

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)403/10-11
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Saturday, 26 June 2010, at 9:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon WONG Sing-chi (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau

Public Officers attending : Item I

Social Welfare Advisory Committee

Professor CHAN Yuk-shee, BBS, JP
Chairman

Mr Herman HUI, BBS, JP
Member

Mr Christopher LAW
Member

Mr Timothy MA
Member

Mr Jovy SUEN
Member

Dr Sandra TSANG
Member

Mrs Teresa TSIEN
Member

Mr TUNG Chi-fat
Member

Mr Michael WONG
Member

Miss Vicky CHEUNG
Secretary

The Administration

Mr Roy TANG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1

Item II

Mr CHEUNG Hing-wah
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)

Mrs Anna MAK
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family and Child Welfare)

Miss Vicky CHEUNG
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and
Welfare (Welfare)1

Mr Virgil HSU
Senior Housing Manager / Tenancy Management Policy

Dr Sandra TSANG
Head of the Department of Social Work and Social
Administration, the University of Hong Kong /
Team Leader of the Consultant Team for the Review
on the Implementation of the IFSC Service Mode

Attendance by : Item I
invitation

Concerning Urban Housing Rights Social Workers
Alliance

Mr WONG King-lai

Hong Kong Unison

Mr Alan DIN Wai-bun
Project Officer

Alliance of Ex-mentally Ill of Hong Kong

Miss TAM Yuen-yan
Chairman

Society for Community Organization

Mr YAU Kin-man
Community Organizer

Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union

Ms CHAN Yu-ling
內務副會長

High Definition Christian

Mr WONG Tsang-kin
Chairman

The Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights

Ms Billy WONG
Executive Secretary

社會工作發展關注組

Mr LO Kin-hei
Member

關注中港家庭權利聯席

Mr TSANG Koon-wing
Member

Mainland-Hong Kong Families Rights Association

Ms FAN Fei-quan
Member

Mr CHAN Wai-hung
Community Organizer

推動天水圍經濟發展大聯盟

Ms WONG Wing-chi
Representative

Community Development Alliance

Mr CHENG Yiu-tung
Chairman

St. James' Settlement, Community Development
Services

Mr NG Sze-on
Representative

Item II

Civic Party

Mr Bill LAY
Exco Member

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Mr Moses MUI
Chief Officer (Family & Community)

Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association,
Social Work Officers Grade Branch

Mr LEUNG Kin-hung
Chairman

Caritas Family Service

Ms Eliza LAM
Supervisor

International Social Service - Hong Kong Branch

Mr Kerin CHAM Kwok-wing
Director of Programme

Hong Kong Christian Service Family Networks :
Yau Tsim Integrated Family Service Centre

Ms Florence KONG
Principal Coordinator

Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association,
Social Worker Assistant Branch

Mr TAM Hin-wai
Chairman

The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council

Mrs Doris LEE LAU So-ying
Executive Director

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

Ms Cindy LEUNG
Head of Service (Family Service)

關注中港家庭權利聯席

Mr TSANG Koon-wing
Member

Mainland-Hong Kong Families Rights Association

Ms FAN Fei-quan
Member

Mr CHAN Wai-hung
Community Organizer

Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union

Miss MAN Pui-lin
Member

Department of Applied Social Sciences,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Dr William CHU Chi-keung

Concerning CSSA Review Alliance

Mr LEE Tai-shing
Community Organizer

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Yvonne YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 5

Miss Karen LAI
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Long-term social welfare planning

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1649/09-10(01) to (02), CB(2)1691/09-10(03), CB(2)1867/09-10(01) to (03), CB(2)1902/09-10(01) to (03), and CB(2)1943/09-10(01) to (03)]

The Chairman said that the Panel had received views from 44 deputations on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong at the special meeting on 5 June 2010. In view of the number of deputations indicating interest to express their views on the subject, the special meeting was convened to receive further views on the subject.

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, 14 deputations presented their views on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. A summary of the deputations' views is in the **Appendix**.

