

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2468/11-12

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Report of the Panel on Welfare Services for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Welfare Services during the 2011-2012 Legislative Council session. It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 11 July 2012 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and the Family Council. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 18 members, with Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che and Hon WONG Sing-chi elected as its Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

Major work

Long-term social welfare planning

4. To follow up on the discussions in the last session, the Administration reverted to the Panel in June 2012 on its response to the study by the Social Welfare Advisory Committee ("SWAC") on the long-term social welfare planning in Hong Kong. Members noted that the Administration agreed with and accepted the various recommendations as set out in the SWAC's Report released in July 2011.

5. While raising no objection to the recommendations to formulate guiding principles and strategic directions for social welfare planning as set out in the SWAC Report, members generally considered that it was the Government's responsibility to make a blueprint for the long-term development of social welfare, and set objective targets and timetable for meeting the specific service needs. Instead of reviewing the social welfare initiatives and services on an annual basis, the Administration should reinstate the five-year plan mechanism for better and longer-term planning of the social welfare services and manpower projection.

6. Members were advised that the planning mechanism proposed by SWAC would allow full and interactive participation of the welfare sector and other stakeholders, and ensure that consultation and planning for welfare services would be conducted on an ongoing and regular (i.e. annual) basis. The proposed new initiatives and pilot schemes did not mean that they were short-term in nature or to be implemented for one year only. According to the Administration, it had all along been investing heavily in the development and provision of social welfare services. The recurrent expenditure for social welfare programmes had been increased by 120% from 1997-1998 to 2012-2013; and the recurrent expenditure for various aspects of social welfare accounted for 16.7% of the total Government Recurrent Expenditure in 2012-2013, ranking third among various policy areas. Members also noted that the Administration had put the planning mechanism to trial run starting from 2012, and would keep it under review for further improvements.

Implementation of Lump Sum Grant Subvention System

7. The Panel received a progress report from the Administration on the implementation progress of the 36 recommendations made by the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee ("LSGIRC") on the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System ("LSGSS") including the production of a Best Practice Manual and provision of actuarial service for non-governmental organisations ("NGOs").

8. The majority of members were of the view that the recommendations of LSGIRC had not thoroughly resolved the fundamental problems arising from the implementation of LSGSS, such as the excessive reserves kept by subvented NGOs, the offer of time-limited employment contracts and high staff wastage and turnover in NGOs. Members also noted with concern that some NGOs did not use the additional funding provided in line with the civil service pay adjustments for the increase of salary for NGO staff.

9. According to the Administration, since the inception of LSGSS, NGOs could devise and implement their own staffing and remuneration structures to best suit their unique financial management and human resource management needs in accordance with the performance standards and conditions stipulated in the Funding and Service Agreements. As recommended by LSCIRC, a Best Practice Manual for NGOs covering various management issues, including human resources policies, financial accountability and corporate governance was being developed by the welfare sector with professional input from management experts.

10. Members also raised concern about the rationale for involving only one NGO in the pilot actuarial study. Members were informed that only one NGO expressed interest to join the first round of the pilot actuarial study and the study was completed in August 2011. A sharing session had been convened in which the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"), together with the participating NGO concerned and consultant, promoted the use of actuarial service as a useful tool for NGOs' financial planning and evaluation of long-term affordability. In view of the positive experience of the first-round study, the second round pilot actuarial study was underway.

Adjustment of social security payments

11. As part of the annual adjustment exercise for the standard payment rates of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") and rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme, the Panel had examined the latest 12-month moving average of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices ("SSAIP") which was compiled by the Census and Statistics Department to measure inflation according to the expenditure pattern of CSSA households. Under the existing adjustment mechanism, the CSSA and SSA rates were adjusted annually according to the movement of SSAIP. Members noted that the latest SSAIP registered an accumulative increase of 4.8%. Members were concerned that an increase of 4.8% in the standard payment rates of CSSA was immaterial in nominal term, especially in the face of rapid increases of food prices and rentals.

12. Pointing out that the actual rental of 57% of CSSA households living in private housing exceeded the maximum rates of rent allowance ("MRA") under the CSSA Scheme, and that 47% of them were paying rent higher than MRA by \$500 each month, members considered that the Administration should introduce immediate relief measures to alleviate the financial hardship of these households especially at times of high inflation, and review the adjustment mechanism for the rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme. Members were advised that MRA was determined and was adjusted annually in accordance

with the movement of Consumer Price Index (A) rent index for private housing, which tracked the lower-end private housing rental market. In the view of the Administration, it was not appropriate to adjust the levels of MRA simply to catch up with the constantly changing rent levels in the private housing market. Individual CSSA households with housing needs could apply for public rental housing units.

