

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)971/10-11
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 13 December 2010, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Chairman)
Hon WONG Sing-chi (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Member attending : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

**Public Officers : Item IV
attending**

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

Mr Stephen SUI Wai-keung
Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr FONG Siu-wai
Assistant Director (Property Services)
Architectural Services Department

Mr CHAN Siu-tack
Assistant Director (Estate Management)2
Housing Department

Mr LEE Man-ho
Chief Transport Officer/Planning/Disabled Transport &
Projects
Transport Department

Equal Opportunities Commission

Mr LAM Woon-kwong
Chairperson

Miss LAM Siu-wai
Chief Equal Opportunities Officer

Item V

Mr Paul TANG, JP
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Ms Irene YOUNG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2

Mr Franco KWOK
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Poverty)

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

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)487/10-11]

The minutes of the special meeting held on 20 October 2010 were confirmed.

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

[LC Paper No. CB(2)243/09-10(01)]

2. Members noted that the referral from Duty Roster Members regarding the installation of lifts for access to footbridges and pedestrian subways in Tai Po had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)488/10-11(01) to (02)]

3. Members agreed to discuss the regularisation and extension of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project proposed by the Administration at the next meeting to be held on 10 January 2011 at 10:45 am. The Chairman said that a special meeting would be held on 18 December 2010 to receive views from deputations on universal retirement protection. Given that about 40 deputations would express views on the subject and that there was only one discussion item for the January meeting, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that the subject matter be further discussed at the next regular meeting in January 2011.

Action

4. Ms Emily LAU said that in view of the public concern about the provision of barrier-free access, members might wish to receive public views on the Government's response to and proposed follow-up action on the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC")'s Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises ("EOC Report"). The Chairman said that Ms LAU's suggestion would be dealt with under agenda item IV below.

IV. Government's response and proposed follow-up action to the EOC Report

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)488/10-11(03) to (04)]

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 ("DS(W)1") briefed members on the Government's response to and proposed follow-up action on the EOC Report released on 7 June 2010. DS(W)1 said that the EOC Report had made 23 recommendations on the improvement of accessibility, connectivity and interface with surrounding environment and user-friendly management practices for publicly accessible premises. To co-ordinate Government's response to and follow-up action on the EOC Report, the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") had convened a Task Force comprising representatives of stakeholders within the Government. In drawing up the responses to and follow-up actions on the EOC Report, the Task Force had examined not only the Government and the Housing Authority ("HA") premises identified by EOC, but also about 3 900 premises and facilities under the management of Government departments and HA properties which had a frequent public interface. DS(W)1 further said that having regard to operational requirements, technical feasibility and time required for the retrofitting works, the Administration had worked out a consolidated retrofitting programme for these premises and facilities. The Government's response to, and follow-up action on, each of the 23 recommendations in the EOC Report were detailed in the Administration's paper.

6. DS(W)1 added that an Access Co-ordinator would be designated within individual bureau or department to co-ordinate accessibility issues. Moreover, an Access Officer would be appointed for each venue.

Action

7. Chairperson of EOC welcomed the positive and active response of the Administration to the recommendations in the EOC Report, in particular its commitment in implementing the retrofitting programme. EOC would continue to work closely with the Government to enhance the provision of barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities ("PWDs") and provide assistance and training to the Government officials in this respect. Chairperson of EOC said that notwithstanding this, the Government had yet to respond to some of EOC's recommendations, such as the introduction of amendment to the Buildings Ordinance ("BO") (Cap. 123) to remove current exemptions of buildings belonging to the Government and the issuance of guidelines to owners and managers of private developments and facilities in addressing current shortfalls in the provision of accessible facilities.

8. Chairperson of EOC advised that following the release of the EOC Report, a working group had been formed by EOC to monitor the progress made on the realisation of a barrier-free environment for PWDs and to collaborate with the Government and the private sector to develop an overarching policy on building an inclusive society that adopted the principle of universal design. Chairperson of EOC said that the working group recommended that the Government should take the lead in adopting the principle of universal design in its new developments and major redevelopment projects, such as the West Kowloon Cultural District Project, Kai Tak Cruise Project and the Kwun Tong Redevelopment Project. The Government should also develop the strategy for addressing accessibility issues and provide funding for the improvement works as well as establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the retrofitting works. Chairperson of EOC appealed to the Government and all stakeholders including the Urban Renewal Authority, the Hong Kong Housing Society ("HKHS") and owners of private buildings to actively improve the provision of barrier-free facilities for the pre-1997 buildings.

