

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1266/15-16

(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/HS/1/12

Subcommittee on Poverty

**Minutes of the thirty-seventh meeting
held on Tuesday, 16 February 2016, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP
- Member absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

**Public Officers : Item I
attending**

Mr FUNG Man-chung
Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Mr Benjamin MOK, JP
District Officer (Sham Shui Po)
Home Affairs Department

Mr Benedict WONG
Chief Executive Officer (Administration)
Home Affairs Department

**Attendance by : Item I
invitation**

Christian Concern For The Homeless Association

Mr CHIM Chun-chau
Assistant Outreaching Officer

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Dorothy WONG Wai-yin
Officer (Policy Research & Advocacy)

Concern for clearance of Homeless area

Mr CHEONG
Representative

Concern for Homeless Again

Mr MAN
Representative

H.K. Street Sleeper Concern Group

Mr CHAN Chung-yin
Representative

Concern for employment on Homeless

Mr HO
Representative

H.K. Homeless Concern Group

Miss Anne SIT Kim-ping
Representative

Concern for temporary shelter

Mr TANG
Representative

Mcdonalds Homeless Concern Group

Mr LO
Representative

Society for Community Organization

Mr NG Wai-tung
Community Organizer

Integrated Service for Street Sleepers, The Salvation Army

Ms TSOI Ling-ling
In Charge

Mr LEUNG Hoi-fu

TKO Homeless Concern Group

Mr LAI Wai-tong
Member

Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union

Mr WONG Hung-sang
Representative

Light Up

Miss Christine LEUNG Cheuk-yiu
Committee Organizer

Concern for Single Person

Mr LAU
Representative

Clerk in attendance : Mr Colin CHUI
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Miss Kay CHU
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Ms Ada TANG
Clerical Assistant (2) 4

Action

- I. Support for street sleepers**
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)856/15-16(01) to (06) and CB(2)891/15-16(01) to (02)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

Admin

2. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide a written response as to whether the Administration would examine the reasons why some street sleepers had reverted to street sleeping after being arranged for living in emergency shelters/hostels so as to review and improve the effectiveness of the accommodation arrangement for street sleepers.

Action

II. Any other business

3. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:36 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 April 2016

