressed appreciation of the consultation undertaken by the Administration with the local communities on the proposal before seeking the Panel's support. To minimize opposition from residents nearby against the proposal to set up LSCHs for discharged chronic mental patients, she considered that the Administration should incorporate the construction plan in the town planning stage and conduct public consultation as early as practicable. In view of the long waiting time for

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LSCH places, Miss CHAN enquired about the Administration's plan to provide additional LSCH places in the coming years.

44. DDSW(S) responded that notwithstanding the difficulties in identifying suitable venues, the Administration would make its best efforts to increase the provision of residential care services for discharged chronic mental patients. He said that 427 additional LSCH places had been provided in the past five years. On top of the 75 additional places to be provided under the proposed project in TSW, the Administration planned to provide 100 additional LSCH places in 2008-2009. DDSW(S) added that community care and support services were provided for discharged chronic mental patients so that they did not necessarily have to reside in LSCHs.

45. Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired about the transport arrangements for residents in the proposed ICMHSSC and LSCH. DDSW(S) responded that the target clientele of ICMHSSC were mental patients and their families and carers living in TSW. As such, they would not have to commute long distance to ICMHSSC. As the users of the proposed LSCH would stay therein, it was envisaged that their transport need would not be great.

46. Pointing out that the proposed welfare and health care facilities would be located in the same joint-user complex, Mr Albert HO asked whether similar service delivery mode had ever been adopted.

47. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) (ADSW(R&MS)) responded that the proposed joint-user complex in TSW, which would provide health care and welfare facilities in the same building, was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. Under the new service delivery mode, out-patients receiving health care services in the general out-patient clinic located on the lower floor would be referred to ICMHSSC for follow up, if necessary. ADSW(R&MS) added that the Administration was discussing with the Hospital Authority about arranging visiting medical officers to provide service for users of LSCH located on the upper floor.

48. Mr Albert HO took the view that LSCHs should preferably be located in low rise single-purpose buildings so that more recreational area could be provided for the residents. Echoing Mr HO's views, the Chairman added that as the proposed LSCH was located in a joint-user complex which also provided general outpatient service, the Administration should put in place adequate infection control measures to protect the health of the residents.

49. ADSW(R&MS) responded that the residents of LSCHs were discharged chronic mental patients who could not return home for various reasons. The residents would receive vocational training and rehabilitation services and participate in recreational activities. ADSW(R&MS) said that separate

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entrances would be provided for the users of the health care and welfare services located on different floors. The Administration would take into account members' views when designing the proposed complex and formulating service components for LSCHs.

50. Noting that the construction of the project would be completed by the end of 2011, and ICMHSSC and LSCH would come into service in 2012-2013, the Chairman asked whether the commencement date could be advanced.

51. ADSW(R&MS) explained that the internal fitting-out works could only be carried out after completion of the construction works of the proposed joint-user complex. The Administration would also have to invite proposals from NGOs for the operation of ICMHSSC and LSCH. Nevertheless, it would advance the preparatory work, such as invitation of proposals for the operation of ICMHSSC and LSCH, as far as practicable.

52. The Chairman concluded that members expressed general support for the proposed setting up of ICMHSSC and LSCH for discharged chronic mental patients in TSW Area 109.

VI. Any other business

53. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:47 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 May 2008