9. While noting that EOC welcomed the Government's response to the recommendations in the EOC Report, Ms Emily LAU took the view that the Government had not responded positively at all. She commented that of the 23 recommendations of EOC Report, the Government welcomed only item 13 (i.e. the appointment of an Access Advisor to provide assistance to PWDs in accessing premises under their ownership and managements as well as services and facilities that they provided). Instead of following up the EOC's recommendation of setting up a high-level central co-ordinating body, headed by the Chief Secretary for

Action

Administration ("CS"), to develop policies and practices on promoting universal access, the Administration convened a Task Force led by LWB to follow up on the EOC Report. Citing that it had taken more than a decade to improve the accessibility of a footbridge in Tai Po, Ms LAU cast doubt about the extent to which the Task Force could adequately perform its role to coordinate the retrofitting works across different bureaux and departments, given that it was headed by a Deputy Secretary in LWB. Ms LAU then enquired about the Administration's stance on the EOC's recommendation of removing the current exemptions of Government premises from the provisions of BO.

10. DS(W)1 said that the Administration's response to the EOC Report had been endorsed personally by the Chief Executive and CS. As a pragmatic approach, LWB was tasked to convene a Task Force to co-ordinate Government's response to, and follow-up action on, the EOC Report as well as to monitor the overall implementation progress. The Task Force would submit regular reports on the implementation progress of the retrofitting programme to CS. DS(W)1 further said that since the enactment of BO, buildings belonging to the Government or certain public authorities were exempt from the provisions of BO. Having said that, it had been the established policy for the Government and HA to comply with the prevailing requirements in the Design Manual ("DM").

11. Chairperson of EOC was pleased to learn that the Task Force led by LWB would coordinate and keep an overview of the implementation progress of the retrofitting works, and submit regular reports to CS. He stressed that EOC would be vigilant to monitor the progress of the retrofitting programme for some 3 000 Government premises/facilities concerned.

12. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned about the provision of barrier-free access environment given that no tactile guide paths were provided in shopping centres under the management of The Link Management Limited ("The Link") even though the shopping centres had just been undergone renovations. Moreover, to his knowledge, the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") had identified 19 steep slopes in the territory which should be provided with lifts to enhance accessibility of PWDs. However, THB would proceed with 10 projects only in three years' time due to financial constraints, and it did not set out any timeframe for the remaining nine projects.

Action

13. DS(W)1 advised that in drawing up the Report, EOC conducted access audits on 60 publicly accessible premises owned or managed by HKHS, The Link, HA and eight Government departments. While the lift retrofitting works mentioned by Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was beyond the scope of the EOC Report, he would convey Mr LEUNG's concern to THB for taking appropriate action.

14. Chairperson of EOC said that the EOC Report was not a comprehensive review of accessibility of all the publicly accessible premises in the territory. As mentioned earlier, EOC had set up a working group to examine the progress made on the realisation of a barrier-free environment for PWDs and the development of an overarching policy on building an inclusive society that adopted the principle of universal design.

15. Assistant Director (Estate Management)2 of Housing Department ("AD(EM)2/HD") said that The Link had assumed an overall and independent management of the retail and carpark facilities divested by HA since March 2005. According to The Link, it had been actively following up the relevant recommendations in the EOC Report, and it had already informed EOC of its response and the improvement works concerned. AD(EM)2/HD further said that the building plans for major renovation works in properties owned by The Link and the Tenants Purchase Scheme ("TPS") housing estates were checked by the Independent Checking Unit of HA to ensure compliance with BO and the requirements under DM before approval.

16. As regards the lift installation works to enhance accessibility, AD(EM)2/HD said that as far as the Housing Department ("HD") was concerned, it would take forward 26 lift installation works in 19 public housing estates, which were scheduled for completion by 2012. AD(EM)2/HD further said that the Transport Department was studying the feasibility of the lift installation works adjacent to the Kwai Chung Estate, as it was not within the boundary of the housing estate.

