

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2527/10-11
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 13 June 2011, 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 Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
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 LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Member absent : Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Public Officers attending : Item IV

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

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

Mr FUNG Man-lok
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth &
Corrections)

Item V

Mr Patrick NIP Tak-kuen, JP
Director of Social Welfare

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

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

Item VI

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

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Yvonne YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Karen LAI
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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I. Confirmation of minutes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1976/10-11]

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2011 were confirmed.

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

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1736/10-11(01), CB(2)1763/10-11(01), CB(2)1838/10-11(01) and CB(2)1972/10-11(01)]

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting –

- (a) Information paper provided by the Administration on the development of the proposed joint-user complex in Area 44, Fanling;
- (b) Information paper provided by the Administration on the impact of statutory minimum wage on private residential care homes;
- (c) Referral from Duty Roster Members regarding the seven-year residence requirement under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme; and
- (d) Referral from Duty Roster Members regarding the support measures for alleviating the hardship of low-income persons in the face of the aggravating problem of income disparity.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1977/10-11(01) to (02) and CB(2)2011/10-11(01)]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next meeting on 11 July 2011 at 10:45am -

- (a) Consultancy study on community care services for the elderly initiated by the Elderly Commission; and
- (b) Work progress of the Task Force on Poverty.

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4. The Chairman said that the subject of long-term social welfare planning would be discussed under agenda item VI below. To his understanding, the Administration had not yet been able to update members on the latest developments at the moment. Members might wish to consider adding the item to the agenda of next regular meeting after the discussion under agenda item VI. Responding to Mr Albert HO, the Chairman said that members might consider the need for receiving views from the stakeholders after the Social Welfare Advisory Committee ("SWAC")'s report was released. Members agreed.

5. Referring to his letter dated 8 June 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2011/10-11(01)), Dr PAN Pey-chyou elaborated that private residential care homes encountered a lot of operational difficulties in the light of increasing operating costs arising from the implementation of statutory minimum wage. He was also concerned about the consequential impact on the staff of these private residential care homes. He considered it necessary for the Panel to hold a special meeting to discuss and receive views on the matter.

6. The Chairman advised that in response to his earlier request, the Administration had provided an information note on the impact of statutory minimum wage on private residential care services in May 2011 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1763/10-11(01)). According to the Administration, there were still about 30% vacant places in private residential care homes for the elderly and the private market had the capacity to absorb decanted residents, if any, resulting from closure of homes owing to different reasons. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should first be requested to provide a paper updating members on the latest development in July 2011. If the number of vacant places available in the market recorded a significant drop, the Panel would consider holding a special meeting in late July or August 2011 to receive views from deputations. The Chairman then invited members' views on the matter.

7. Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed reservation about the vacancy rate as cited by the Administration. In his view, the vacant places were usually available in those private residential care homes charging higher home fees. To his understanding, many private residential care home operators were considering closing down the homes because of the extreme operational difficulties. Members should accord importance to the concern and hold a special meeting to follow up the matter as early as practicable. Dr PAN Pen-chyou expressed a similar view on the meeting date.

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8. While expressing no specific views on the timing for holding the special meeting, Ms LI Fung-ying took the view that the purpose of the meeting should be expanded to discuss the impact of rising rentals and inflation on the operation of private residential care homes. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed a similar concern.

9. Mr Albert CHAN said that two to three weeks' time should be allowed for both the Administration and the deputations to get prepared for the special meeting. To facilitate members' discussion, members might request the Legislative Council Secretariat to prepare an information note on the subject matter, if considered necessary.

10. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan pointed out that notwithstanding the implementation of the statutory minimum wage, private residential care homes remained unable to recruit adequate staff. Deputations should also be invited to give views on this.

11. After discussion, the Chairman said that the special meeting would be scheduled for early July 2011. Deputations would be invited to give views on the impact of statutory minimum wage, rising rentals and inflation on the operation of private residential care homes, as well as the possible impact of the implementation of the licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs"), if any.

