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Panel on Welfare Services

**Paper prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 12 November 2007**

Proposal for appointment of a Subcommittee on Elderly Services

Purpose

This paper invites members to consider the proposed terms of reference, work plan and time frame of a Subcommittee on Elderly Services to be appointed by the Panel on Welfare Services.

Background

2. The Panel on Welfare Services has been following closely the provision of elderly services. Members in general expressed dissatisfaction with the slow progress in the provision of elderly services. Although the Chief Executive announced in his 2007-2008 Policy Address a number of welfare initiatives relating to elderly care and elderly services, members were of the view that, in the light of the ageing population and the problem of elderly in poverty, the Policy Address and the Policy Agenda had not set out concrete measures to be taken to enhance services for the elderly. They considered that, while the Panel could discuss policy issues relating to elderly services, further actions had to be taken to monitor closely the progress of the implementation of services for the elderly as well as other related initiatives.

3. At the Panel meeting on 11 October 2007, members agreed that a Subcommittee on Elderly Service should be appointed by the Panel to study issues relating to elderly services. Members also agreed that the Panel would discuss the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the Subcommittee at the regular meeting on 12 November 2007.

Proposed terms of reference

4. The proposed Subcommittee should be tasked to study issues relating to elderly services and to examine possible measures to improve the provision of such services, taking into consideration the views of the public, service users and non-governmental organisations providing elderly services.

Proposed work plan and time frame

5. The proposed Subcommittee will focus its work on the following major areas –

- (a) to review the existing provision of financial assistance and support services for the needy elders and hidden elders, as well as the provision of day care places and residential care places for the elderly, respite service for the elderly, home-based community care services and support for elderly hospital discharges;
- (b) to monitor the Government and relevant authorities in implementing the plans for elderly services; and
- (c) to discuss with the Government and relevant parties possible measures to improve services for the elderly.

6. The proposed Subcommittee will complete its work and report to the Panel in June 2008. Members may also wish to consider the need for undertaking research into the subject matter, and for meeting with deputations to receive their views.

Activation mechanism for subcommittees

7. At the House Committee meeting on 2 March 2007, Members agreed that the total number of subcommittees relating to policy issues or Council business that might be in operation at any one time should be eight, and that a queuing system would be activated if the number of such subcommittees exceeded eight. Members also agreed that if the number of Bills Committees in operation was less than 16, the House Committee might activate subcommittees on the waiting list after considering the following factors as listed in House Rule 26(b) –

- (a) the number of vacant slots for Bills Committees;

- (b) the number of bills likely to be introduced in the Council in the next three months;
- (c) the number of subcommittees on subsidiary legislation already or likely to be appointed by the House Committee and by Bills Committees; and
- (d) the availability of resources in the Secretariat.

Currently, 12 policy-related subcommittees and 11 Bills Committees are in action, while a number of bills on the Administration's Legislative Programme will likely be introduced shortly. Members may also wish to note that three policy-related subcommittees (i.e. the Subcommittee on Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme under the Panel on Welfare Services, the Subcommittee to Follow Up the Outstanding Leisure and Cultural Services Projects of the Former Municipal Councils under the Panel on Home Affairs, and the Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site) under the Panel on Development) are concluding their work, and will be dissolved upon presentation of their reports to the respective Panels by December 2007.

8. If the Panel agrees to the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the Subcommittee, the House Committee's advice will be sought as to whether the Subcommittee should be activated.

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to consider the proposal set out above.

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