Discussion

3. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 ("DS(W)1") said that the Government shared the views of deputations that a study on the subject of long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong should be conducted. As stated in his Policy Agenda 2007, the Chief Executive had tasked the Social Welfare Advisory Committee ("SWAC") to study the long-term development planning for social welfare in Hong Kong. DS(W)1 clarified that the consultation being conducted by SWAC was part of the study on long-term welfare planning and the study was in progress. The Administration had an open mind on the subject. The proposals presented in the consultation paper did not represent the stance or final decision of the Administration. SWAC would take into account the views collected and put forward a report setting out its recommendations for consideration by the Administration. The Administration would carefully study SWAC's recommendations and consult the Panel in due course.

4. DS(W)1 said that the Government played three major roles in social welfare, namely resources provider, policy maker and policy executor. On the first role, DS(W)1 emphasized that the Government was committed to providing resources for welfare services. Notably, the expenditure on welfare services had been increased ninefold in the past decade. The

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growth rate was higher than that of Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product and the total Government recurrent expenditure each year in the corresponding period. The proportion of total recurrent public expenditure on welfare services rose from around 9% to around 18% during the same period.

5. On the role of policy maker, DS(W)1 explained that the Administration attached much importance to the views of stakeholders and would take them into account in the course of policy formulation. Public consultation, including the one conducted by SWAC on long-term welfare planning, was part of the policy formulation process. DS(W)1 clarified that it was not a special or uncommon arrangement for an independent advisory body to conduct consultation on a specific subject. The Administration was confident that SWAC would provide a fair and objective analysis given its independency and wide representation with members not only from the social welfare sector but also from the business and academic sectors, etc. Concerning policy execution, DS(W)1 said that both the Government and non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") played a crucial role.

6. Regarding the consultation arrangement, DS(W)1 said that when SWAC released the consultation paper in April 2010, it had issued a press release and uploaded the consultation paper onto SWAC's website. At the time of the meeting, SWAC had organised four consultation sessions to gauge the views of interested parties. Invitations to the consultation sessions were made to some 400 stakeholder organisations, including subvented and non-subvented NGOs, self-help/users' groups and the academic sector, etc. SWAC also welcomed any interested member of the public to attend the consultation sessions and to offer their views through other channels. In fact, about 15% of the 300 attendees at the four consultation sessions were not amongst the 400 invitees. DS(W)1 further said that the Administration fully respected the independency of SWAC's study, and it would be for SWAC to decide as to whether the consultation period would be extended.

7. Professor CHAN Yuk-shee, Chairman of SWAC ("Chairman/SWAC") said that the consultation paper looked into the subject of long-term welfare planning at a macro level. It set out the mission of social welfare, the guiding principles for welfare planning and the strategic directions for providing welfare services to address welfare-related issues at a macro level, instead of focusing on service

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provision and resources allocation in individual areas. SWAC hoped that the study would help align the different views on the mission, guiding principles and strategic directions for welfare services. Chairman/SWAC added that SWAC had discussed the role of the Government in social welfare and the consultation paper had not sought to recommend shifting of the responsibilities of the Government to SWAC.

8. Mr CHEUNG Kowk-che said that in order to enable wider participation in the consultation exercise, SWAC might consider attending meetings of District Councils to collect views on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong at district level. Pointing out that many respondents' views were in fact focused on service provision in specific areas, Mr CHEUNG wondered if SWAC would also analyze the findings and make recommendations on service delivery model as well.

9. Chairman/SWAC advised that two additional consultation sessions would be held in July 2010 to receive views on the subject of long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. He stressed that the study was not meant to look into provision of services in individual areas. SWAC would deliberate on the views and comments received and prepare a report for consideration by the Administration. He added that SWAC would consider whether to extend the consultation period.

10. Ms LI Fung-ying disagreed that the former Five-Year Plan mechanism for welfare planning was rigid and lacked flexibility to cope with the changing needs of the society. While agreeing that it was important for the welfare services to be able to respond to the changing service demand and crisis in a flexible and timely manner, she was of view that the Administration should draw up long-term planning on provision of the welfare services, notably plans to address the problems of inter-generational poverty and working poverty. Ms LI was concerned about the role of Government in the development of tripartite partnership and the proposal of adopting the user pays principle.

11. Chairman/SWAC said that SWAC would carefully consider all views received including the planning mechanism for social welfare. He said that while playing different roles, the Government, NGOs and the business sector were equally important in developing tripartite partnership.