13. To maintain the purchasing power of the CSSA recipients, members strongly called on the Administration to put in place a mechanism to adjust the standard rates of CSSA ahead of the annual adjustment cycle if there was persistently high inflation. According to the Administration, the proposed increase in the standard rates of the CSSA Scheme and rates of allowance under the SSA Scheme was made in accordance with the established mechanism. The Administration acknowledged the need to monitor closely the SSAIP movements. It would consider seeking approval for any inflationary adjustments to the standard payment rates ahead of the annual adjustment cycle if movements of SSAIP and other economic indicators pointed to persistently high inflation.

14. To help ease the pressure of inflation and rising prices on people's livelihood, members noted that the Chief Executive in the 2011-2012 Policy Address and the Financial Secretary in the 2012-2013 Budget proposed to provide an extra allowance to CSSA recipients equal to one month of the standard rates of CSSA, and an extra allowance to Old Age Allowance ("OAA") and Disability Allowance ("DA") recipients equal to one month of the allowances. Members were supportive of the proposal of providing additional payments to the CSSA and SSA recipients, and the relevant funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee on 8 June 2012.

Review of various employment assistance programmes under the CSSA Scheme

15. Members examined the Administration's proposal to integrate various employment assistance services under the CSSA Scheme, viz. the Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme ("IEAS"), the Special Training and Enhancement Programme ("My STEP"), the New Dawn ("ND") Project and the Community Work ("CW") Programme. According to the Administration, the integrated services could enable NGOs to use resources more flexibly and effectively, and the same NGO could provide CSSA recipients and their family members with different services to meet their need. Members noted that the Administration proposed to implement the new integrated services in January 2013 for a period of 27 months as all the contracts of the existing employment assistance services would expire on 31 December 2012.

16. Pointing out that the respective employment rates for participants of IEAS, My STEP and ND Project were about 20%, 50% and 28%, members cast doubt about the effectiveness of the integrated services in helping the CSSA recipients to secure full-time employment. Members were advised that the employment rate of participants of employment service programmes would be affected by various factors such as business environment, the availability of suitable jobs in the market and the personal profile of the unemployed CSSA recipients.

17. Members expressed grave concern that the proposed integration of employment assistance services was a step moved forward by the Administration to further outsource its services. The Administration assured members that the objective of the proposal was not to save resources, but to allow NGOs to deploy their resources more flexibly and to provide a wide range of one-stop employment assistance services to better assist the target CSSA recipients to get employed.

18. Members also noted with concern that around 80 non-civil service contract staff positions in SWD would no longer be required by the end of March 2013 after the integration of the CW Programme with other employment assistance services. Members appealed to the Administration to render employment assistance to the staff concerned as appropriate.

Guangdong Scheme

19. Following the announcement of the Chief Executive in his 2011-2012 Policy Address of the introduction of a Guangdong ("GD") Scheme under the SSA Scheme to provide OAA for eligible elderly who chose to reside in GD, the Panel examined the content of the proposal. Members noted that the proposed GD Scheme had basically the same eligibility criteria as OAA in Hong Kong, and had the same 305-day permissible limit of absence per payment year, except that the recipients would be required to reside in GD instead of Hong Kong for at least 60 days for obtaining a full-year payment of the allowance.

20. Members supported the proposed GD Scheme, but some members took the view that the coverage of the Scheme should be extended to Fujian given that participants of the Portable CSSA Scheme could choose to stay in GD or Fujian. According to the Administration, GD was at present the only place with the conditions suitable for implementing the new scheme taking into consideration the growing integration and unique relationship between Hong Kong and GD.

21. Noting that an agent would be appointed on the Mainland for the implementation of the GD Scheme, members were concerned about the service capacity of the agent to cope with the tremendous caseload having regard to the extensive service areas in GD. According to the Administration, it did not rule out the possibility of appointing more than one agent in GD to assist in implementing the GD Scheme. Members noted that the GD Scheme would be ready for implementation around mid-2013 as the Administration would need some time to draw up the tender specifications, in particular the specific role of the appointed agent(s). Members called on the Administration to advance the implementation timetable of the GD Scheme.

Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

22. As announced in the 2011-2012 Policy Address, the Administration would introduce the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities ("the concession scheme") in a phased approach to enable elderly persons aged 65 or above, as well as eligible persons with disabilities to travel on the general Mass Transit Railway ("MTR") lines, franchised buses and ferries at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip at any time. The Panel examined the proposal at two meetings, and received views from deputations at one of the meetings.

23. Members generally welcomed the concession scheme and urged its early implementation. Members, however, noted that given the technical complexity involved, the public transport operators concerned would be ready to implement the concession scheme at different points in time. The scheme would be rolled out by phases starting from the end of June or July 2012 for travelling on MTR, and fully implemented in the first quarter of 2013 for travelling on franchised and major licensed ferry services. To enable the elderly and persons with disabilities to participate more in community activities, members strongly urged the Administration to advance the implementation timeline given that ferry services were the only mode of public transport for those living on outlying islands.

24. Members shared the concern of deputations that the coverage of the concession scheme should be extended to other modes of public transport, notably tram and green minibuses. Noting that eligible persons with disabilities would be those CSSA recipients aged between 12 and 64 with 100% disabilities and DA recipients of the same age, some members had urged the relaxation of the eligibility criteria to cover persons with less than 100% disabilities and children with disabilities aged below 12. A motion requesting

the Government to immediately extend the concession scheme to disabled children aged below 12 was passed by the Panel.

25. In response to the motion, the Administration advised that its priority was to launch the concession scheme initially on three major modes of public transport, which accounted for about 72% of the daily public transport patronage in 2011. The Administration undertook to review whether to cover other modes of transport in the concession scheme after it had been running smoothly, and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the scheme three years after it had been fully implemented.

Pilot scheme on community care service voucher for the elderly

26. The Chief Executive announced in his 2011-2012 Policy Address that the Government would plan for a pilot community care service ("CCS") voucher scheme to provide direct subsidy to elders who had long-term care needs with more flexibility and choices of CCS that suited their needs to age at home. In February 2012, the Panel examined the Administration's preliminary proposal to launch a four-year pilot scheme in 2013-2014 by two phases to provide subsidy directly to the service users who had long-term care service needs instead of service providers, i.e. the money follows the user principle. Members noted that in the first two years (i.e. the first phase), the Administration would start with elders who had been assessed by SWD's Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Service ("SCNAMES") to have impairment at moderate level. Subject to the outcome of the first phase, it would include elders with severe impairment, whose care needs were more complicated, in the second phase. The Panel held another meeting in April 2012 to receive public views on the pilot scheme.

27. Members expressed diverse views on the pilot scheme. Some members expressed support for the launch of the pilot scheme as the new funding mode would provide users with more flexibility to choose the types of service and service providers that most suited their needs. Some other members objected to the implementation of the pilot scheme as they saw it as a move towards privatization of the subsidised CCS. Noting that a sliding scale of co-payment ranging from 10% to 50% would be determined based on a means test mechanism, these members also expressed grave concern that some existing users would have to pay more for subsidised CCS to be provided by private service providers.

28. According to the Administration, in anticipation of an increasing demand for CCS arising from an ageing population, the introduction of CCS voucher based on the principles of affordability and shared responsibility would help

address the varying needs of different sectors of the older population and the effective use of finite public resources. These principles had all along been adopted for subsidised CCS, and were supported by the majority of stakeholders in the study survey carried out by the consultancy commissioned by the Elderly Commission on CCS. Members were advised that the introduction of the pilot scheme would not affect existing subsidised CCS provision. The Administration would continue its efforts in providing more subsidised CCS and residential care services ("RCS") funded by the conventional financing mode.

Residential care service for elderly couples

29. Arising from a case concerning the allocation of RCS places for an elderly couple with varied impairment levels at two different residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs"), members called on the Administration to review the existing allocation mechanism of RCS with a view to providing some flexibility to allow an elderly couple to stay in the same RCHE, if they so preferred.

30. Members were advised that elders would be allocated with subsidised RCS at the appropriate care level based on their impairment levels as assessed under SCNAMES. Nonetheless, RCS applicants who wished to move into the same RCHE with their spouse, family members or friends could indicate their preference for that same RCHE in their individual applications. If RCS applicants wished to be admitted at the same time, they could opt for "group application" and wait for sufficient places to be available for the whole group. Members remained concerned that the waiting time for group applicants with different impairment levels would be longer than other individual applicants. To address the concern, members urged the Administration to provide more long-term care places providing continuum of care such that elders could continue to stay in the same subvented RCHE when their health conditions deteriorated and needed not to move to another RCHE providing a higher level of nursing care.

Implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre service mode

31. The Panel received a progress report from the Administration in December 2011 on the implementation of 26 recommendations of the review report on the Integrated Family Service Centre ("IFSC") service model. Noting that the IFSC service mode would continue to be adopted for publicly funded family services in Hong Kong as recommended in the review report and four new IFSCs would be set up in districts with higher service demand as announced in the 2011-2012 Policy Address, members were concerned about

the plan for the provision of new IFSC service. According to the Administration, in planning for the provision of new IFSC service, consideration would be given to the social indicators and service demand of individual districts in the light of the characteristics and needs of the districts, such as the number of CSSA households, case of domestic violence and juvenile crimes. Apart from the new IFSC in Sham Shui Po, the remaining three would go into services after resources were earmarked under the 2012-2013 Budget.

32. Members shared the concern raised by frontline staff of IFSCs about spending substantial time on handling of housing assistance cases which related to housing management and tenancy issues, and held another meeting in March 2012 for further discussion on the referral system in respect of compassionate rehousing arrangement. Members were given to understand that SWD had set up a liaison mechanism with the Housing Department ("HD") to enhance collaboration and communication between IFSCs and HD at the headquarters and district levels as well as to review and streamline work procedures on handling housing assistance cases. Specifically, HD would process cases relating to purely housing management issues, such as requests for addition of family members to the tenancy, household splitting and transfer by existing public housing tenants.

Comprehensive Child Development Service

33. The Panel examined the Administration's plan to extend the coverage of the Comprehensive Child Development Service ("CCDS") to all 18 districts by 2012-2013, with the aim to identify and meet, at an early stage, various health and social needs of children aged below five and their families so as to foster healthy development of children. While supporting the extension of CCDS, members were concerned about the provision of adequate resources and appropriate follow-up services for needy children and their families.

34. Noting that the Administration would make use of Maternal and Child Health Centres ("MCHCs") of the Department of Health ("DH") to identify and provide services to at-risk pregnant women and mothers of new born babies, members expressed concern about the capacity of MCHCs to cope with the increasing service demands arising from the surge of Mainland women giving birth in Hong Kong. Members were of the view that the Administration should accord priority to MCHCs in the New Territories in allocating resources and put in place immediate measures to alleviate the workload of frontline staff and improve the services of MCHCs.

35. Members noted the Administration's advice that formal referral mechanisms had been set up amongst relevant service units for prompt referrals of needy children and their families to appropriate health and/or social services. Additional recurrent resources had been allocated for strengthening manpower of the Hospital Authority ("HA"), DH and SWD for the extension of CCDS. The recruitment and training of relevant health and social work professionals were in progress.

Measures to support at-risk youths

36. Members were briefed on the Administration's latest measures to support at-risk youths, including enhancement of school social work service, outreaching social work service and community support service scheme, setting up of additional youth outreaching teams and additional counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers, as well as launching of pilot cyber youth outreaching projects and pilot project on enhanced probation service.

37. While welcoming the allocation of additional resources for services to assist at-risk youths, members expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness of individual services after injecting additional resources. Members were informed that having regard to the diversity of services to support at-risk youths, the Administration considered it not feasible to set specific outcome targets for individual services, or to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of these services. Members expressed dissatisfaction at the Administration's explanation. At the suggestion of members, the Administration agreed to set out performance indicators of various related services to support at-risk youths.

Work progress of the Family Council

38. Together with the Convenor of Sub-committee on Family Support under the Family Council, the Administration reported to the Panel on the findings of four thematic studies conducted by the Family Council on young drug abuse, youth prostitution, child neglect and elderly neglect. Members noted from the four research studies that although the causes of the four social problems under study were complicated and multi-faceted, they could be traced back to the family.

39. Members generally took the view that the causes of social problems identified by the four research studies were not something new and the Family Council should have put forward concrete proposals to tackle these problems. According to the Family Council, the four studies had adopted a new approach to look into the causes of youth drug abuse and youth prostitution from the family perspective. The research studies also confirmed the need for a

"family-focused" strategy in order to tackle such problems effectively. The Family Council had, in the light of the research findings, recommended three new policy directions, viz. family engagement, prevention, and community-based family support as well as the measures to support the new policy directions. Members were given to understand that the new policy directions had featured in the Policy Agenda of the 2011-2012 Policy Address and the relevant bureaux and departments had implemented the measures in support of these new policy directions. The Family Council would keep in view the implementation of the recommended measures and review the effectiveness of these measures.