(Post-meeting note : The special meeting would be held on 5 July 2011 at 8:30 am.)

IV. Progress of the Child Development Fund

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1977/10-11(03) to (04)]

12. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2 ("DS(W)2") briefed members on the progress of the Child Development Fund ("CDF") which was to help children from a disadvantaged background. Since the launch of CDF in 2008, two batches of 22 projects had been rolled out, benefiting a total of 2 270 children, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper. As regards the first batch of seven pioneer projects, most of the participating children had successfully accumulated financial and non-financial assets and drawn up their personal development plans ("PDPs"). Under the guidance of the operating non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") and their mentors, the participating children would implement their PDPs in the third year of the projects by using their

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accumulated savings. The third and fourth batches of CDF projects were planned for rolling out in September 2011 and mid-2012 respectively to benefit an additional 5 000 children. The target was to benefit 13 600 children eventually. DS(W)2 added that the Administration had commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University ("PolyU") to conduct a longitudinal study to evaluate the first batch pioneer projects and make recommendations to the Government on how to further develop CDF.

13. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that members had previously raised concern about the ability of children from a disadvantaged background to meet the monthly savings target of \$200. Mr LEE asked whether any participating children could not achieve the savings target in the light of the experience of the first and second batches of projects. Noting from paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper that the Administration would encourage the operating NGOs to recruit ethnic minorities, children with disabilities and children living in cubicle apartments to join the CDF projects, Mr LEE asked about the rationale for the arrangement and the concrete measures in place to facilitate the recruitment of these target children. Mr LEE further asked about the expected date for rolling out the projects to all the 13 600 target children.

14. DS(W)2 said that affordability had been taken into consideration in setting the savings target. Out of the 750 children initially recruited for the first batch pioneer projects, 723 children (96.4%) were able to complete the targeted savings programme, and more than 97% of them could meet the monthly savings target of \$200. Similarly, for the second batch projects which came into operation last year, around 98% of the participating children were able to save \$200 per month. She added that the objective of the targeted savings programme was to encourage the participating children to develop a saving habit, and therefore the operating NGOs had made a lot of efforts to help the children complete the programme. For example, they had set up emergency funds to assist those who had difficulty meeting their savings target owing to temporary financial hardship, and had agreed with some participating children and their families to set a lower savings target if necessary. The initial findings of the longitudinal study suggested that the participating children had developed a saving habit and were able to make better saving plans.

15. As regards the recruitment of ethnic minorities or children with disabilities, DS(W)2 said that they were most welcome to participate in CDF projects. She elaborated that in rolling out the second batch projects, the Administration had encouraged the operating NGOs to recruit these

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children through their established networks or to formulate specific recruitment plans. This approach was considered effective. Of the 1 520 children recruited, 79 were ethnic minorities and 53 were children with disabilities. For the third batch projects, the same approach would be adopted and children living in cubicle apartments would also be a target group. DS(W)2 added that the Administration was mindful of members' concern about the timetable for rolling out more CDF projects. She explained that a prudent approach was adopted at the early implementation stage to ensure that the operating NGOs could recruit a sufficient number of high quality and committed mentors. Having gained more experience, the Administration had increased the number of participants to 1 500 for the second batch projects, and would further increase it to 2 500 each for the third and fourth batches of projects. The total number of participating children would be increased to 7 200 after the launch of the third and fourth batches of projects.

16. Pointing out that some children had failed to complete the two-year savings programme in the first and second batches of projects, Ms LI Fung-ying asked whether any follow-up action had been taken to examine the reasons for their withdrawal from the programme. She was concerned that these children had dropped out of the programme because of inability to save.

17. DS(W)2 elaborated that of the 18 children who had withdrawn from the first batch CDF projects, about half indicated that they did not want to continue to participate, and the remainders had dropped out because of employment, health or other personal reasons. Similarly, about half of the participating children who had withdrawn from the second batch projects indicated that they did not want to continue to participate. For those children who were unable to continue the targeted savings programme, the operating NGOs would invite them to participate in other training programmes under CDF. DS(W)2 added that the aforementioned study to evaluate the first batch pioneer projects would also examine why some participating children had dropped out from the projects.