17. Dr PAN Pey-chyou asked about the arrangement for filling the Access Co-ordinator and Access Officer posts, and the number of officers concerned. DS(W)1 advised that similar to the appointment of Green Managers and Gender Focal Points in individual bureaux and departments, an Access Co-ordinator, which was pitched at the Directorate Grade Officer level, would be designated within individual bureau or department to co-ordinate accessibility issues. DS(W)1 envisaged that hundreds of

Action

Access Officers would be appointed as one such officer would be appointed for each venue.

18. Dr PAN Pey-chyou expressed concern about the impact on the workload of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers if the incumbents were required to assume the responsibilities in addition to their existing duties. Commissioner for Rehabilitation ("C for R") said that the management of Government premises was responsible to uphold the Government's established policy on and ensure the provision of barrier-free environment to enable PWDs to access to Government premises and make use of the facilities therein. This was part and parcel of the duties of departmental management and venue management. The appointment of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers would facilitate a focused and co-ordinated approach relating to accessibility issues. C for R further said that suitable training on accessibility issues would be arranged for the responsible officers.

19. Chairperson of EOC said that it would be for the Government to appoint the most suitable officers to assume the role of "Access Advisor" to provide assistance to PWDs, as recommended in the EOC Report. Nonetheless, the Government should make public the contact details of the Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers.

20. Although members were advised that it was the Government's established policy objective to provide barrier-free environment for PWDs, Ms LI Fung-ying commented that the Administration had overstated its efforts made in this respect as it would still take several years to complete certain retrofitting works to which the requests had been made for many years. Ms LI was concerned about the provision of barrier-free access and facilities in shopping centres located in public housing estates which were owned by private corporations such as The Link and The Incorporated Owners ("IOs") of TPS housing estates. In the light of the financial implications, IOs of TPS estates could hardly carry out the retrofitting works, such as the provision of tactile paths, as recommended by EOC. To speed up the retrofitting works in privately owned premises, she asked whether the Administration would consider providing resources for the relevant retrofitting works. Ms LI was particularly concerned about the accessibility to disabled toilets in shopping arcades. She pointed out that it was not uncommon that such toilets were used as storerooms. Sometimes, the design of the smoke doors would prevent wheelchair users from accessing the disabled toilets.

Action

21. DS(W)1 clarified that as set out in the Administration's paper, the retrofitting works of 85.1% of the Government premises and facilities would be completed before 30 June 2012, and that 9.9% of the retrofitting works would be completed by 30 June 2014. DS(W)1 said that the Administration was aware of EOC's observation about the need to assist PWDs in accessing premises under its ownership and management as well as services and facilities being provided. Against this background, the Administration would appoint an Access Officer for each venue relating to accessibility issues. DS(W)1 added that the contact details of the Access Officers would be placed at a prominent location inside the venue and posted onto the website.

22. On the provision of tactile guide paths, AD(EM)2/HD said that HA had completed the retrofitting works in all public housing estates. As regards TPS housing estates, HA would urge the IOs concerned to take forward improvement works to enhance accessibility for PWDs as far as practicable. To his understanding, IOs maintained a capital reserve fund for maintenance works. DS(W)1 added that IOs could apply funding under the Building Maintenance Incentive Scheme of HKHS to carry out retrofitting works, including provision of barrier-free facilities. The Chairman shared the views of Ms LI Fung-ying and took the view that the Administration should actively consider assisting IOs to carry out the necessary improvement works to realise a barrier-free environment for PWDs.

23. Mr Frederick FUNG declared that he was a member of EOC. In his view, PWDs should be able to access services and facilities on an equal basis with others. As such, the adoption of a universal design should underpin the Government policy in providing safe and accessible facilities and services, and it should not examine the accessibility issues merely from the welfare perspective. Mr FUNG pointed out that DM was not applicable to old buildings. Moreover, property owners and managers were not obliged to comply with the Best Practice Section of DM. He considered that the Government should provide incentive to property owners for providing and upgrading barrier-free services and facilities, for example, setting up a designated loan for the purpose. Mr FUNG added that EOC had been promoting the principle of universal design in developing an overarching policy on building an inclusive society. Apart from providing barrier-free access to premises, the Government should make reference to overseas experience in providing accessible services to persons with visual or hearing impairment to ensure that they could take part in art and cultural activities on an equal basis with others.

