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**Subcommittee on Issues Relating to
the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for
the meeting on 11 June 2016**

Sustainable development and planning for elderly services

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major concerns raised at meetings of the Council and relevant committees on issues relating to the sustainable development and planning of elderly services, including planning and review, land and space, medical-social collaboration, public-private partnership, human resources, elderly housing and retirement protection.

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 1.15 million, representing 15.7% 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. In the face of the ageing population and increasing longevity, the Administration adopts a proactive approach in delivering elderly services with an objective to enable senior citizens to live in dignity and to provide necessary support for them to promote their sense of belonging, sense of

security and sense of worthiness. In addition to promoting active ageing, the Administration provides quality and cost-effective long-term care ("LTC") services to those who are in need, in line with the policy objective of promoting "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". Moreover, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced in his 2014 Policy Address that the Elderly Commission ("EC") would be commissioned to draw up the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("Programme Plan") within two years with an aim to enhance the medium to long-term planning for elderly services.

Deliberations by Members

Elderly Services Programme Plan

4. 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
- (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.

5. The Administration advised that in 2014, CE had tasked EC to formulate the Programme Plan within two years to enhance the planning of elderly services. In formulating the Programme Plan, EC would make reference to the issues highlighted in its past studies on LTC services for the elderly¹, and the views expressed by various stakeholders and concern groups on elderly care services. In addition, 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 on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("the Special Scheme"), the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, the feasibility study of introducing a residential care service voucher scheme for the elderly, and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families under the Community Care Fund ("CCF").

¹ The Elderly Commission released the report on the Consultancy Study on Residential Care Services for the Elderly in 2009 and the report on the Consultancy Study on Community Care Services for the Elderly in 2011.

6. The Panel on Welfare Services ("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 ("LWB") 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.

7. 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 community care services ("CCS"). Some other Members expressed grave concerns about the inadequacy of residential care services ("RCS") and the lack of the Administration's action 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. The Administration advised that the Programme Plan would not only 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.

Use of limited land resources for increasing provision of subsidized residential care places for the elderly

8. According to the Administration, LWB and the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") were actively following up on some 60 projects under the Special Scheme to assist social welfare organizations to pursue expansion, redevelopment or new development on their land to provide particularly more elderly and rehabilitation facilities. Among the projects, five were expected to be completed by 2017-2018 and would provide, inter alia, about 100 places for subsidized elderly services. The Panel would be briefed on the progress of implementation of the Special Scheme at its meeting on 13 June 2016. In addition to the Special Scheme, the Administration would make better use of space in subvented homes and construct new contract homes for provision of more subsidized places.

9. Noting that provision of residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") was constrained by land supply, some Members suggested that the Administration should formulate policies on providing RCHEs in both new and existing public rental housing ("PRH") estates. The use of ground-level vacant bays of domestic blocks under new PRH development projects for RCHEs should also be considered. The Administration should consider detaching Day Care Units for the Elderly ("DCUs") from RCHEs so that it could have more flexibility in finding suitable premises for DCUs.

10. The Administration advised that welfare facilities would be provided under all new PRH development projects. SWD would discuss with the Housing Department to secure more floor area in PRH estates for RCHEs. In addition to providing RCHEs with DCUs, the Administration would find suitable premises in PRH estates for stand-alone Day Care Centres for the Elderly ("DEs"). In formulating the Programme Plan, EC would look into the medium and long-term development of elderly services up to 2030. 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. It would also look into the demand for and supply of LTC services, taking into account the welfare facilities to be provided under the Special Scheme. The Programme Plan was expected to be ready in 2016. In the interim, the Administration would continue to bid for resources to enhance the provision of LTC services.

Public-private partnership and medical-social collaboration

11. While noting that SWD, the Department of Health and Hospital Authority ("HA") had been providing support services to demented elderly persons, some Members considered that the provision of such services was inadequate to meet the demand in the light of the ageing population. More resources should be allocated to strengthen the services at DEs/DCUs and to provide relevant training programmes for staff of elderly service units and family carers. The Administration should, instead of adopting a piecemeal and fragmented approach, formulate a long-term policy and planning for the provision of support services for demented elderly persons. The Administration was also urged to identify the target group of service users by making an accurate projection on the number of demented elderly persons, and then formulate specific policy and set targets for service provision in the next five years. Moreover, the Administration should spearhead the collaboration between the medical and welfare sectors in providing support services for demented elderly persons.

12. The Administration advised that in respect of the long-term planning, following the recommendations of EC in its consultancy study on CCS released in 2011, the Administration would strengthen CCS such that it

would have a more balanced development compared with that of RCS. The Administration was committed to providing holistic medical and care services to patients with dementia and their carers through the concerted efforts of and close collaboration between the medical and welfare sectors. At present, the community geriatric assessment teams and psychogeriatric outreach teams under HA provided outreach services for RCHEs to support elders with dementia and their carers. In addition, medical social services were available in public hospitals and some specialist out-patient clinics to provide psychological intervention for patients including persons with dementia. DH also collaborated with SWD and non-governmental organizations to organize dementia seminars, workshops and health talks to give practical tips on dementia care.