18. Ms LI Fung-ying noted with concern that although it was the Administration's intention to give priority to children aged between 14 and 16, an over-subscription of places for children aged 10 to 13 was recorded in the first two batches of projects. She asked whether the Administration would consider allocating more places to meet the full demand from children aged 10 to 13 as the target of benefitting 13 600 children had yet to be achieved.

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19. DS(W)2 explained that in the first two batches, priority was given to children aged 14 to 16 as some of them might be about to leave school and therefore have a more imminent need to plan for their future. In view of the strong demands for places from the 10 to 13 age group in the first two batches, the Administration would adjust the minimum percentage of children aged between 14 and 16 from 70% to 50% for the third and fourth batches of CDF projects. However, the operating NGOs could provide more than 50% of places for children aged 14 to 16 according to the actual needs in individual districts.

20. Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed disappointment at the slow progress in rolling out the CDF projects. While reckoning a lack of adequate mentors would hamper the implementation of the CDF projects, Mr WONG urged the Administration to step up its publicity work to help NGOs recruit suitable mentors. Mr WONG took the view that the Administration should re-prioritise the eligibility criteria for CDF projects. In his view, when children reached the age between 14 and 16, it would be rather difficult for them to make a change to their bad habits. Hence, priority should be given to younger children such that they could develop a saving habit and build up relationship with their mentors at an earlier stage. To facilitate young children to save, a lower savings target could be set for them. Mr WONG added that appropriate training on counselling and communication skills with the participating children and their parents should be provided to the mentors.

21. DS(W)2 reiterated that the Administration had adopted a prudent approach in rolling out CDF projects. On the recruitment of mentors, DS(W)2 said that the Administration considered it appropriate for the operating NGOs to recruit mentors through their established networks. Nonetheless, the CDF Secretariat would continue to promote CDF to the business sector and encourage corporations to mobilise their employees to join the mentorship programme. The practical experience of the first and second batches of projects suggested that mentors recruited from the same company were more effective in providing mutual support amongst themselves. As regards training for mentors, DS(W)2 advised that the operating NGOs were required to provide training programmes for them. In addition, mentors were provided with a guidebook prepared by the Labour and Welfare Bureau to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Mentors were also reminded to seek assistance from the operating NGOs if necessary.

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22. On the target age group, DS(W)2 said that, as mentioned earlier, the percentage of children aged 10 to 13 would be adjusted to no more than 50% for the third and fourth batches of project.

23. Mr Albert HO expressed concern that some children had not been able to complete the two-year savings programme because of their inability to save, but refrained from disclosing their financial difficulties. In his view, instead of focusing on the amount of savings to be achieved, the operating NGOs should provide guidance to the participating children on how to optimise the use of limited resources available to them in particular. Mr HO added that the implementation progress of the CDF projects was far from satisfactory. To expedite the full implementation of the CDF projects, the Administration should actively consider members' suggestion of introducing a central register system so as to enlarge the network and facilitate matching of mentors and participating children across the territory.

24. DS(W)2 responded that, as shown from the first two batches of projects, almost 98% of participating children could meet the monthly savings target of \$200, suggesting that the target was realistic. Those who had difficulty meeting the target could agree with the operating NGOs to set a lower target. She added that at the same time, the operating NGOs had to secure donations of the business sector and individual donors to match the children's savings. In addition, the Government would provide a special financial incentive of \$3,000 for each participating child who had completed the targeted savings programme. The participating children could use the savings amounted to \$12,600 (including the matching contribution and the special financial incentive) to implement their PDPs under the guidance and supervision of the operating NGOs and mentors. On the recruitment of mentors, DS(W)2 said that the Administration was inclined to tasking the operating NGOs to recruit mentors at the moment. The Administration would strengthen promotion efforts for soliciting the support of corporations as well as other community organisations to help recruit mentors. She added that the operating NGOs of the first two batches did not encounter difficulty in recruiting mentors, having regard to the fact that the ratio of mentor to mentee was maintained at a satisfactory level such as one to one or one to two, and that additional mentors had been recruited as reserve to replace those who dropped out.