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12. Dr PAN Pey-chyou shared the views of some deputations that the Administration and SWAC should study the problems faced by non-subsented NGOs in welfare service delivery and consider allocating more resources to these organizations. Mr Herman HUI, member of SWAC said that SWAC noted the concerns raised by non-subsented NGOs and their difficulties. To his knowledge, non-subsented NGOs could submit service bids for pilot welfare projects. He added that SWAC would deliberate on the views received and prepare a report for the consideration by the Administration.

13. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered the consultation paper unsatisfactory as it failed to provide any concrete proposals to address the social welfare problems in Hong Kong. Mr LEUNG wondered whether SWAC would compile an interim report on the consultation exercise and then conduct the next phase of consultation by adopting the approach of a White Paper.

14. Chairman/SWAC advised that a Task Group on Welfare Planning ("Task Group") had been set up under SWAC to take forward the study and formulate the consultation framework. With the assistance of the Task Group, SWAC released the consultation paper in April 2010. The consultation paper sought to set out the initial views of SWAC on long-term welfare planning at the macro level, specifically the major issues and factors affecting the provision of social welfare, the mission and values of social welfare, the guiding principles for social welfare planning, and the strategic directions for planning and provision of welfare services. A lot of useful views and comments had been received during the consultation so far.

15. Responding to Mr IP Wai-ming's concern that the community at large was not aware of the consultation exercise being conducted by SWAC, DS(W)1 said that as mentioned earlier at the meeting, SWAC was tasked by the Chief Executive to study the long-term development planning for social welfare in Hong Kong and the consultation exercise was part of SWAC's study. The consultation paper was not the final report of SWAC's study. He added that it was not uncommon for an advisory body like SWAC be tasked to conduct consultation and gauge the views of the public on policy issues.

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16. Mr IP Wai-ming was concerned about the course of action to be taken by SWAC in the event that the Administration refused to accept the recommendations put forward by SWAC. Chairman/SWAC said that SWAC was tasked by the Chief Executive to study the subject. He believed that the Administration would consider carefully the report and recommendations of SWAC.

17. Mr Alan LEONG enquired about the Administration's stance on the Five-Year Plan mechanism for planning the social welfare services, in the event that SWAC recommended the Government should adopt such a mechanism. DS(W)1 said that it would not be appropriate to speculate at this stage on whether or what recommendation SWAC would or would not make in respect of the welfare planning mechanism. DS(W)1 added that the Administration had an open-mind on the report to be prepared by SWAC. In fact, the Administration had been adopting a flexible planning approach comprising an annual consultation mechanism with the welfare sector, including the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and the District Welfare Planning Protocol.

18. In response to Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's request for extending the consultation period, Mr Christopher LAW, member of SWAC advised that two additional consultation sessions would be held on 19 and 24 July 2010, and those who would like to express views and comments on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong were welcomed.

19. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that SWAC and the Administration should be careful in taking forward the user pays principle bearing in mind the concerns raised by service users. The Chairman appealed for SWAC to prepare a forward-looking report for the consideration of the Administration. However, he was concerned whether adequate resources had been allocated to SWAC for conducting the study on the long-term social welfare planning, and he requested the Administration to provide the relevant information after the meeting. DS(W)1 emphasized that the Administration would provide every support to SWAC, and the requisite information would be provided to members after the meeting.

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II. Review on the Implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre Service Mode

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1619/09-10(01) to (02), CB(2)1747/09-10(03), CB(2)1867/09-10(04) to (08), CB(2)1902/09-10(04), CB(2)1910/09-10(01), CB(2)1930/09-10(01), and CB(2)1943/09-10(04) to (09)]

20. The Chairman said that as agreed at the meeting on 14 June 2010, deputations had been invited to give views on the Review on the implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre ("IFSC") Service Mode ("the Review"). The deputations' views are summarized below.

Meeting with deputations

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service ("HKCSS")
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(04)]

21. Mr Moses MUI said that although the Report had identified problems faced by the operating NGOs of IFSCs in the implementation of the IFSC service mode, the recommendations set out in Chapter 8 of the Review Report had yet to address the problems. Mr MUI considered that a working group comprising representatives from IFSCs should be set up to implement the 26 recommendations in the Report. This apart, the Administration should set out the concrete implementation plan and timetable, and to make periodic progress report. Mr MUI added that the core services of IFSCs should be clearly defined (e.g. housing assistance cases should be handled by other service units, instead of IFSCs), manpower resources of IFSCs should be strengthened at all levels, and the interface with the relevant service units of the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and other departments should be enhanced.

Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association ("HKCCSA"), Social Work Officers Grade Branch
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1902/09-10(04)]

22. Mr LEUNG Kin-hung told the meeting that social workers of SWD IFSCs had to handle statutory cases which were not counted as part of the output standards of SWD IFSCs, but this formed a significant part of the work of SWD IFSCs. Although SWD IFSCs could not meet the output standards of number of new/reactivated cases receiving intensive counselling and supportive casework, the number of group services

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exceeded the output standards by 20% to 30%. Mr LEUNG further said that social workers of SWD IFSCs were not unwilling to handle housing assistance cases, but they called for a clearly delineated referral mechanism between SWD IFSCs and the Housing Department ("HD"). Mr LEUNG added that the service hours of IFSCs had been extended after normal office hours. Given that the number of cases handled in the extended hours had not been increased significantly, he hoped that a review of the cost effectiveness of extended-hour service of IFSCs should be conducted.

Caritas Family Service

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(05)]

23. Ms Eliza LAM said that the core service of IFSCs should be clearly defined in FSA, with priority be given to "child and family-based" services. In addition, communication platform should be set up such that frontline staff of IFSCs could express views on staff welfare and future development of the service mode. Ms LAM referred members to a letter signed by 99 staff members of Caritas and expressed disappointment that the Review Report failed to provide concrete measures to enhance the services of IFSCs. She urged the Administration to, based on the recommendations of the Review Report, map out concrete plans and measures to improve the services of IFSCs.

International Social Service – Hong Kong Branch

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1867/09-10(06)]

24. Mr Kerin CHAM was disappointed to learn that IFSC social workers were still expected to handle housing assistance cases, notwithstanding that IFSC workers had reported that handling such cases had constituted a substantial proportion of their workload. Mr CHAM said that in the absence of a clear delineation of responsibilities among different service units, miscellaneous cases were referred to IFSCs for services. He appealed to SWD to enhance the understanding of other service units on the functions of IFSCs and align the referral guidelines.

Hong Kong Christian Service Family Networks: Yau Tsim Integrated Family Service Centre

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(06)]

25. Ms Florence KONG said that there was a need to enhance the communications between IFSCs and HD in handling housing assistance

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cases, although she considered that housing assistance cases should be handled by HD staff and not IFSCs. Ms KONG said that a review of the service boundary of IFSC, which was currently serving a population size of 100 000 to 150 000, should be conducted. Specific indicators to reflect the changing needs in the community should be drawn up to facilitate planning of services and manpower requirement. In her view, additional manpower should be deployed to IFSCs in districts with huge population and with increasingly complicated family problems. Ms KONG added that leave relief should be provided for IFSCs.

Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, Social Worker Assistant Branch

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(07)]

26. Mr TAM Hin-wai said that the number of new cases was counted as output performance, but not the number of existing cases being handled. To meet the workload requirement, IFSC social workers could try to close the cases in hand as quickly as possible. Alternatively, some IFSCs would organise more group services in lieu of casework services so as to meet the output standards. Mr TAM further said that HD staff should take a stricter approach in referring housing cases to IFSCs for assistance, as the referral of such cases to IFSCs had given rise unreasonable expectations of the applicants. Mr TAM added that the Administration should review the effectiveness of the arrangement of IFSC's extended-hour service.

The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council

27. Mrs Doris LEE said that about 22% of the cases handled by her organization were housing related issues. In her view, it would be more appropriate for Government departments to handle housing assistance cases. She considered that the core services of IFSCs should be clearly delineated and that additional resources should be deployed for IFSCs to serve specific target groups and provide preventive services.

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1930/09-10(01)]

28. Ms Cindy LEUNG was of the view that a working group comprising representatives from SWD and operating NGOs of IFSCs should be set up by September 2010 to monitor the implementation of the 26 recommendations in the coming year. The working group should make

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quarterly reports on the implementation progress. Ms LEUNG said that as handling housing assistance cases had constituted a substantial proportion of IFSCs workload, HD should set up a dedicated team to handle housing assistance cases. Ms LEUNG further said that additional resources should be deployed to those IFSCs in districts where there were a significant increase in caseload and growing complexity of family problems, e.g. Yuen Long, Shum Shui Po and Kwun Tong. She added that a review mechanism should be put in place to examine the resources allocation for individual IFSCs having regard to the service boundary and specific population profile of the district.

