

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)936/14-15
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 8 December 2014, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP

Members absent : Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Public Officers attending : Item III

Mr Donald CHEN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr LAM Ka-tai, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr Kenneth WOO
Chief Executive Officer (Subventions and Planning)
Social Welfare Department

Items IV & V

Ms Joyce TAM, JP
Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr FONG Kai-leung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation &
Medical Social Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr KOK Che-leung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Subventions)
Social Welfare Department

Mr LAI Cheuk-man
Senior Architect
Social Welfare Department

Mr Kenneth WOO
Chief Executive Officer (Subventions and Planning)
Social Welfare Department

Item VI

Miss Annie TAM, JP
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Donald CHEN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Steve TSE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Special Duties)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr LAM Ka-tai, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Dr Ernest CHUI
Principal Investigator
Consultant Team

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

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

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Miss Tess HUI
Clerical Assistant (2) 4

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

Members noted that no paper had been issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)381/14-15(01) to (02)]

2. Members noted that the Administration had proposed to discuss at the next meeting scheduled for 12 January 2015 the following items –

(a) Updated progress of Child Development Fund; and

(b) Progress on the implementation of home care service for persons with severe disabilities.

3. The Deputy Chairman said that some deputations that were concerned about ageing in place had reflected that the consultation exercise for the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("the Programme Plan") was not well conducted and the service needs of elderly persons had not yet been addressed. They wished to give their views on the Programme Plan at a Panel meeting. Pointing out that some deputations had attended the Panel

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meeting on 25 July 2014 to give views on the service scope and planning of home and community care services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, Mr TANG Ka-piu said that it might be more appropriate for the Panel to accord priority to other outstanding items for discussion. He said that according to the Administration, the survey conducted by the Central Policy Unit and the Census and Statistics Department on the service needs of persons with disabilities was expected to be completed in end-2014. Since the last briefing by the Administration on the review of disability allowance ("DA") in 2013, the Panel had not been updated on the progress of the review. He suggested that the Panel should discuss matters in relation to DA as soon as possible. He also suggested that the review of Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA") should be discussed at the next meeting.

4. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the Panel should help promote the development of an age-friendly community and suggested that the Panel should discuss the subject matter. As the development of an age-friendly community required the collaboration among different government departments, the Administration and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service might be invited to join the discussion.

5. Given that the Legislative Council, in particular the Panel, had yet to hear the views of the community on the Programme Plan, the Chairman suggested that a special meeting should be held in either January or February 2015 to receive views on the Programme Plan from interested parties. He further suggested that, subject to the availability of new developments on the reviews of DA and of OALA, the subjects should be discussed at the regular meeting in either January or February 2015. Depending on the number of items to be discussed at the regular meeting in January 2015, the discussion of "Updated progress of Child Development Fund" might need to be deferred. The subject "the development of an age-friendly community" should be discussed in March 2015. Members agreed.

(Post meeting note: A special meeting had been scheduled for 20 January 2015 to meet with deputations and the Administration on the Programme Plan.)

III. Setting up a new contract residential care home for the elderly with a day care unit at Welfare Block of Shek Mun Estate Phase II public rental housing development, Shatin
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)381/14-15(03) to (04)]

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6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DD(SW)(S)") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to construct a 150-place Contract Residential Care Home for the Elderly ("Contract RCHE") with a 30-place Day Care Unit for the Elderly ("DCU") at the welfare block in the public rental housing ("PRH") development of the Housing Authority ("the Project") at the site of Shek Mun Estate Phase II ("the subject site"), with the financial provision to be met from the Lotteries Fund ("LF").

7. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP") regarding personal pecuniary interest to be disclosed. He reminded members to declare interests in the matter under discussion, if any.

Waitlisting situation of long-term care services

8. Noting that the number of elderly persons waiting for subsidized residential care places had substantially increased in five months' time (i.e. from 29 441 persons as at end-April 2014 to 30 931 persons as at end-September 2014), Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed concern that the additional places to be provided under the Project was far from adequate to meet the demand. He pointed out that the Administration had not informed the Panel of the 6 883 elderly persons with inactive status on the Central Waiting List for long-term care services ("CWL") when it briefed the Panel on its proposal to construct a new contract RCHE at its meeting in June 2014. The Administration disclosed the figure only until it was revealed in the Director of Audit's Report No. 63. He wondered whether it was the Administration's intention to understate the seriousness of the waitlisting situation.