25. Mr IP Wai-ming expressed concern that some participating children had not completed the targeted savings programme. In his view, the Administration should examine the underlying reasons for their withdrawal

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and follow up with their whereabouts. If they discontinued with the savings because of inability to save, the operating NGOs should consider lowering the savings target. Notwithstanding that PolyU was conducting an evaluation study on the first batch pioneer projects, he requested the Administration to provide the preliminary evaluation findings prior to the completion of the study. Noting that 1 300 mentors from all walks of life had been recruited for some 1 500 children participating in the second batch projects, Mr IP highlighted the importance of maintaining stability of mentorship for individual participating children. He then sought more information on the support and training provided for the mentors of the participating children.

26. DS(W)2 said that the Administration had looked into the reasons for children dropping out from the targeted savings programme, although they represented only 2% of the total participants. The operating NGOs would conduct an exit interview for each withdrawal case. In the event that individual children had difficulty meeting the savings target owing to financial hardship, the operating NGOs would propose to provide them with emergency funds to tide over short-term financial hardship or agree with them a lower savings target for the remaining period of the savings programme. DS(W)2 stressed that even if the participating children withdrew from the targeted savings programme, they could still participate in the training and mentorship programmes of the CDF projects. At the request of Mr IP, the Administration would provide after the meeting further information on the reasons why some children had withdrawn from the projects.

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27. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth & Corrections) said that as stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements for the CDF projects, the operating NGOs were required to organise at least two sessions of training per year for the mentors and at least one sharing session for the participating children, their parents/guardians and the mentors per year during the first two years of the project. Mentors were required to contact their mentees at least once every month, and face-to-face meetings were encouraged. Most of the operating NGOs required the mentors to meet the mentees in the presence of their staff or the mentees' parents during their first few meetings. Although some mentors had dropped out, the operating NGOs could arrange replacement mentors immediately. He added that in anticipation of the strong demand for mentors for the third and fourth batches of projects, the Administration would enhance its publicity work in recruiting mentors.

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28. Dr PAN Pey-chyou said that to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of the CDF projects in reducing inter-generational poverty, the Administration should consider conducting a longitudinal study on the participating children up to age 30.

29. DS(W)2 responded that the Administration had commissioned PolyU to conduct a longitudinal study to evaluate the effectiveness of the first batch pioneer projects and make recommendations to the Government on how to further develop CDF. Given that there were a lot of factors affecting children's development and growth, it would be very difficult for a longitudinal study straddling more than 10 years to isolate the impact of CDF on individual participants. Nevertheless, the Administration would take note of Dr PAN's suggestions and would make reference to similar longitudinal studies overseas, if any.

30. In concluding, the Chairman said that to expedite the full implementation of CDF projects, the Administration should re-consider members' suggestion of introducing a central register to facilitate matching of mentors and participating children across the territory. To facilitate the low-income families to meet the savings target, operating NGOs could consider soliciting private patrons to meet the savings of the participating children in recognition of their progress in academic performance and good conduct. This apart, the operating NGOs should also solicit assistance from local organisations in identifying target children, in particular those living in cubicle apartments. As regards the longitudinal study being undertaken by PolyU, the Chairman said that the study should evaluate the effectiveness of the operating NGOs and mentors in enlightening the participating children in bringing about positive changes. Lastly, the Chairman requested the Administration to consider making available an interim report of the longitudinal study.

