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Panel on Welfare Services

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 14 March 2016**

Elderly Services Programme Plan

Purpose

This paper gives an account of past discussions at meetings of the Council and relevant committees on the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("the Programme Plan").

Background

2. According to the Administration, Hong Kong is facing an ageing population. In 2015, the provisional number of elderly persons aged 65 and above stood at about 1.12 million, representing 15.4% of Hong Kong's population. According to the latest population projection by the Census and Statistics Department, the elderly population will keep growing until peaking at 2.61 million (36% of Hong Kong's population) in 2058 and then declining to 2.58 million (36%) in 2064. Concurrently, the life expectancy of Hong Kong's population continues to increase. The expectation of life at birth for males is projected to increase to 84.3 years in 2034 and further to 87 years in 2064. Likewise, the expectation of life at birth for females is projected to increase to 89.9 years in 2034 and further to 92.5 years in 2064.

3. With the combined effect of an ageing population and increasing longevity, there will be a pressing need for the Administration to enhance its medium to long-term planning for elderly services. In this connection, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced in his 2014 Policy Address that the Elderly Commission ("EC") would be commissioned to draw up the Programme Plan within two years. To take forward the task, EC has set up a dedicated working group. Besides, it would engage consultants to assist in collating and

analyzing information related to the provision of long-term care ("LTC") services for the elderly persons, as well as engaging relevant stakeholders and other interested groups in the process.

4. The Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") has appointed the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes ("the Subcommittee") to study relevant policies and measures relating to the future development of elderly services, follow up the work of the Programme Plan, discuss relevant policies with the Administration and make timely recommendations. Monthly meetings have been scheduled to be held from February to June 2016 for the Subcommittee to complete the aforesaid tasks.

Deliberations by Members

Coverage of the Programme Plan

5. Members had time and again urged the Administration to make early planning on the provision of elderly services. While agreeing that the formulation of the Programme Plan was necessary, Members considered that the Administration should assess the demand for residential care services ("RCS") and community care services ("CCS") for elderly persons and make corresponding planning on welfare premises, manpower and financial resources requirements.

6. The Administration advised that it had all along accorded high priority to address LTC needs of elderly persons. In mapping out the Programme Plan, EC would look into the medium and long-term development of elderly services up to 2030 by taking into account the supply of and demand for welfare premises for elderly services, related manpower needs, as well as the viability and desirability of different modes of service delivery. In considering the long-term development of elderly services, the consultant team engaged by EC would examine the impact of the growing elderly population on the existing services and explore measures for a sustainable development. EC would also look into the demand and supply of LTC services, taking into account the welfare facilities to be provided under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("the Special Scheme"), under which social welfare organizations were encouraged to provide the necessary welfare facilities through in-situ expansion or redevelopment.

7. The Administration further advised that a number of schemes would be considered together with the relevant information and data (including the demand for and supply of elderly services) in the wider context

of the Programme Plan. For example, the Special Scheme, the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly, the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families under the Community Care Fund and the feasibility study of introducing the Voucher Scheme on RCS for the Elderly¹. In the course of formulating the Programme Plan, public consultation would be conducted.

8. Members took the view that the Programme Plan should not confine to studying RCS policies for the elderly but should also cover policies on housing, financial security, health and medical, psychological, employment and recreational needs of elderly persons. Some Members considered that instead of formulating the Programme Plan, the Administration should prepare a high-level blueprint of elderly care policy with input from relevant government bureaux/departments. The Administration advised that the Programme Plan would be prepared in accordance with the guiding principle of "Ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". It had been committed to formulating elderly care policies holistically, having regard to considerations on different areas, including medical, housing, as well as population strategies, where appropriate.

9. Members considered that the existing provision of LTC services was fragmented with unnecessary categorization under "elderly" and "persons with disabilities", which was against the international trend of no distinct age limit. The Administration was urged to conduct a comprehensive review of its LTC policy with a view to offering services according to the needs of recipients, instead of their age. Members also considered that the Programme Plan should be prepared in tandem with the Rehabilitation Programme Plan, so that the Administration could map out holistically the direction of LTC policy according to the needs of recipients.

Motion passed by the Council

10. At its meeting on 11 June 2014, the Council passed a motion urging the Administration to -

- (a) immediately formulate a comprehensive elderly care policy, make detailed planning for elderly care services in the future and promote collaboration between the medical and welfare sectors; and

¹ CE announced in his 2014 Policy Address that EC had also been tasked to study the feasibility of introducing the Voucher Scheme on RCS for the Elderly and submit a report within a year's time in addition to the preparation of the Programme Plan.

- (b) take the needs and LTC of the elderly persons as the basis, rather than adopting age as the sole criterion, to immediately formulate a comprehensive elderly care policy.

11. The Administration advised that it would continue to commit resources to elderly services, implement a host of new measures to provide more suitable services to elderly persons and enhance the planning of elderly services. When formulating the Programme Plan, EC would take into account the schemes mentioned in paragraph 7 above in the wider context of the Programme Plan. In addition, it would make reference to the issues highlighted in its past studies on LTC services for the elderly persons², and the views expressed by different stakeholders and concern groups on elderly care services.

12. The Panel was briefed on the progress of the preparation of the Programme Plan by EC's Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan ("WGESPP") which had engaged a consultant team to provide assistance. Noting that policies under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau would form the core of the consultant team's study, the Panel passed a motion at its meeting on 20 January 2015 urging EC to extend the scope of the Programme Plan and press the consultant team to extend its scope of study to cover social welfare services, medical services, housing and needs after retirement. The Administration advised that the Programme Plan would be prepared in accordance with the guiding principle of "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up." It had been committed to formulating elderly care policies holistically, having regard to considerations on different areas, including medical, housing, as well as population strategies, where appropriate.

13. Some Members took the view that the principle of "ageing in place as the core" was only a slogan given that the Administration did not have a sustainable policy on or allocate sufficient resources for the provision of CCS. Some other Members expressed grave concerns about the inadequacy of RCS and the Administration's inaction to address the problem. These Members considered that WGESPP should realistically forecast the demand for elderly services in the next five to 10 years, and make recommendations on how to enhance elderly services to cater for the growing demand in this regard for consideration by the Administration in formulating the Programme Plan.

14. The Administration advised that the Programme Plan would not only

² EC released the report on the Consultancy Study on RCS for the Elderly in 2009 and the report on the Consultancy Study on CCS for the Elderly in 2011.

take stock of the existing and planned elderly services, but also cover the longer-term projection on the demand for and supply of subsidized elderly services. Meanwhile, the Administration would continue to take measures to enhance elderly services.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 March 2016

Appendix

Relevant papers on Elderly Services Programme Plan

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	23 January 2014 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	10 March 2014 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee	30 April 2014 (Item 3)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	11 June 2014	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 6-76 Progress Report
Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy	24 July 2014	Report (issued on 30 July 2014)
Panel on Welfare Services	25 July 2014 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Welfare Services	8 December 2014 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Welfare Services	20 January 2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes