

Supplementary Information on
FCR(2010-11)10 : LOTTERIES FUND
HEAD 341 – NON-RECURRENT GRANTS
for the FC Meeting on 6 May 2011

As requested by the FC Chairman at the pre-meeting briefing with the Administration on 4 May 2011, supplementary information on the above FCai is appended below.

Options of Retrofitting or Reconstruction of the Premises

2. At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services held on 14 March 2011, some Members asked whether it would be better to demolish the premises and redevelop the site, instead of retrofitting, to provide more residential care places and to suit the specific requirements of the persons with disabilities.

3. The Administration has considered the option of a full-scale redevelopment. However, having regard to the site constraints and the permissible development intensity governing the site, we cannot ascertain the possible net increase in service capacity without conducting a detailed technical feasibility study, which is expected to take some time. There are also operational constraints associated with a large rehabilitation institution. Therefore, we believe that the more practical option would be to retrofit the readily available premises into an integrated rehabilitation service centre (IRSC) with a sizeable capacity. This option would better meet the pressing need for additional rehabilitation facilities in the most cost-effective manner. The conversion works are expected to take some six to nine months to complete. It is expected that the non-governmental organisation (NGO) operator, to be selected through invitation of proposals, will take another six months to carry out the necessary fitting-out works. In other words, the conversion programme can be implemented in less than two years, whereas a full-scale redevelopment may take at least five years to materialise.

4. Besides, a full-scale redevelopment of the site requires corresponding improvements to the existing access road and sewage works

which will inevitably increase the project's technical complexity. Whilst there are a few Government, Institution or Community sites near Kau Wah Keng, they fall within the boundary of the service reservoirs which cannot be put into institutional use. There are no other available government sites in the close vicinity that may be suitable for accommodating any expansion.

5. We have also considered the construction of additional floor space under the retrofitting option but the structure and foundation of the existing buildings may not be able to take up the loading of additional floor space. There are also other development constraints that need to be observed, e.g. the accessibility of the site (including the emergency vehicular access) and other related concerns as raised by relevant departments such as the Planning Department, Buildings Department, Fire Services Department and Lands Department. Furthermore, to meet the fire safety requirement, a residential care home for persons with disabilities should not exceed 24 metres above street level. This height restriction will be incorporated as a proposed licensing requirement of residential care homes for persons with disabilities.

Provision of Barrier-free Facilities

6. The Administration was asked to provide information on how to ensure that under the retrofitting option, the premises could fulfill the barrier-free requirement enabling the safety and convenience of future service users.

7. According to the scope of accommodation worked out by the Architectural Section of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and our preliminary studies, it is feasible to meet the current barrier-free requirements as stipulated in the Design Manual 2008 by adding new facilities, such as lifts, ramps, accessible toilets etc. into the existing buildings. The cost estimate has also taken into account these added facilities. The requirement for compliance with the prevailing barrier-free design standards will be clearly stipulated in the service specifications for strict compliance by the future operator.

Environmental Consideration

8. The Administration was asked to provide information on how the environmental protection issues such as energy saving would be taken into account and addressed in the retrofitting project.

9. The Administration has addressed the environmental protection issues in retrofitting this project. The conversion approach without demolishing the existing buildings is already an environment-friendly approach. When SWD invites NGOs to submit service proposals to operate the Kau Wah Keng IRSC, SWD will spell out the specific requirements on environment-friendly and energy efficiency measures in the fitting-out works such as electrical installations, lighting, air-conditioning and materials.

10. Other projects like the Homantin IRSC and the Kwai Chung IRSC, which commenced services in November and December 2010 respectively, have demonstrated the viability of adopting environment-friendly and energy efficient measures in the fitting-out works. These two IRSCs have adopted simple designs to maximise the use of natural lighting and facilitate good air ventilation. Also, existing layouts of the premises have been retained as far as possible to minimise wastage of construction materials.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
6 May 2011