Action

24. DS(W)1 agreed that realisation of a barrier-free environment was more than a welfare issue. The Task Force was led by LWB simply because the latter had been co-ordinating for the barrier-free policy and all Government bureaux and departments would continue to facilitate the development a barrier-free environment in areas under their respective purview. DS(W)1 added that BO had no retrospective effect and owners of pre-1997 private buildings were exempt from complying with the latest design requirements set out in DM unless renovation and addition works to the premises were made. In considering whether it should be made mandatory for about 30 000 to 40 000 pre-1997 buildings to provide access and facilities for PWDs in compliance with the latest standards of DM, the Administration had to take into account a number of factors, including the needs of PWDs, technical feasibility, and the impact on the general public. He added that all buildings which had undergone major alterations were required to provide access and facilities in compliance with the prevailing standards of DM.

25. C for R said that the Government was obliged to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all PWDs, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The Administration would take appropriate measures to enable PWDs to participate fully in all aspects of life, including using leisure and cultural facilities and services. To this end, in terms of hardware, the Administration fully observed the latest requirements in DM2008 in the provision of barrier-free access facilities and services in cultural venues. In terms of software, C for R said that the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department would continue to collaborate with and relevant organisations such as the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong, and the rehabilitation sector in taking forward the development of arts accessibility.

26. Mr Albert CHAN expressed gratitude to EOC for conducting the investigation and preparing the Report, which, in his view, was a good start to enhance the provision of a barrier-free access environment. However, he noted with concern that little progress had been made in respect of access to or use of certain premises and services owned or operated by the public transport companies and The Link. It was not uncommon to find PWDs be able to access the frontage of a shopping centre but not be able to access the amenities inside due to physical barriers, such as lack of automatic door at the entrance. To rectify the shortfalls in the provision

Action

of barrier-free access and facilities, Mr CHAN took the view that a concrete action plan should be drawn up. This apart, EOC should consider listing the shortfalls in the provision of barrier-free access and facilities in Government premises by departments, types of shortfalls and districts. Mr CHAN added that the Administration and EOC should take the lead in enhancing the concept of universal accessibility by, say, providing sign language service for Government press conference and television programme.

27. Chairperson of EOC said that judging from the positive response to the EOC Report, this would be the first step to solicit Government and public support for building towards a barrier-free and inclusive society. The EOC working group on accessibility issues would continue to work closely with the Government, public organisations, large corporations and private developers. It had been lining up meetings on accessibility issues with the relevant bureaux such as the Development Bureau, THB and HAB, as well as large corporations like the Mass Transit Railway Corporation ("MTRC"), and The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong. Chairperson of EOC advised that promotion of universal access would be the priority area of work of EOC in the coming year.

28. Responding to Mr Albert CHAN's enquiry about promotion of sign language service, C for R said that the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee had formed a working group on promotion of sign language, which comprised members of the Committee, persons with hearing impairment and other stakeholders. The working group was drawing up a work plan on promoting sign language, thereby facilitating persons with hearing impairment to live independently and integrate into society. He would convey Mr CHAN's suggestion of providing sign language interpretation on television programme, such as the forthcoming Budget speech to the relevant bureau for consideration.

29. DS(W)1 said that apart from the consolidated retrofitting programme, HD had devised a retrofitting programme to improve the accessibility of the properties under its management, and the Highways Department would also accelerate its retrofitting programme for the provision of barrier-free access (lift or ramp) at public footbridges and subways without such access or alternative at-grade crossings, where technically feasible. LWB would convey to THB members' views on the provision of barrier-free access and facilities by franchised bus operators for follow-up discussion in the relevant Panel in due course.

Action

30. Ms Emily LAU noted from the EOC Report that although the Fanling Integrated Treatment Centre was built in 2002, it did not provide all the key access facilities in full compliance with DM1997 and DM2008. This showed that the Government did not necessarily comply with the design requirements in DM as Government buildings were exempt from such requirements. In her view, the Government should set out the fact that Government buildings were exempt from the mandatory requirements when preparing its report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Ms LAU considered that the provision of barrier-free access would benefit not only PWDs, but also the elderly, wheelchair users, parents with young children. She enquired why premises owned by MTRC and the Hospital Authority were not covered in the access audits conducted by EOC.