9. DD(SW)(S) responded that the Administration had no intention to hide the inactive cases. As some of these elderly persons were assessed by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD")'s Standardised Care Needs Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services ("SCNAMES") as eligible for both residential care services ("RCS") and community care services ("CCS"), the Administration had encouraged these elderly persons to receive CCS as far as possible so that they could age in place. For the elderly persons who had chosen to receive CCS, their applications on CWL would be changed to "inactive cases". They might request at any time to re-activate their applications for long-term care ("LTC") services with their waiting positions resumed according to the original application dates.

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10. Mr TANG Ka-piu was of the view that without knowing the actual waitlisting situation, members would not be able to assist the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") in securing the necessary resources for the provision of RCS.

Lead time and estimated recurrent funding for the Project

11. To enable the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU to come into operation earlier, Mr POON Siu-ping said that the Administration should carry out the tendering exercise of selecting suitable operator for the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU earlier or in tandem with the construction work. Pointing out that members had already raised a similar request at previous meetings, the Chairman called on the Administration to seriously consider carrying out the tendering work in parallel with the construction work. DD(SW)(S) responded that the Administration would try to compress the procedures as far as practicable to expedite the commencement of service of the Contract RCHE with DCU.

12. Noting that the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU was expected to commence operation in 2019, Mr POON Siu-ping said that the costs incurred in its operations might be increased by that time. He asked whether the estimated recurrent funding requirement had factored in the increments. DD(SW)(S) responded that the recurrent funding requirement was estimated according to the cost levels in the 2014-2015 financial year and adjustments to the estimates would be made nearer the time, if necessary.

Provision of RCHEs in PRH estates

13. The Deputy Chairman said that although members had called on the Administration to formulate policies on reserving sites at new PRH projects for the construction of RCHEs, the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU would only be provided at a separate welfare block. She enquired about the difficulties the Administration encountered in formulating the relevant policies. She also expressed concern that the provision of RCHEs at welfare blocks might be delayed as it would take longer time to construct a welfare block than premises solely providing RCS for the elderly. Sharing a similar concern, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether the Administration could undertake to use some domestic units in newly constructed PRH estates for RCHEs.

14. DD(SW)(S) responded that welfare facilities would be provided under all new PRH development projects and the proposed Contract RCHE

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with DCU was located at the welfare block at the subject site. Of the 11 sites earmarked for the construction of new RCHEs, RCHEs with DCUs and day care centres for the elderly ("DEs"), seven were PRH development projects. The Chairman said that the Administration should provide RCHEs not only in new PRH estates but also in some existing PRH estates, e.g. Fu Tung Estate and some PRH estates in the Southern District. He urged SWD to pursue this with the Housing Department ("HD"). At the Chairman's request, the Administration would provide information on which of the seven new contract RCHEs and RCHEs with DCUs commencing service from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 would be located on the ground floor of PRH domestic blocks.

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15. In response to Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's enquiry about the provision of RCHEs under PRH development projects, DD(SW)(S) said that generally speaking, one RCHE with 100 to 150 places would be provided in a PRH development project. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that, to increase the supply of residential care places for the elderly, the Administration should consider converting the ground floor of some PRH domestic blocks into RCHEs. The Deputy Chairman took the view that the provision of RCHEs at PRH estates should be further enhanced through formulating specific policy in this regard. DD(SW)(S) responded that SWD would discuss with HD with a view to securing more floor area in PRH estates for RCHEs.

16. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the Administration should consider making use of the ground-level vacant bays of domestic blocks under new PRH development projects for residential care places for the elderly or persons with intellectual disabilities. DD(SW)(S) responded that in addition to the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU, one entire storey of the welfare block would be allocated to a 30-place supported hostel for mentally handicapped persons and persons with physical disabilities. That aside, a 100-place child care centre would be provided on the ground floor of one of the domestic blocks at the subject site.

17. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that in addition to incorporating RCHEs in welfare blocks, the Administration should consider using some units at the lower floors of PRH domestic blocks for RCHEs. According to the Administration, 67 600 PRH units would be constructed between 2014-2015 and 2017-2018. Only if 2% of these units (i.e. 1 352 units) could be used for subsidized RCS and if each of these units would provide four residential care places, the supply of subsidized residential care places would be substantially increased by 5 408 places. He took the view that the provision of RCS in PRH domestic blocks would better help elderly persons to integrate into the community.

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18. Dr Fernando CHEUNG further said that the concept of small RCHEs had been adopted for a long time in many countries as they provided a homey environment for the residents. The Administration should consider providing small RCHEs in PRH so long as they were cost effective. He called on the Administration to have a broader vision in identifying suitable premises for RCHEs so that residents of RCHEs could live in dignity. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung also took the view that comparing with RCHEs located in welfare blocks and in PRH domestic blocks, the latter would facilitate elderly persons to mingle with local residents.

19. DD(SW)(S) responded that welfare blocks would be located in PRH estates and adjacent to domestic blocks. Depending on the design of the projects, some RCHEs would be located on the ground floor of PRH domestic blocks and some in welfare blocks. As regards converting PRH units into RCHEs, he said that contract or subvented RCHEs should have a minimum of 100 places to achieve operational effectiveness. Given that the total floor area required for a 100-place RCHE was around 17 600 square feet, converting PRH units into an RCHE would substantially reduce the supply of PRH units and therefore impact on the PRH applicants. Nonetheless, the Administration would strive to secure more areas in PRH development projects for RCHEs. At the request of Dr Fernando CHEUNG, the Administration undertook to provide the number of subsidized residential care places to be provided in PRH units in the coming five years.

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20. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that the additional provision of subsidized places in RCHEs could not possibly meet the substantial demand. SWD should actively discuss with the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") policies on the provision of RCHEs in PRH domestic blocks. He expressed disappointment that the Administration had not made good use of the premises on the ground level of PRH domestic blocks and in those public markets, which were managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") but had been vacant or idle for a long time. He requested the Administration to provide a list of the vacant or idle space/premises in PRH estates, Home Ownership Scheme courts and FEHD's public markets.

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Increasing the percentage of bought places in private elderly homes

21. The Chairman was of the view that the Administration should endeavour to increase the supply of residential care places for the elderly

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by purchasing more places from private elderly homes. Notwithstanding that members had repeatedly requested the Administration to increase the percentage of bought places in private elderly homes, the proportion of bought places remained at 50%. Given that many operators of private elderly homes considered the amount of government subvention insufficient to cover their running cost, the Administration should adjust the percentage of bought places in private elderly homes from 50% to 80%. With more subvention, private elderly homes could provide better services thereby increasing their intakes.

Distribution of places of RCS, DEs and DCUs in RCHEs

22. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that in the light of the great demand for RCHEs, the Administration should provide as many residential care places as possible in each project. Noting that the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU would only provide 150 places, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired about the basis of determining its scale.

23. DD(SW)(S) responded that the number of places to be provided in an RCHE would depend on the plot ratio. According to the relevant outline zoning plan, the subject site was for high density residential development and the plot ratios approved for residential and non-residential uses were 6 and 0.5 respectively. As the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU would be located at the welfare block, it would not be regarded as residential use as far as plot ratio was concerned. The Administration had optimized the plot ratio allowed for community facilities under the Project. The proposed Contract RCHE with DCU would occupy five storeys of the seven-storeyed welfare block. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung took the view that the plot ratio of 6 should apply to the proposed Contract RCHE with DCU as it was for residential purposes. He urged SWD to liaise with PlanD in this regard.

24. Mr TAM Yiu-chung asked whether the number of places in an RCHE would be constrained by height restriction. DD(SW)(S) responded that it was a legal requirement that no part of a residential care home might be situated at a height of more than 24m above the ground floor. Given that the number of places in an RCHE was constrained by its height, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration should explore the feasibility of using basement levels for office uses so as to free up the storeys above the ground floor for RCHEs.