關注中港家庭權利聯席

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(08)]

29. Mr TSANG Koon-wing agreed with the recommendations of the Review Report, in particular Recommendations 9, 13 and 19. The Administration should endeavour to assist IFSCs to implement the recommendations. In view of the increasing number of cross-boundary families, Mr TSANG said that IFSCs should enhance and develop new specialised services for these families. Instead of performing the role of case workers, IFSC social workers should change their mindset to provide comprehensive services to newly identified target groups in the community.

Mainland-Hong Kong Families Rights Association

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(09)]

30. Ms FAN Fei-quan told the meeting about the difficulties faced by Mainland single mothers who entered Hong Kong by Two Way Permits to take care of their young children. However, IFSCs would very often turn down their request for assistance because they were non-Hong Kong residents. Ms FAN urged IFSCs to provide assistance to these Mainland women.

Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1867/09-10(07)]

31. Miss MAN Pui-lin said that the Review Report had not fully reflected the concerns raised by IFSC social workers about handling housing assistance cases. She pointed out that there was an overwhelming call from social workers that IFSCs should be dedicated to the core services

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(e.g. counselling services) and that they should not be expected to handle housing assistance cases.

Department of Applied Social Sciences, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

32. Dr William CHU said that the Review Report had not made reference to the key issues/findings of previous research reports on IFSCs. Apart from giving a factual account on the experiences of IFSC frontline social workers, the Review Report had yet to make an in-depth analysis and critical evaluation on the effectiveness of the service mode of IFSCs in the light of the concerns and feedback of the frontline staff of IFSCs. Dr CHU added that to his knowledge, the Review Report was not the only version prepared by the Consultant Team for the consideration of the Administration.

Concerning CSSA Review Alliance

33. Mr LEE Tai-shing said that IFSCs were handling various miscellaneous cases on family and housing-related issues which were under the purview of different departments, as the existing policies were unclear and confused. The Administration should review the prevailing family-related policies, with a view to delineating clearly the respective roles of departments concerned.

Civic Party

34. Mr Bill LAY considered that the Administration should work out the concrete timetable and plan for the implementation of the 26 recommendations of the Review Report. In his view, the Administration should review the performance standards of FSA to reflect the actual workload of IFSCs. To relieve the workload of IFSCs, the Administration should put in place indicators for strengthening the manpower provision for IFSCs and setting up additional IFSCs in those districts having more complicated social problems. Consideration should also be given to reopening single parent centres and new arrival centres to serve the specific target groups in the community. Mr LAY said that a communication platform should be set up for operating NGOs and service users of IFSCs to sound out their views on the future development of IFSCs. He added that to address IFSCs' concerns in handling housing assistance cases, HD should recruit its own team of social workers to handle housing-related issues.

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Discussion

35. Responding to the deputations' views, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") made the following points -

- (a) the Review aimed to examine the effectiveness of IFSC service mode. As shown from the review findings, the IFSC service mode received general support from the stakeholders who considered it appropriate in directing and delivering family services in Hong Kong;
- (b) it was recognized that IFSC social workers had raised concerns about the handling of housing assistance cases. Apart from housing needs, housing problems were often related to family problems, and thereby it would be appropriate for social workers to handle such cases;
- (c) a working group would be set up to review the FSA for IFSCs, with a view to updating and adjusting the performance indicators and encouraging IFSCs to support and develop service initiatives;
- (d) the Review Report recommended that IFSC service mode should continue to be adopted. Following the release of the Review Report, the Consultant Team had explained to the welfare sector the findings and recommendations; and
- (e) the Administration had an open mind on the observations and recommendations of the Review Report, which was the only report prepared by the Consultant Team for the consideration of the Administration.