V. Implementation of Financial Assistance Scheme for private residential care homes for the disabled

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1977/10-11(05) to (06)]

31. At the invitation of the Chairman, Director of Social Welfare ("DSW") briefed members on the proposed framework of a Financial Assistance Scheme ("FAS") for private residential care homes for persons with disabilities ("RCHDs"). DSW elaborated that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") would implement the proposed FAS after the commencement of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities)

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Bill ("the Bill") to provide subsidies for private RCHDs to carry out improvement works in compliance with the licensing requirements on building and fire safety. The eligibility criteria and scope of improvement works and level of support were detailed in the Administration's paper. DSW added that as private RCHDs were commercially operated, to ensure the proper use of public money, the maximum grant allocated to each private RCHD would be 60% of the recognised cost of the improvement works within the scope of improvement works. The estimated total expenditure of the proposed FAS would be around \$29 million, subject to adjustment nearer the time of implementation. SWD planned to seek funding approval from the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee ("LFAC") after the passage of the Bill.

32. Mr Albert HO was concerned about the monitoring of the improvement works relevant to building safety. In his view, financial assistance should not be provided for private RCHDs to carry out improvement works relating to unauthorised building works therein. Noting that the grant would be released upon completion of the improvement works, Mr HO was concerned that some operators of the private RCHDs would encounter cashflow problem if they had to meet the entire costs of the improvement works in the first place. In his view, the Administration should allow flexibility in the payment arrangement and consider releasing partial subsidy in advance before the commencement of the improvement works. To this end, the Administration could require the RCHD operators to give an undertaking that the grant would be repaid if they discontinued operation later.

33. DSW advised that a Licensing Office would be set up under SWD to monitor the operation of licensed RCHDs and ensure compliance with the required standards as specified in the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance, its Regulation and the Code of Practice. The Licensing Office, which comprised professional officers from the relevant departments, would process the applications and provide the applicants with necessary advice relating to building and fire safety.

34. DSW said that as private RCHDs were commercially operated, it was proposed that the maximum grant allocated to each private RCHD would be 60% of the recognised cost of the improvement works, and the operators were required to shoulder a certain portion of the cost to demonstrate their clear intention to continue with the operation of their private homes for a reasonable period by sharing part of the cost. Moreover, in the absence of a recovery mechanism if the private RCHD

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operators discontinued operation after receiving the grant, the Administration considered it appropriate to require the operators to shoulder part of the cost. Under the proposed arrangement, the operators would be required to undertake to continue with the operation for at least two years after receiving the grant of FAS. SWD had consulted the private RCHD sector on the proposed parameters and framework of FAS.

35. On the payment arrangement, DSW explained that since the proposed FAS would be funded by the Lotteries Fund ("LF"), and therefore the standing practice of reimbursement of grant was applicable to all organisations receiving LF. Similar payment arrangement was adopted for providing subsidies to operators of private residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") to carry out improvement works after the licensing scheme for RCHEs had come into operation.

36. Dr LEUNG Ka-lau was worried that some private RCHDs would close down after the implementation of the licensing scheme because of inability to meet the rising operating costs, thereby resulting in displacement of residents. Some other private RCHDs would need to increase home fees to cover the additional costs for meeting the licensing requirements on building and fire safety, if they had to shoulder 40% of the cost under the proposed FAS. He expressed grave concern about the impact of the licensing scheme on the operation of private RCHDs and the well-being of the RCHD residents. Dr LEUNG sought information from the Administration on the operating costs and profit level of private RCHDs.

37. DSW said that notwithstanding the imminent introduction of a licensing scheme for RCHDs, the number of private RCHDs known to SWD had been increasing from 45 in March 2009 to 54 in March 2010, and a further increase to 71 in May 2011, representing an increase of 26 homes in two years. The Administration considered that there was a trend of steady increase both in the number and capacity of private RCHDs. It anticipated that the private market remained active and had the capacity to absorb decanted residents, if any, resulting from closure of private RCHDs owing to different reasons. DSW further said that apart from the proposed FAS, the Administration had launched in October 2010 a pilot Bought Place Scheme ("BPS") for private RCHDs, with a view to encouraging private RCHDs to upgrade their service standards and help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities.