25. Noting the variation of the ratio of residential care places to DE/DCU places in an RCHE under different projects,

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Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the principle in determining the ratio. DD(SW)(S) responded that in deciding the number of places for residential care, DE and DCU, the Administration would take into account the floor area allocated for and the waitlisting situation of such services. There were currently 70 DEs/DCUs in the territory, providing a total of 2 761 places and the average waiting time for DEs/DCUs was seven months. There would normally be 20 to 30 DCU places in an RCHE. Apart from providing DCU and DE places in RCHEs, the Administration would construct stand-alone DEs which would provide around 60 places. The Administration would continue to increase the provision of DCU and DE places.

26. In response to the Chairman's invitation of views, members present supported in principle the submission of the relevant funding proposal to the Finance Committee ("FC") for consideration.

IV. Setting up an Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex at the site of ex-Kai Nang Sheltered Workshop and Hostel, Kwun Tong
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)381/14-15(05) to (06)]

27. At the invitation of the Chairman, Commissioner for Rehabilitation ("C for R") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to construct an integrated rehabilitation services complex ("IRSC") at the site of ex-Kai Nang Workshop and Hostel in Kwun Tong with the financial provision to be met from LF.

28. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of RoP regarding personal pecuniary interest to be disclosed. He reminded members to declare interests in the matter under discussion, if any.

29. In response to the Chairman's invitation of views, members present supported in principle the submission of the relevant funding proposal to FC for consideration.

V. Setting up an Integrated Rehabilitation Services Complex at the site of ex-Siu Lam Hospital, Tuen Mun
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)381/14-15(06) to (07)]

30. At the invitation of the Chairman, C for R briefed members on the Administration's proposal to construct an IRSC at the site of ex-Siu Lam Hospital in Tuen Mun ("the project site") with the financial provision to be met from LF.

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31. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of RoP regarding personal pecuniary interest to be disclosed. He reminded members to declare interests in the matter under discussion, if any.

(The Deputy Chairman took the chair at this juncture.)

Increasing the supply of land for welfare uses

32. While expressing support for the Administration's proposal, Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the Administration should explore the use of privately-owned sites and vacant school premises in Tuen Mun for RCS. He said that some organizations had applied to the Administration for changing the use of their vacant schools or sites in Tuen Mun for providing RCS but did not receive active response from the Administration. He called on SWD to impress upon the Planning Department ("PlanD") and the Lands Department ("LandsD") to actively consider these applications so as to increase the supply of RCS places in Tuen Mun.

33. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation & Medical Social Services) ("ADSW(R&MSS)") responded that SWD had been maintaining close contact with various government departments to secure suitable premises and sites for welfare uses and would continue to do so on an ongoing basis. Vacant school premises and other available sites, if found suitable, would be included in new development or redevelopment projects for setting up welfare facilities.

34. To tackle the shortage of supply of land for welfare services, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that the Administration should consider formulating policies on resuming the land which had not been used for the permitted purposes for a certain period of time. It was incumbent upon LWB to project the land resources required for welfare facilities and liaise with the Development Bureau for it to consider adjusting the development plans so as to meet LWB's needs. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Subventions) ("ADSW(S)") responded that SWD maintained constant communications with PlanD and LandsD, in particular, regarding the supply of land for welfare facilities. SWD would endeavor to secure more suitable sites for welfare facilities.

Optimizing the project site

35. Noting that the building height of the proposed IRSC would be four storeys, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the Administration should consider constructing a basement to augment the utilization of the project site. ADSW(S) responded that in conducting feasibility studies for

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development or redevelopment projects, assessments would be made in some cases on whether the geological condition of the sites was suitable for constructing a basement. It was the Administration's standing practice to consider accommodating certain facilities, e.g. facilities on building services as well as storage area for provision of RCS, day care services, etc., at basement level if the geological condition of the site concerned so permitted.

Transport arrangement for users of the proposed IRSC

36. Given that the project site was not conveniently accessible, the Chairman expressed concern about the transport arrangements for users of the proposed IRSC. He was also concerned about whether the IRSC operators would be provided with sufficient subvention for employing drivers for providing transport services for users of and visitors to the proposed IRSC. ADSW(S) responded that 12 drivers and 12 coaches were proposed under the project. A total of 33 parking spaces would be reserved at the project site to meet service needs, for emergency vehicles, for loading and unloading of goods as well as picking up and dropping passengers, etc. Centre bus service would be arranged to provide support for service users, visitors and staff for ensuring minimum traffic impact on the surrounding area upon commencement of the services to be provided in the proposed IRSC. Public transport commuting to the proposed IRSC would also be available. SWD would discuss with the Transport Department with a view to providing more choices of public transport for users of and visitors to the proposed IRSC. The Chairman said that the Administration should assess whether 12 drivers would be adequate to meet the transport service needs. In response, ADSW(R&MSS) said that when inviting quality-based proposals for the services to be provided in the proposed IRSC, the Administration would impress upon the non-governmental organization applicants the importance of transport services and the manpower deployment for the delivery of such services.