36. As regards handling of housing-related issues, Senior Housing Manager/Tenancy Management Policy ("SHM/TMP") said that HD was responsible for vetting and processing of applications for public rental housing. In the financial year 2009-2010, HD processed some 35 000 applications for public rental housing, of which 90% was tackled by HD staff. For some of the housing-related applications, such as those where the applicants had indicated preference for locations and / or required special arrangements on welfare grounds, assessment by welfare service

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units including IFSCs would be sought. In addition, HD would also refer cases which warranted compassionate rehousing to welfare service units for follow-up. SHM/TMP further said that a liaison mechanism between HD and SWD would be set up at both the headquarters and district levels, with a view to reviewing and streamlining the existing work procedures in respect of the referral system.

37. Dr Sandra TSANG of the Consultant Team advised that she would convey deputations' views to the Consultant Team for consideration as appropriate. Noting the concerns of IFSC social workers, Dr TSANG said that instead of relying on IFSCs to be responsible for all family problems, the service users should also manage any existing unrealistic expectation of the scope of IFSC services and the role of social workers. She added that a Steering Committee, comprising representatives of the Administration, NGOs and an independent member of the community, was set up to advise on the direction of the Review, monitor its progress and examine and accept the Review Report submitted by the Consultant Team.

[To allow sufficient time for discussion, the Chairman suggested and members agreed to extend the meeting for 15 minutes.]

38. Mr Alan LEONG said that although IFSCs were tasked to provide integrated family services, it was unreasonable for IFSC social workers to spend a significant portion of working time on housing assistance cases. To better define the service priority of IFSCs, he urged the Administration to work out the concrete timetable and plan to implement the 26 recommendations in the Review Report. Mr LEONG further said that the Administration should step up the publicity on the role and functions of IFSCs to enhance public understanding and manage a realistic expectation of IFSC services.

39. DDSW(S) said that since its inception, IFSCs were committed to providing integrated and comprehensive family services. He further said that upon the release of the Review Report, SWD had consulted the welfare sector on the recommendations and ways to enhance the services of IFSCs. The Task Group on the Implementation of IFSCs would monitor the progress of related measures to implement the recommendations of the Report.

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40. Mr Albert CHAN said that as bound by its terms of reference, the Review Report had not examined the future direction of IFSC service mode. Under the current service mode, it was an anomaly for IFSC social workers to be overwhelmed by the unrealistic expectation of service users, but the latter considered that the IFSC services did not meet their expectations. In the light of the sentiments of the stakeholders, further discussion should be held among relevant departments, the Consultant Team and IFSCs to map out the future directions of IFSCs, including its service mode, the provision of manpower, and service priority.

41. DDSW(S) stressed that the Review Report aimed to study the effectiveness of the IFSC service mode in providing family services and to make recommendations as appropriate.

42. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked how the Consultant Team had collected views from the stakeholders and service users. Mr LEUNG was regrettable that the IFSC service mode had replaced the former single parent centres which were proven effective in fostering the concept of self-help and mutual help of the disadvantaged.

43. DDSW(S) said that based on a pluralistic approach, the Review adopted a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from different stakeholders and service users, including centre reports from all the 61 IFSCs, service statistics on service output and outcome, district focus groups in the 11 SWD districts, case studies as well as user survey.

44. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che said that the Administration should step up the publicity efforts with a view to better managing the general public's expectation of the function and role of IFSCs and their understanding of the difficulties and sentiments of IFSC social workers in service delivery. He considered that further studies should be conducted to collect views from IFSC staff on the difficulties encountered in their daily work, with a view to prioritizing the services of IFSCs. This apart, the Consultant Team should make public the raw data collected in the course of the study so as to facilitate further analysis of the findings. Pointing out that IFSC social workers had strong sentiments of handling housing assistance cases, Mr CHEUNG took the view that HD should set up its own team of social workers to handle housing-related cases, instead of making referrals to IFSCs for assistance.

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45. SHM/TMP said that in addition to the setting up of a liaison mechanism with SWD on handling of housing assistance cases by IFSCs, HD had already set up a Housing Advisory and Service Team ("HAST"), which consisted of social workers, in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. The service team assisted new tenants in adapting to the new living environment through briefings and home visits and identified families in need of services and referred them to the appropriate service units for assistance.

46. Mr IP Wai-ming said that the integrated service mode of IFSCs had attributed to the unrealistic public expectation that IFSC social workers would provide every assistance to resolve the problems of service users. Mr IP appealed to IFSC social workers to sound out their constraints in work and let the public better understand the role and functions of IFSCs. Referring to the concerns on handling housing assistance cases as detailed in paragraphs 7.26 to 7.28 of the Review Report, Mr IP urged that the Liaison Group on Issues relating to Housing Assistance Cases, formed by SWD and HD at the headquarters level, should accord high priority to streamline the referral mechanism and ensure the implementation of the agreed procedures in actual operation.

47. Dr PAN Pey-chyou said that from the service users' perspective, the integrated service mode of IFSCs should be continued, although the service mode posed great challenge to the social workers. In the circumstances, the Administration should deploy more resources to strengthen support for IFSCs.

48. DDSW(S) assured members that the Administration would seek additional resources and provide support for IFSCs as appropriate.

49. The following supplementary points were made by the attending deputations -

(a) Mr LEE Tai-shing of Concerning CSSA Review Alliance said that in view of the heavy workload of IFSCs, the Administration should set up dedicated service units to provide specialized services to specific target groups;

(b) Mr Bill LAY of the Civic Party said that instead of asking service users to adjust their expectation of IFSCs, the Government should allocate more resources to enhance

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services of IFSCs. Mr LAY and Ms Cindy LEUNG of the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society were of the view that HD should set up a dedicated team of social workers to handle housing assistance cases;

- (c) Mr Moses MUI of HKCSS said that under the existing population policy, IFSCs could not provide assistance to families with Mainland members. The Administration should review the population policy such that early identification and assistance could be provided to high-risk families. Mr TSANG Koon-wing of 關注中港家庭權利聯席 said that the Government should take note of the social phenomenon of increasing cross-boundary families and assume the responsibility of formulating a comprehensive family policy;
- (d) Mr LEUNG Kin-hung of HKCCSA, Social Work Officers Grade Branch said that the responsibilities of SWD IFSCs and NGO IFSCs should be aligned; and more training should be provided for HD staff to process the housing assistance cases. Mr TAM Hin-wai of HKCCSA, Social Work Assistant Branch shared a similar view and called for a review of the extended-service hours of IFSCs;
- (e) Ms Eliza LAM of Caritas Family Service hoped that the service priority of IFSCs should be clearly defined, and that services for different target groups would be rendered by specialized welfare units; and
- (f) Dr William Chu of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University hoped that the observations and recommendations of the Review Report should be followed up for further enhancement of family services.

50. Noting that frontline IFSC social workers had expressed grave concern about handling of housing assistance cases, DDSW(S) reiterated that SWD had set up a liaison mechanism with HD at both the headquarters and district levels, with a view to reviewing and streamlining the existing work procedures in respect of the referral system as well as to achieving clear delineation of roles of social workers and HD staff. DDSW(S) further said that SWD would review the service hours and the provision of

Action

manpower for IFSCs within the established mechanism as appropriate. SHM/TMP stressed that HD would work jointly with SWD in setting up the liaison mechanisms in respect of the referral system.

51. In view of members' concern about the IFSC service mode, the Chairman said that members might wish to further discuss the IFSC service mode in the next legislative session. Mr Albert CHAN requested the Secretariat to provide background information on the commissioning of the Consultant Team to review the family welfare services, when the subject was further discussed.

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:25 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 November 2010

Panel on Welfare Services

Special meeting on Saturday, 26 June 2010

Long-term social welfare planning

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Concerning Urban Housing Rights Social Workers Alliance [LC Paper No. CB(2)1902/09-10(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● resources for social network and community building, especially for the redeveloped areas, should be provided for under the regular social welfare provision when formulating the long-term social welfare plan ● given that some organizations such as the Urban Renewal Authority had employed social workers to provide services for residents who were affected by redevelopment projects, it was worried about the independence of these social workers in assisting the residents
2.	Hong Kong Unison [LC Paper No. CB(2)2096/09-10(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● inadequate publicity on the consultant exercise on the long-term social welfare planning ● although the consultation paper had set out problems of the welfare sector, it left out the welfare needs and social services of the ethnic minorities. Nor did it put forward any concrete proposals to solve the problems ● the long-term social welfare planning exercise should be led by the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB"); and the consultation paper should be redrafted based on the views of the general public rather than the welfare sector and the stakeholders