Development of social enterprises

40. Following up its work in the previous session, the Panel continued to monitor the Administration's efforts in promoting the development of social enterprises ("SEs"). Members noted that new initiatives for promoting the sustainable growth of SEs were drawn up having regard to the views of Social Enterprise Advisory Committee. These included launching the SE Award Scheme to give recognition to outstanding SEs; launching a campaign to give recognition to organisations or individuals which/who had provided support to SEs; holding the SE Bazaar to enhance public awareness of SEs and promote caring consumption; and launching a series of training programme to nurture more social entrepreneurs. Members also noted that starting from 2011, the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme accepted, on a trial basis, applications from non-profit-making organisations not registered under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) to encourage more SE practitioners to apply for grants under the programme.

41. Members remained concerned that the major challenge faced by SEs was a lack of relevant experience and professional knowledge in running a business. Apart from providing SEs with start-up grants, the Administration should introduce facilitating measures from the policy perspective to help SEs sustain their business. Members requested the Administration to take into account the scale and capability of SEs and identify suitable Government service contracts for priority bidding by SEs as well as take the lead to support SEs through purchasing SE products and services. Members were pleased to note that the number of Government service contracts awarded to SEs had been increasing in the past few years, and the Administration would give priority to use SE projects and services as far as practicable if SEs met the service standards and requirements.

Public consultation on child custody and access

42. Following the release of the Administration's consultation paper on whether the "joint parental responsibility model" should be implemented in Hong Kong by legislative means to replace the existing custody and access arrangements under the family law, the Panel had held two meetings to receive views from deputations and discuss with the Administration the way forward on whether and how the proposed model should be implemented.

43. While the Panel was supportive of the concept of joint parental responsibility, members expressed diverse views on the introduction of the joint parental responsibility model by legislative means. Some members expressed support for the implementation of the proposed model by legislative means so as to uphold the children's rights and to promote the concept of continuing responsibility of the divorced parents toward their children rather than parental rights. Some other members expressed reservations about the implementation of the proposed model by legislative means for the time being, as they considered that the consent and notification requirements might be used by hostile parents to obstruct and harass their former spouses after divorce. In these members' view, requiring divorced parents to discharge continuing responsibility was a complex issue which might lead to legal disputes and cause distress to the children and impede their healthy development. The Administration should first formulate adequate complementary measures to support divorced families before implementing the model by legislative means.

44. Member called on the Administration to provide more support services for divorced families and strengthen family services irrespective of whether or not the model would be implemented by legislative means. Members noted that the Administration would carefully consider the views collected during the consultation period and would revert to the Panel on its way forward.

Funding and staffing proposals

45. The Panel had examined a number of funding proposals before their submission to the Finance Committee.

Additional allocation for short-term food assistance service

46. The Panel had examined the proposed allocation of an additional \$100 million for the continuation and enhancement of the short-term food assistance service. While supporting the funding proposal, members noted with concern that the service demand had increased steadily from around 1 870 users per month before February 2011 to around 2 550 thereafter. Members suggested

that the Administration should conduct an in-depth study to better understand the background of the service users and the reasons for them to use the services with a view to formulating concrete measures to address their needs and problems. According to the Administration, the major service users were the low income group and the unemployed in face of rising food prices. Should service users have other welfare and financial needs, they would be referred to appropriate service units for follow-up service and assistance.

47. Noting that service users would normally receive dry rations for up to a maximum of six weeks, members urged the Administration to provide a wider variety of food including hot meals and fresh food to meet the special needs of children, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses.

Injection of funding into the "Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise" Project

48. Members supported the proposal to inject \$100 million into the "Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise" Project ("3E's Project") as announced by the Chief Executive in the 2011-2012 Policy Address to promote the employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Members, however, noted with concern that only some 550 job opportunities had been created since the launch of the Project in 2002-2003. In members' view, the amount of funding approved was disproportionate to the number of job opportunities created for persons with disabilities. Members raised concern on the effectiveness of the Project in enhancing sustainable employment of persons with disabilities. Members called on the Administration to review the cost effectiveness of the Project.