**Proceedings of the thirty-seventh meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty
on Tuesday, 16 February 2016 at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I –Support for street sleepers</i>			
000720 - 001123	Chairman	Opening remarks	
001124 - 001458	Christian Concern For The Homeless Association	Presentation of views	
001459 - 001828	The Hong Kong Council of Social Service	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)891/15-16(01)]	
001829 - 002000	Concern for clearance of Homeless area	Presentation of views	
002001 - 002142	Concern for Homeless Again	Presentation of views	
002143 - 002507	H.K. Street Sleeper Concern Group	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)856/15-16(03)]	
002508 - 002613	Concern for employment on Homeless	Presentation of views	
002614 - 002943	H.K. Homeless Concern Group	Presentation of views	
002944 - 003214	Concern for temporary shelter	Presentation of views	
003215 - 003358	McDonalds Homeless Concern Group	Presentation of views	
003359 - 003730	Society for Community Organization	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)856/15-16(03)]	
003731 - 004033	Integrated Service for Street Sleepers, The Salvation Army	Presentation of views	
004034 - 004425	Mr LEUNG Hoi-fu	Presentation of views	
004426 - 004809	TKO Homeless Concern Group	Presentation of views	
004810 - 004906	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han	In response to a deputation's view on some political parties, Miss CHAN Yuen-han invited deputations/individuals to try to understand the stance of The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions on the street sleeping problem.	
004907 - 005229	Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union	Presentation of views	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
005230 - 005558	Light Up	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)856/15-16(06)]	
005559 - 005906	Concern for Single Person	Presentation of views [LC Paper No. CB(2)856/15-16(03)]	
005907 - 011532	Chairman Admin	<p>The Chairman expressed concern about the cases of inhuman treatment of street sleepers by the Administration. He requested the Administration to respond to the following major views and concerns of the deputations/individuals on the support for street sleepers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration had not yet formulated a policy on street sleepers; (b) services provided by the three Integrated Services Teams for Street Sleepers ("ISTs") and the Society for Community Organization ("SoCO") did not address the needs of street sleepers; (c) under the Funding and Services Agreements ("FSAs") signed between the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and the subvented non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") operating ISTs or emergency shelters/hostels, street sleepers were generally not allowed to live in emergency shelters/hostels for a period longer than six months. SWD should consider allowing flexibility in this regard to cater for the needs of individual street sleepers; (d) the Administration carried out several operations to disperse street sleepers without advance notice; and (e) the arrangement and operation of temporary shelters during cold and hot days was undesirable. <p>The Administration briefed members on the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on Enhancement of District Administration ("the Pilot Scheme") to strengthen support for street sleepers and the arrangement of temporary cold shelters as set out in its paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)856/15-16(01)) and added that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the three ISTs and SoCO would continue adopting a caring approach to provide outreaching and one-stop services for 	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>street sleepers;</p> <p><i>Financial assistance and accommodation arrangement for street sleepers</i></p> <p>(b) under the current established mechanism, the maximum rent allowance ("MRA") under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme was adjusted annually based on the movements of rent index for private housing under the Consumer Price Index (A) for CSSA households to meet the necessary rental expenses. The MRA was adjusted upwards yearly from 2012 to 2015 and, had a cumulative increase of about 30%. With effect from 1 February 2016, the level of MRA would be further increased by 5.8%;</p> <p>(c) the Community Care Fund under the Commission on Poverty had implemented an assistance programme to provide a subsidy for CSSA households living in rented private housing and paying a rent exceeding MRA under the CSSA Scheme;</p> <p>(d) an allocation was included in the annual subvention for each ISTs as emergency fund to cover eligible street sleepers' expenses, e.g. short-term payment of rent and living costs, payment of rental deposit and expenses arising from finding jobs;</p> <p>(e) SWD was aware that some street sleepers with special needs had been arranged for living in emergency shelters/hostels for a period longer than usual. SWD would continue to closely liaise with the subvented NGOs operating ISTs or emergency shelters/hostels, and annually review their compliance with the requirements under FSAs, taking into account their follow-up actions on and the special circumstances of the aforesaid cases;</p> <p>(f) increasing the supply of public rental housing ("PRH") was crucial to addressing the street sleeping problem in the long run;</p> <p><i>Operation of temporary cold shelters</i></p> <p>(g) temporary cold shelters would continue to provide users with hot water and paper</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>cups as well as sufficient blankets, which would be cleaned after use;</p> <p>(h) according to the representative of a deputation, a temporary cold shelter had declined his admission to a cold shelter as it was fully occupied. The Administration advised that there was probably a misunderstanding in the communication as the admission record of that shelter indicated that it was not fully occupied during the period concerned. That said, frontline staff of the shelter had been reminded to exercise care in their communication with shelter users;</p> <p>(i) since December 2015, the temporary cold shelter in Sham Shui Po ("SSP") had opened for 21 days, during which it had remained open during the day for 13 days, because of the persistent intense cold surge and the demand for the service. If necessary, the conference room on the 4th floor which was accessible by lift, would also be used as a temporary cold shelter during the day; and</p> <p><i>Arrangement of cleansing operations</i></p> <p>(j) regarding the case which involved a group of street sleepers lodging claims in the Small Claims Tribunal for compensation for their loss arising from a recent cleansing operation carried out in Yau Tsim Mong district, the Administration noted that it would not be appropriate to discuss it further because the case was sub judice.</p>	
011533 - 012337	Chairman Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Admin	<p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che expressed concern about the disrespectful treatment of street sleepers by the Administration. For instance, a temporary cold shelter accommodated only a few street sleepers during daytime by a small conference room instead of the community hall with a capacity of over 120 persons as the hall was used for organizing other activities, and the weekly cleansing operations had wetted beddings of the street sleepers in cold days. He asked whether the Administration:</p> <p>(a) would consider providing additional resources to cover the recurrent expenses if each IST was provided with a vehicle to deliver services; and</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>(b) had a policy to facilitate the integration of street sleepers in the community instead of eradicating the street sleeping problem.</p> <p>The Administration advised that:</p> <p>(a) NGOs receiving the Lump Sum Grant ("LSG") Subvention had flexibility in deploying their LSG according to their services and operation. Although the NGOs operating ISTs had indicated that there was no urgent operational need to have a vehicle, the Administration would keep in view in this regard; and</p> <p>(b) SWD would continue providing support for street sleepers. In addition, the SSP District Office ("DO") had implemented the Pilot Scheme to strengthen the support for street sleepers in the district.</p>	