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
3.	Alliance of Ex-mentally Ill of Hong Kong [LC Paper No. CB(2)1902/09-10(02)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● expressed dissatisfaction at lack of publicity on the consultation and representatives from the Administration attending the special meeting of the Panel on 5 June 2010 to receive views of deputations ● the Government should set out concrete measures to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ● urged that the Chief Executive should set up an independent committee comprising relevant bureaux and departments to conduct a fresh consultation
4.	Society for Community Organization [LC Paper No. CB(2)1691/09-10(03)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● given that the consultation paper was a framework document only, the Government should promulgate a White Paper and set out the long-term targets for the provision of welfare services for public consultation ● opposed to the introduction of the user pays principle in the long-term social welfare planning ● while social enterprises ("SEs") had been playing an important role in the delivery of welfare services, most SEs were unable to sustain. The Government should be cautious in relying SEs in the long-term provision of welfare services
5.	Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union [LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Government had evaded its responsibility on the formulation of social welfare policy and planning in the past two decades, in particular preventive and rehabilitation services ● expressed disappointment that no concrete proposals had been provided in the consultation paper and opposed to the user pays principle ● the consultation period should be extended such that more time would be allowed for gauging views from the welfare sector and the public on the values underpinning the welfare policy, role of the Government and the social welfare planning mechanism. The Government should take into account the views collected from the consultation exercise and then issue a Green Paper on the long-term social welfare policy

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
6.	High Definition Christian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Administration should adopt a people-centred approach in the planning and delivery of social services to meet the specific needs of different types of users, instead of asking the business sector to share the responsibility of social welfare provision by means of promoting tripartite partnership ● opposed to the adoption of user pays principle in providing welfare services
7.	The Hong Kong Committee on Children's Rights [LC Paper No. CB(2)1867/09-10(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the consultation paper had left out the long-term planning for children welfare ● the Government should acknowledge the contribution of the non-subsidized non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") in filling the existing service gap in delivery of welfare services, and enhance collaboration with and allocate recurrent resources to these organizations ● calling for the Administration to allocate more resources for preventive services as it was more effective to tackle social problems through early identification and timely intervention
8.	社會工作發展關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the consultation exercise should be conducted by the Government, instead of SWAC ● the role of the Government and the concept of welfare should be set out in the consultation paper ● the Government should adopt a people-centred approach in providing welfare services to the needy people, instead of adopting the market force in further developing welfare service provision
9.	關注中港家庭權利聯席	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● although the consultation paper had highlighted the phenomenon of increasing cross-boundary activities and the impacts on the provision of conventional welfare services, it should put forward concrete proposals to solve the problems ● while agreeing the guiding principles for social welfare planning including social inclusion, people-centred approach, sustainability and preventive services, it appealed to the Administration to implement these principles for the benefit of reunion of the cross-boundary families

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
10.	Mainland-Hong Kong Families Rights Association [LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(02)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● calling for SWAC and the Administration to address the increasing social service demand of the cross-boundary families arising from the increasing cross-boundary marriages ● requested the Administration to strengthen the services provided to the newly arrivals from the Mainland and those Mainland women who entered Hong Kong on the strength of Two Way Permits to take care of their children in Hong Kong
11.	推動天水圍經濟發展大聯盟	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lack of publicity on the consultation exercise on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong ● while the Government had promoted actively a tripartite partnership among the Government, the welfare and business sectors in the provision of welfare services, it cast doubt about the commitment of the business sector in the provision of services and thereby the sustainability of the services ● opposed to the user pays principle and was disappointed at the Government's evasion of responsibility in the provision of welfare services ● the problem of intergenerational poverty had been left out in the consultation paper
12.	Community Development Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the consultation paper failed to provide concrete proposals to solve the problems faced by the welfare sector and the long-term commitment in the provision of welfare services ● while the guiding principle of shared responsibility was on the right direction, it could not accept the user pays principle for welfare services ● of the four consultation sessions held by SWAC, only two sessions had received views from the public

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
13.	St. James' Settlement, Community Development Services [LC Paper No. CB(2)1943/09-10(03)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the consultation period should be extended as only four consultation sessions had been held by SWAC to receive views from the sector and stakeholders, and that the long-term social welfare planning should be undertaken by the Government • SWAC should also examine the impact of time-limited service contracts on the service quality and delivery of welfare services

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