31. Chairman of EOC said that the formal investigation examined means of access to or use of certain premises owned by or managed by HA, HKHS, The Link and various Government departments. Notwithstanding this, EOC had been following up individual cases on accessibility issues with the Hospital Authority and MTRC. These included the use of Hospital Authority's telephone appointment system by persons with hearing impairment, and the accessibility of MTR stations.

32. In view of the wide public concern about the provision of barrier-free access and facilities for PWDs and the scope of the retrofitting programme involved, Ms Emily LAU took the view that an opportunity should be provided for Members to express their views on the subject. She suggested that the Panel seek the agreement of the House Committee to allocate a debate slot for the Panel Chairman to move a motion on the EOC Report at a Council meeting. Members agreed.

33. Ms Emily LAU further suggested that the Panel should consider appointing a subcommittee to monitor the Government's follow-up action on the EOC Report, in particular the implementation progress of the retrofitting works. Members expressed agreement generally. To facilitate members' deliberation on the proposal, Mr WONG Sing-chi said that he would prepare the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the subcommittee for the discussion of the Panel at the next meeting. In the meantime, Ms LAU requested the Administration to provide the expected commencement and completion dates and implementation details of the retrofitting programme for upgrading the barrier-free facilities in existing Government premises and facilities.

Admin

Action

34. Ms Emily LAU suggested and members agreed that a special meeting would be held in January 2011 to gauge views from deputations on the Government's response to and proposed follow-up action on the EOC Report.

Admin

35. In concluding, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide a quarterly report on the implementation progress of the retrofitting programme. The Chairman took the view that the contact details of Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers should be posted on individual bureaux and departments and the venue concerned. To provide incentive for owners of private premises to provide barrier-free access and facilities, the Administration should also consider establishing a matching fund for carrying out the retrofitting and improvement works.

V. Extension of one supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C post in the Poverty Team of Labour and Welfare Bureau for three years

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)488/10-11(05) and (06)]

36. Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("PSLW") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to retain one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C ("AOSGC") (D2), designated as Principal Assistant Secretary (Poverty) ("PAS(P)"), in the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") for a period of three years with effect from 10 March 2011. PSLW said that it was envisaged that the PAS(P) post would continue to be required for a range of poverty alleviation tasks, as explained in paragraphs 5 to 10 of the Administration's paper.

37. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that members were given to understand that the Task Force on Poverty ("Task Force") had duly followed up all the recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty ("CoP"), the Administration should further elaborate on the specific recommendations of CoP which had yet to be implemented and the new initiatives on poverty alleviation, in order to obtain members' support for the proposal of retaining the PAS(P) post for another three years. In his view, instead of seeking approval for extending the PAS(P) post every three years, the Administration should formulate a long-term strategy and plan for poverty alleviation, and examine the need for converting the supernumerary post into a permanent one.

Action

38. PSLW said that while many of the former CoP's recommendations had already been implemented, the Task Force would continue to monitor the development of these initiatives. Apart from providing secretariat support for the Task Force, PAS(P) was also the subject officer responsible for various poverty alleviation initiatives in the labour and welfare policy areas, including the monitoring of the progress and development of the Child Development Fund ("CDF") projects as well as the pioneer one-stop training and employment service model. PSLW further said that the Administration would embark on a comprehensive review shortly to evaluate, from both policy and operational perspectives, the overall effectiveness of the employment assistance programmes under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. PAS(P) would be responsible for coordinating the conduct of review and overseeing its implementation. PSLW added that the Administration had not proposed to extend the PAS(P) post indefinitely, as some of these measures might eventually become regular ones.

39. As regards the role of PAS(P) in supporting the newly established Community Care Fund ("CCF"), Mr WONG Sing-chi held the view that apart from helping to implement CCF initiatives, PAS(P) should examine from the policy perspective as to whether any of them should become regular welfare initiatives. Moreover, PAS(P) should also coordinate and make periodic progress report to the Panel.