37. In response to the Deputy Chairman's invitation of views, members present supported in principle the submission of the relevant funding proposal to FC.

VI. Elderly Services Programme Plan

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)381/14-15(08) to (09) and CB(2)402/14-15(01)]

38. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("PS(LW)") briefed members on the progress of the

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preparation of the Programme Plan by the Elderly Commission ("EC"). With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Dr Ernest CHUI, Principal Investigator of the Consultant Team, took members through the process and methodology for formulating the Programme Plan.

Timeframe for formulating the Programme Plan

39. Noting that EC aimed to submit the Programme Plan to the Government for consideration in around July 2016, Mr Frederick FUNG expressed concern that the Programme Plan might not be implemented within two years (i.e. in 2016). He also asked about what would be covered in the Programme Plan.

40. PS(LW) responded that as announced in his 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive ("CE") had tasked EC to prepare the Programme Plan within two years. It was expected that, among other issues, EC would include in the Programme Plan its views on the supply of and demand for welfare premises for elderly services, related manpower needs, the viability and desirability of different modes of service delivery as well as elderly services planning.

41. Mr Frederick FUNG said that according to his interpretation of paragraph 63 of the CE's 2014 Policy Address, the planning for elderly services would be completed in 2016 as opposed to EC making recommendations by 2016. He reiterated his concern about the timing for implementing the Programme Plan. PS(LW) responded that CE had tasked EC in 2014 to prepare the Programme Plan within two years. The Administration would carry out the preparatory work if and when deemed appropriate and practicable to facilitate an early implementation of the Programme Plan.

42. Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that there was room for shortening the lead time for formulating the Programme Plan. Taking the view that most of the information required for drawing up the Programme Plan was readily available, he called on the Administration to consider expediting its work and focus on resolving issues, such as the deployment of manpower and financial resources, for taking forward a comprehensive plan for elderly services. Sharing a similar view, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern that it could be difficult to implement the Programme Plan within the current term Government. He called on the Administration to speed up the formulation of the Programme Plan.

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43. PS(LW) responded that in formulating the Programme Plan, EC would look into the medium and long-term development of elderly services up to 2030. Public engagement exercises and analysis relating to elderly services were necessary to facilitate EC's work in this regard. Meanwhile, the Administration would continue to take measures to improve elderly services. The launch of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses which would increase the supply of welfare facilities particularly for the elderly persons and persons with disabilities was a case in point.

44. Dr Ernest CHUI said that as many new initiatives on elderly services were still in their pilot stage or under review (e.g. the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly ("CCS Voucher Pilot Scheme") and SWD's review on SCNAMES), more time would be required to conduct the study so that the progress, findings and experience of these initiatives could be taken into account in preparing the Programme Plan.

45. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the lengthy process would give an impression that the formulation of the Programme Plan was empty talk. To avoid such an impression, the Administration should implement short-term measures before the launch of the Programme Plan to tackle the problems in the provision of elderly services. For example, to address the manpower shortage problem in the care sector, the Administration should consider releasing women labour force by engaging two part-timers in one job.

Coverage of the Programme Plan

46. The Chairman said that as more and more people had higher education level and were professionals, the study should take into account that the retirement life of elderly persons in the future would be very different. Noting that only welfare services were mentioned in the discussion paper submitted by the Administration on the Programme Plan, he enquired whether the Consultant Team would be able to propose including other important issues (such as medical services for the elderly) in the scope.

47. Dr Ernest CHUI said that although policies under the purview of LWB would form the core of the study, the stakeholders would not be precluded from raising issues relating to medical, housing and transport aspects in the consultation sessions. For this reason, participants of the five public engagement sessions of the Scoping Stage were encouraged to also give views freely on these issues. These views would be reflected in the report of the Scoping Stage.