49. Members also expressed concern that among the 70 funded businesses, 14 had ceased operation. To enhance the sustainability of the funded businesses, members urged the Administration to designate specific sites in government buildings and premises with concessionary rental for the operation of business funded under the Project as well as consider awarding service contracts to business of 3E's Project by restricted tenders. Members also suggested that more diverse job types should be introduced to fully develop the potentials and employability of persons with disabilities.

Workload and challenges faced by Social Security Assistants

50. Members noted that the Social Security Assistant ("SSA") staff union had commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a survey on the working conditions and work pressure of the SSA grade staff in SWD. The survey findings revealed that SSA grade staff was overwhelmed by the

workload and work pressure of the Social Security Field Units ("SSFUs") in SWD as a result of the overstretched manpower situation of the grade to cope with the increasing caseload and service demand. Members shared the concerns of the SSA grade staff and called on the Administration to face squarely the problems, such as seeking appropriate human resources and examining critically the workflow of SSFUs and procedures for handling social security cases.

51. According to the Administration, it fully recognised the staff concerns. SWD had implemented various measures to help relieve the workload of SSAs, such as re-engineering resources by setting up a centralised unit to handle special cases and commissioning NGOs to provide employment assistance services for CSSA recipients. The Administration undertook, on an on-going basis, to explore practical and feasible measures to streamline workflow, and organise training courses and support programmes to meet the needs of SSA grade staff as well as maintain close communication with staff and staff unions so as to provide them with appropriate assistance.

Subcommittee on Retirement Protection

52. In the light of an ageing population, the Panel was gravely concerned about the subject of financial security in old age. The Subcommittee on Retirement Protection was appointed by the Panel in January 2011 to study issues relating to the protection of retirement, and to follow up on the proposal for implementation of a universal retirement protection scheme for all people in Hong Kong. Approval from the House Committee was obtained on 21 January 2011 for the activation of the Subcommittee in late April 2011.

53. The Subcommittee held 12 meetings between May 2011 and May 2012 to discuss with the Administration the various issues relating to retirement protection. It had exchanged views with deputations and studied five retirement protection models put forward by some community organisations and political groups. The Subcommittee had also conducted a research on retirement protection in four overseas places. The Subcommittee concluded its work in May 2012 and made a number of observations and recommendations, as detailed in its report to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2) 1942/11-12), for the Administration's consideration.

Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disability

54. The Panel appointed another subcommittee in January 2011 to monitor the Government's follow-up actions on the 23 recommendations in the Equal

Opportunities Commission ("EOC")'s Formal Investigation Report: Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises ("EOC Report") and the Government's response to and follow-up actions on the Report and to study issues relating to the provision of barrier-free access and facilities for persons with disabilities. The approval of the House Committee was obtained on 8 April 2011 for the Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disability and the Elderly to commence work in June 2011.

55. The Subcommittee held six meetings to discuss with the Administration and EOC the progress of the Government's follow-up actions in response to the EOC Report. It received views from District Councils on accessibility issues in individual districts, and met with representatives of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation, The Link Management Limited and the HA to discuss various issues relating to the accessibility of the premises and facilities under their respective management. The Subcommittee examined in depth the strategic direction to be adopted by the Government in the provision of barrier free environment with a view to developing an overarching policy on building an inclusive society for persons with physical limitations. The Subcommittee concluded its work in May 2012 and drew up a number of recommendations, as detailed in its report to the Panel (LC Paper No. CB(2) 2065/11-12), for the Administration's consideration.

Meetings held

56. During the period between October 2011 and end of June 2012, the Panel held a total of 17 meetings, including two joint meetings with the Panel on Health Services on community support services for demented elders and community mental health services, and one joint meeting with the Panel on Housing on housing needs of street sleepers. The Panel also conducted a visit to the Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home. It has scheduled another meeting in July 2012.

Legislative Council

Panel on Welfare Services

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to welfare (including women welfare) and rehabilitation services, poverty, social enterprise and Family Council.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy areas prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

Panel on Welfare Services

Membership list for 2011 - 2012 session

Chairman	Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Deputy Chairman	Hon WONG Sing-chi
Members	Hon Albert HO Chun-yan Hon LEE Cheuk-yan Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP 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 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 Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

(Total : 18 members)

Clerk	Miss Betty MA
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Legal adviser	Mr YICK Wing-kin
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Date	13 October 2011
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