012338 - 013003	Chairman Miss CHAN Yuen-han Admin	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that members and NGOs had time and again put forward many views and recommendations on how to strengthen the support for street sleepers for consideration by the Administration. However, the street sleeping problem had not yet been addressed. She asked whether SWD had taken into account the aforesaid views and recommendations to review the existing support measures for street sleepers.</p> <p>The Administration advised that SWD, which was one of the bureaux/departments responsible for providing assistance for street sleepers, would continue taking appropriate support measures to help street sleepers leave the streets. Besides, SWD would continue meeting with the NGOs operating ISTs and SoCO on a regular basis to keep in view the provision of support for street sleepers. In view of the growing demand for temporary accommodation, SWD was planning to deploy internal resources this year to increase the provision of accommodation places, and would further discuss with the NGOs concerned in this regard.</p>	
013004 - 013750	Chairman Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Admin	Expressing grave concern about the poor handling of the street sleeping problem by the Administration and District Council members, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked about what measures would be taken by the Administration to help the 800 or so street sleepers on the Street Sleepers Registry	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>("SSR") address their problems and find temporary accommodation in cold and hot days.</p> <p>The Administration advised that the street sleeping problem was a complicated issue and could be alleviated by an adequate supply of PRH in the long run. In the meantime, social workers would continue reaching out to street sleepers to help them leave the streets. The Administration also clarified that social worker teams were not involved in the Administration's cleansing operations.</p> <p>Mr LEUNG considered the social worker teams ineffective as they did not provide appropriate assistance for the street sleepers who were affected by cleansing operations.</p>	
013751 - 014206	Chairman Mr TAM Yiu-chung	<p>Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") was concerned about and sympathized with street sleepers. He held the view that:</p> <p>(a) District Council members were responsible for relaying residents' views on the street sleeping problem, if any, to the Administration for follow up action;</p> <p>(b) the Administration should handle street sleeping problem by balancing the interests of street sleepers and the residents affected by street sleeping. For instance, cleansing operations should be carried out with advance notice so that the street sleepers could take away their belongings beforehand;</p> <p>(c) increasing the provision of PRH could only alleviate the street sleeping problem as street sleeping was a personal choice of many street sleepers who had different needs and consideration; and</p> <p>(d) DAB's criticism of the violent incident occurred in Mong Kok on 9 February 2016 was not relevant to the discussion of the street sleeping problem.</p>	
014207 - 014805	Chairman Mr CHAN Chi-chuen Admin	<p>Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered that the Administration should:</p> <p>(a) state that it would adopt a friendly attitude to help street sleepers in the absence of a</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>specific policy;</p> <p>(b) give street sleepers advance notice of cleansing operations to avoid conflicts; and</p> <p>(c) examine the reasons why some street sleepers had reverted to street sleeping after being arranged for living in emergency shelters/hostels so as to review and improve the effectiveness of the accommodation arrangement for street sleepers.</p> <p>The Administration advised that ISTs would follow up on each street sleeper case, which was registered with SSR, and de-register the cases when the street sleepers concerned had left the streets. The Administration also undertook to provide a written response regarding (c) above after the meeting.</p>	Admin (paragraph 2 of the minutes)
014806 - 015000	Chairman H.K. Street Sleeper Concern Group	<p>The Chairman invited deputations/individuals to give further views on the support for street sleepers.</p> <p>Presentation of views</p>	
015001 - 015116	Chairman Society for Community Organization	Presentation of views	
015117 - 015220	Chairman H.K. Homeless Concern Group	Presentation of views	
015221 - 015345	Chairman TKO Homeless Concern Group	Presentation of views	
015346 - 015430	Chairman Hong Kong Social Workers' General Union	Presentation of views	
015431 - 015913	Chairman Dr KWOK Ka-ki Admin	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that the some 600 places of temporary accommodation provided by NGOs for street sleepers were not adequate to accommodate the 881 street sleepers on SSR. He asked about:</p> <p>(a) what measures would be taken by the Administration to help the remaining some 200 street sleepers find temporary accommodation in cold weather; and</p> <p>(b) when the Administration would formulate</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>a policy on street sleepers.</p> <p>The Administration advised that in addition to the some 600 overnight or temporary accommodation places provided by the subvented NGOs and other NGOs on a self-financing basis, two singleton hostels under the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") had provided a total of 580 bedspaces to address the emergency and short-term accommodation needs of persons in need, including street sleepers.</p> <p>The Chairman, however, considered that the imminent accommodation need of street sleepers in cold days could not be addressed promptly as street sleepers had to wait for at least six months for the aforesaid temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The Administration advised that the utilization rates of emergency shelters/hostels operated by subvented NGOs and the two singleton hostels under HAD were about 80% and 85% respectively. To help street sleepers cope with very cold weather, temporary cold shelters would open and ISTs would provide warm items.</p>	
015914 - 020612	Chairman Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Miss CHAN Yuen-han Admin	<p>Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung called on the Administration to respect street sleepers and treat them as human beings. In response to the recent cleansing operations which had wetted the beddings of some street sleepers living in the pedestrian subways, he asked the Administration to undertake to notify street sleepers in advance of cleansing operations and provide them with necessary assistance to timely remove their personal belongings.</p> <p>The Administration advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration would continue treating street sleepers with respect; (b) the Highways Department was responsible for arranging regular cleansing operations at pedestrian subways. During the aforesaid operations, fenders were used to avoid wetting the beddings of the street sleepers as far as possible; and (c) the NGOs providing services (including enhanced services provided under the Pilot Scheme) to street sleepers in the district 	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>would help notify street sleepers of the cleansing operations to be conducted in the district.</p> <p>The Chairman said that some staff members of HAD admitted that some cleansing operations were carried out without informing street sleepers in advance. He requested the Administration to pledge to give street sleepers advance notice of cleansing operations in future.</p> <p>The Administration advised that the concern about the cleansing operation in individual districts would be relayed to the respective DO. In response to the Chairman's concern about the arrangement of cleansing operations in SSP, the Administration reiterated its reply at (c) above.</p>	
020613 - 020740	Chairman	<p>The Chairman asked the Administration to note the following requests and concerns raised by members and deputations:</p> <p>(a) request for respectful treatment of street sleepers by the Administration;</p> <p>(b) concern about the shortage problem of temporary accommodation and inadequate amount of MRA under CSSA; and</p> <p>(c) concern about the undesirable arrangement of temporary cold shelters.</p>	