38. Referring to Dr LEUNG Ka-lau's question on the operating costs of

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private RCHDs, DSW said that private RCHDs were not obliged to disclose their financial position and operating costs. As a matter of fact, the operating costs of individual private RCHDs were affected by numerous factors, such as differential in rentals. To his knowledge, the Hong Kong Private Hostel for Rehabilitation Association had provided its estimated unit operating cost of a private RCHD place to the Bills Committee formed to study the Bill. DSW added that in determining the purchased price for a BPS place, SWD had duly taken into account the operating expenditure of RCHDs.

39. In response to the Chairman's enquiries about the eligibility criteria, level of support, payment arrangement and financial implication of FAS, DSW and Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation & Medical Social Services) made the following salient points -

- (a) to be eligible for FAS, a private RCHD should be known to SWD and in operating at the existing premises prior to the commencement of the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance and its Regulation. Therefore, operators were obliged to notify SWD of its up-to-date address immediately upon removal, and the latest premises known to SWD would be uploaded onto the website of SWD for public reference. SWD would highlight to the operators the meaning of existing premises at the relevant briefing sessions for FAS applications;
- (b) as set out in paragraph 5(e) of the Administration's paper, the home fees charged by the private RCHD applying for FAS should be at a rate of not more than the purchased price under the pilot BPS for private RCHDs after taking into account the higher service standards of a BPS place;
- (c) the recognised cost of the improvement works would not necessarily be the same as the amount applied for under FAS application or the actual cost of the improvement works. In line with the existing practice of processing LF applications, the recognised cost of the improvement works was estimated by professional quantity surveyors according to the prevailing price level. The maximum grant allocated to each private RCHD would be 60% of the recognised cost of the improvement works;

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- (d) the standing payment practice of reimbursement of grant was applicable to all organisations receiving LF. Since FAS was funded by LF, private RCHDs applying for FAS would follow the payment practice as stipulated under the LF Manual, whereby the grant would be made on a reimbursement basis. In accordance with the payment arrangement for LF, 90% of the approved grant might be released upon completion of the improvement works, while the remaining 10% be released upon SWD's approval of the final accounts and after a licence had been obtained by the private RCHD. It was estimated that the approved grant could be released in about two weeks after the improvement works were completed in compliance with the licensing requirements on building and fire safety;
- (e) while it was estimated that the total expenditure of the proposed FAS would be around \$29 million, SWD would review the cost estimates near the time of implementation of FAS before seeking funding approval from LFAC; and devise the detailed procedural guidelines for reference of the private RCHDs.
- (f) while it was the responsibility for private RCHD operators to ensure that the premises being used for the operation of the RCHD comply with the conditions of land lease, SWD would provide assistance as appropriate to individual RCHD operators for seeking the Lands Department's written agreement for the use of the subject premises for residential care home purpose; and
- (g) in line with the existing practice of processing LF applications for subvented RCHDs, the approved amount on the improvement works for private RCHDs would be estimated according to the prevailing price level. In the event that the actual cost of improvement works was higher than the approved grant, the Administration would consider each case on individual circumstances.

40. In concluding, the Chairman cautioned that as private RCHD operators were not well versed in the payment arrangement of public funds, he called on the Administration to explain clearly to the private RCHD sector the application and reimbursement procedures so as to avoid unnecessary delay in effecting the grant payments. DSW assured

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members that prior to the implementation of FAS, SWD would conduct briefing sessions for the private RCHD sector to explain to them the details of the parameters and payment arrangement for the proposed FAS.

VI. Update on the long-term social welfare planning

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1977/10-11(08)]

41. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 ("DS(W)1") said that the Administration had not yet received the SWAC's report on long-term social welfare planning. To his understanding, the SWAC secretariat was finalising the report which was tentatively scheduled for release in early July 2011. The Administration expected that the report should be available for members' information before the next regular Panel meeting in July 2011. The Chairman said that as agreed under agenda item III above, the subject of long-term social welfare planning would be followed up at the next regular meeting in July 2011. The Chairman requested, and DS(W)1 agreed, that the report would be made public when SWAC submitted it to the Administration.

VII. Any other business

42. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:33 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 August 2011