40. While the operation of CCF was to be worked out by the Steering Committee on CCF chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, PSLW said that LWB was expected to be heavily involved in supporting its operation, in particular, PAS(P) would be the subject officer in LWB to provide policy input and coordinate contributions from parties concerned in relation to welfare initiatives, and to monitor their implementation. PSLW assured members that the Administration would revert to and consult the relevant Panel on any substantial change to the regular social welfare services and programmes in the light of the operational experience of CCF.

41. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the Administration should give an account of the timetable for the review of various poverty alleviation initiatives and the way forward. Noting that the Administration would review three employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme, Mr LEUNG considered that the current scope of the review was too

Action

limited. As these programmes were part and parcel of the CSSA Scheme to help the able-bodied recipients to move from welfare to self-reliance, the Administration should take the opportunity to examine the effectiveness of these programmes in the context of an overall review of the CSSA Scheme.

42. As regards the one-stop training and employment service, PSLW advised that a pioneer one-stop centre in Tin Shui Wai would be set up in the second half of 2011 to try out a new service model. A review would be conducted after the service centre had come into operation for some time. With reference to CDF, PSLW said that the first two batches of projects had been rolled out. The Administration would closely monitor the progress of the projects, and had commissioned a longitudinal consultancy study to evaluate the effectiveness of the first batch projects and make recommendations to the Government on how to further develop CDF into a longer-term model. It would decide the way forward for CDF after taking into account the consultant's recommendations. PSLW further said that the employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme, namely, the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, the Special Training and Enhancement Programme and the New Dawn Project, provided tailor-made employment assistance services to enhance the employability of different groups of CSSA recipients. Given that the current phase of the programmes would end in September 2011, the Administration would embark on a review shortly to review the effectiveness of these programmes, and consider the way forward including the possibility of integrating them for more effective operation.

43. Mr Albert CHAN commented that the Administration had yet to take into account of the review findings on various poverty alleviation initiatives and formulate a long-term plan for poverty alleviation. This showed that the Administration lacked of sincerity in alleviating the problem. In the circumstances, he and Members belonging to the League of Social Democrats would not support the proposal of extending the PAS(P) post.

44. PSLW stressed that the Task Force had duly followed up all the former CoP's recommendations, and would continue to monitor the implementation progress. As previously advised, the Administration planned to brief the Panel on the latest work progress of the Task Force in the second quarter of 2011.

Action

45. As regards the implementation of CDF, the Chairman said that the Administration should expedite the implementation progress having regard to the fact that out of 13 600 target children, only a total of 2 270 children were benefited under the first two batches of CDF projects. The Chairman further said that the Administration should examine whether and how the employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme should be integrated given that the nature of these programmes was in fact very similar. While acknowledging that the Steering Committee on CCF had yet to hold the first meeting, the Chairman envisaged that LWB would be heavily involved in supporting the operation of CCF especially the Welfare Sub-committee. Since the PAS(P) post was pitched at D2 level, he took the view that the incumbent should attach more importance to providing policy input than coordinating contributions from parties concerned. Specifically, PAS(P) should take into account the operational experience of CCF in providing social services and assistance to the disadvantaged and people in need, and identify the specific areas of services, from the policy perspective, which could become regular services. In this connection, he took the view that the Administration should further elaborate on PAS(P)'s support to CCF in preparing its proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") and the Finance Committee ("FC") for consideration.

46. PSLW reiterated that the Administration would evaluate the implementation of CDF including the progress of rolling out the projects. PSLW advised that as the Chairman had rightly pointed out that the Steering Committee on CCF had yet to meet and deliberate on the operation of CCF. While the Home Affairs Bureau would coordinate the overall operation of CCF, PAS(P) would be the subject officer in LWB in relation to welfare initiatives funded by CCF and had to monitor their implementation. In the light of the objectives of CCF, PAS(P) would be heavily involved in providing input on specific welfare services or assistance that could be provided to the target recipients of CCF as well as coordinating the implementation of initiatives under the purview of LWB. In the longer term, PAS(P) would examine as to whether any social welfare services or assistance provided under CCF should become regular services or assistance under the purview of LWB.

47. In concluding, the Chairman said that most members had no objection to the Administration's staffing proposal, but he hoped that the Administration would take into account members' views and further elaborate on PAS(P)'s involvement in providing support to CCF when submitting the staffing proposal to ESC and FC.

Admin

Action

VI. Any other business

48. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:36 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 February 2011