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48. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about whether the Programme Plan would be formulated from the Government's angle or only from the LWB's angle, PS(LW) responded that the Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan ("WGESPP") was set up under EC for the formulation of the Programme Plan. The membership of WGESPP comprised senior officials from LWB and SWD, the Food and Health Bureau, THB/HD, the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority. The official representatives serving on WGESPP would provide input under their purview and assist WGESPP throughout the process of formulating the Programme Plan.

49. The Chairman took the view that the effort for soliciting views from the medical sector should be stepped up. This could be achieved either by expanding the membership of WGESPP to include more representatives with medical background or by inviting the medical sector to participate in the public engagement sessions. PS(LW) responded that some official members and non-official members of WGESPP were in the medical profession. Views on medical-related matters would be duly reflected.

50. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that lack of land and manpower resources was the crux of the supply shortage of RCHEs. Although members had all along been suggesting that the Administration should consider using one storey in each PRH domestic block as RCHE, the Administration had not taken any concrete actions so far. He cast doubt on whether the Consultant Team could ensure that relevant government bureaux/departments would take forward its recommendations.

51. PS(LW) responded that LWB and other relevant government bureaux/departments sitting on EC and its WGESPP would keep in view the discussion of EC and WGESPP on the Programme Plan and provide input under their purview. Where necessary, other relevant government departments such as PlanD, LandsD and HD would also be invited to provide assistance to the formulation of the Programme Plan.

Way forward for provision of elderly services

52. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that currently, eligible elderly persons were provided with LTC services at low fees regardless of their financial situation. Noting that EC would take into account the fiscal sustainability of elderly services in formulating the Programme Plan, he asked whether a contribution system for LTC services was being considered.

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53. Dr Ernest CHUI responded that some members of the Consultant Team including himself were involved in the consultancy studies on RCS and CCS commissioned by EC in 2009 and 2010 respectively. In preparing the reports of these consultancy studies, reference was made to overseas practices, such as different types of insurance-based systems, contribution systems, and means testing arrangements for elderly services. The Consultant Team did not have any pre-conceived assumptions on whether a particular system should be adopted. Instead, it would provide its analyses and recommendations on the pros and cons of different options for EC's consideration. As the public's receptiveness of the Programme Plan was important, the Consultant Team's analyses and recommendations would also be made available to the public to forge consensus.

54. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed concern that the figures contained in the Consultant Team's report might be subject to the Financial Secretary's scrutiny, as in the case of the Research Report on Future Development of Retirement Protection in Hong Kong. PS(LW) clarified that the situation mentioned by Mr TANG had never happened. She said that LWB was open-minded on the financing model of elderly services and would facilitate the Consultant Team and EC to understand the possible implications of different options. In addition to studying the advantages and disadvantages of different options, the Consultant Team and EC would also prepare financial projections to assist in the analysis.

55. Given that government departments were required to cut their expenditure in each of the two financial years starting from 2016-2017 by 1%, Mr TANG Ka-piu enquired about whether the Consultant Team would adopt a conservative approach in making financial projections. Dr Ernest CHUI responded that the Consultant Team would study the financial sustainability of different options from an academic point of view. Mathematical models would be used to project the demand of and supply for elderly services with different assumptions on population, economic situation, etc.

56. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that according to the Director of Audit's Report No. 63, the effectiveness of the CCS Voucher Pilot Scheme was questionable. Pointing out that 27% of the participants had withdrawn from the CCS Voucher Pilot Scheme, he took the view that adopting the "money-following-the-user" approach might not be the best option. Given that EC had considered an RCS voucher scheme not feasible when it conducted the consultancy study on RCS in 2009, he sought the reasons for revisiting an RCS voucher scheme in the context of the Programme Plan.

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57. Dr Ernest CHUI responded that based on the number of elderly persons, their impairment levels and the number of RCS users projected according to a questionnaire survey conducted in 2009, the RCS Consultancy Study concluded that subsidized RCS might result in induced demand for RCS from those who had no pressing need for institutional care. Based on this finding, the consultant team had, at that time, recommended that the Administration consider first enhancing CCS so as to reduce the possibility of induced demand for RCS. The Consultant Team did not have any stance on whether an RCS voucher scheme should be introduced and there was not an issue of overturning the conclusion of the previous study.

58. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was wary that means test would be introduced for elderly services. He was of the view that core social services including elderly services should not be provided from a poverty alleviation perspective. Such services should be offered to those in need of the services without taking account of their financial situation. Privatization of social services would result in a downward mobility in the society and was the main cause of the public's discontent with the Government.

59. The Deputy Chairman said that financial resources, medical services and housing were the important elements that affected the provision of elderly services. The Administration should plan ahead and relevant government bureaux should collaborate in formulating policies to facilitate the provision of elderly services. Many community groups had provided views on elderly services in past years and the Panel had been following up matters relating to services for the elderly and persons with disabilities in the last two Legislative Council sessions. However, the problem of inadequate provision of these services remained unresolved. The Administration should critically consider formulating a policy on the provision of RCS for elderly persons and persons with disabilities in PRH. It should also implement measures to release women labour force to replenish the manpower supply for the welfare sector. She called on relevant government bureaux including the Development Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau, THB and LWB to work together to resolve the problems encountered in the provision of elderly services.

60. Mr Frederick FUNG said that in some places in Europe and the United States, elderly services were planned, managed and delivered by elderly persons. He suggested that the Consultant Team should draw on these experiences and recommend similar models to EC.

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Dr Ernest CHUI responded that one of the members of the Consultant Team was an overseas scholar. In addition to Western countries, the Consultant Team would look into elderly services in Asia to take account of the Chinese cultural factors in its feasibility study of policy implementation. He had conducted a separate study on the silver hair market which covered the provision of services not only for elderly persons in poverty but also for those with different financial capabilities. Elderly persons who did not have imminent service needs and with different education levels and different financial conditions were also covered in the study. The results of the study would be a useful reference for formulating the Programme Plan. In its study, the Consultant Team would also take into account the view that elderly persons could be service providers in addition to service recipients.

Public engagement

61. Mr Frederick FUNG said that some deputations had reflected that they did not have sufficient time to express their views at the Scoping Stage. They hoped that more time would be allowed for them to give views at the Formulation Stage and Consensus Building Stage. There were also suggestions that home care services provided by the Administration should be strengthened. According to some deputations, some elderly persons had waited for 10 years before they were provided with home-making services. In some cases, the provision of meal support services was cut down from five days a week to three days a week and the number of Integrated Home Care Services teams had not been increased in the past 10 years.

62. Dr Ernest CHUI responded and assured Members that there would be ample opportunities for stakeholders to give their views on the Programme Plan, as they would be invited to participate in the public engagement exercises of the Formulation Stage and Consensus Building Stage. The Consultant Team would also consider the improvements that could be made to the coming public engagement exercises.

63. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about whether frontline workers and training institutions related to the elderly services sector had been invited to take part in the engagement sessions of the Scoping Stage. He also sought information on whether the Programme Plan would adopt the recommendations made in the report of the former Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy ("the Joint Subcommittee") formed under the Panel and the Panel on Health Services.

Action

64. Dr Ernest CHUI responded that representatives of frontline workers, unions representing frontline workers and training institutions as well as professional associations related to elderly services had been invited to participate in the engagement sessions. Other stakeholders would be invited to join the public engagement exercises of the Formulation Stage and of the Consensus Building Stage. Members were also welcomed to give their views.

65. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that the Joint Subcommittee had suggested that the Programme Plan should be prepared in tandem with the Rehabilitation Programme Plan but the Administration had not accepted this recommendation or some other recommendations made by the Joint Subcommittee. He expressed his disappointment in this regard.

66. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether interim reports would be prepared upon completion of the public engagement exercise of each of the three Stages, so that the public would have an opportunity to give views at each Stage. Dr Ernest CHUI responded that the Consultant Team would submit its report for each of the three Stages to WGESPP. WGESPP would decide whether and how the information contained in the reports could be made public. Dr CHEUNG hoped that WGESPP would make its work as transparent as possible and make public its reports so as to facilitate public participation, particularly participation by elderly persons.

VII. Any other business

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:56 pm.