13. The Administration further advised that it had invited CCF to consider collaborating with HA and SWD to implement a two-year pilot scheme, based on a medical-social collaboration model, to provide dementia care services to the elderly persons with mild or mild to moderate dementia in the community through the District Elderly Community Centres with a view to shortening the waiting time of patients for diagnosis and specialist services of HA and enhancing the dementia care services in the community.

14. Some Members questioned whether the Administration would consider launching a public-private partnership programme to provide medical consultation services for dementia patients. The Administration advised that before deciding whether to introduce a public-private partnership programme for a clinical service, HA would take into account a series of factors, including service demand, service capacity of the market and service quality, and patients' clinical conditions and acceptance. Relevant stakeholders including the specialties and patients concerned would also be widely consulted. For dementia, HA would keep the situation in view before considering whether public-private partnership was applicable to this type of clinical service.

Manpower supply for elderly care sector

15. Given the growing demand for RCS, some Members called on the Administration to address the manpower shortage problems in the elderly care sector by reviewing the quota for imported labour for private RCHEs and nurturing care workers locally. The Administration advised that as at June 2015, there were a total of 3 224 imported labour and 1 652 of them (i.e. 51.3%) were working as frontline care workers in private RCHEs. The number of elderly persons admitted to RCHEs represented 7% of the total elderly population. Such a high percentage was attributed to the inadequacy of community and home care services, resulting in pre-mature institutionalization of many elderly persons. The Administration would

review elderly services comprehensively which included strengthening community and home care services.

16. As regards the supply of local care workers, the Administration advised that the "first-hire-then-train" pilot project had been introduced in 2013 to attract young people to join the elderly care services. Under the aforesaid project, young people were recruited to provide care services at RCHEs and were provided with training on care services. In view of the positive response to the project, the Administration launched the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services in July 2015 which would provide a total of 1 000 training places in the coming few years to offer employment and training opportunities to young persons interested in providing care services in the welfare sector. Moreover, the Education Bureau had undertaken to develop a qualifications framework for the elderly care sector, with a view to attracting more new entrants to the field.

17. The Administration further advised that to alleviate the problem of nurse shortage in the welfare sector, SWD had collaborated with HA to run a two-year full-time programme to train Enrolled Nurses (General)/Enrolled Nurses (Psychiatric) for the welfare sector since 2006. Altogether 14 training classes had been organized so far, providing a total of about 1 800 training places. Another 920 training places would be provided in the coming years. The training programme was fully subsidized by the Administration. Each trainee was required to sign an undertaking to work in the welfare sector for two consecutive years after graduation from the programme. Among the graduates of the first nine classes, over 90% had joined the welfare sector after graduation. According to the Administration, the Programme Plan being prepared by EC was expected to cover long-term manpower planning for the care sector.

Housing needs of the elderly

18. Some Members took the view that the housing needs of the elderly had become one of the major issues of public concern, and had expanded the domain of housing development in the future. Noting that the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society had provided housing flats tailor-made for elderly persons, these Members asked whether the Administration adopted any measure in the past five years to encourage private developers to provide flats that catered for the needs of the elderly when carrying out their residential development projects. These Members also called on the Administration to conduct a review of the housing policy for the elderly in the near future.

19. The Administration advised that all newly constructed private buildings and any alterations, modifications or additions to the existing

private buildings were required to comply with the latest barrier-free design standards as stated in the prevailing Building (Planning) Regulations (Cap 123F) under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) and the Design Manual: Barrier-free Access issued by the Buildings Department. Chapter 6 of the Design Manual listed out the design guidelines and considerations for the elderly and the elderly with frailty. The implementation of the requirements of the Design Manual had resulted in greater awareness among property developers on the topic of barrier-free access and the importance of making the built-environment more accessible for the elderly. In respect of urban planning, the Planning Department was carrying out the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" ("Hong Kong 2030+") to update the long-term territorial development strategy. The study would examine various social and economic trends which had far-reaching implications on the long-term development of Hong Kong. It would also assist in formulating suitable strategies on urban and spatial planning and development to cater for Hong Kong's future needs, including how urban planning and building design, etc. could meet the challenges arising from the ageing population. The initial study findings and relevant recommendations of Hong Kong 2030+ would be available later in 2016 and a public engagement exercise would be conducted.

Retirement protection

20. Members noted that the Commission on Poverty ("CoP") had put forth two simulated options, one under the "regardless of rich or poor" principle and the other under the "those with financial needs" principle, in its consultation document on retirement protection.² Some Members urged the Administration to adopt the "regardless of rich and poor" principle to implement a non-means-tested retirement protection scheme with tripartite contributions from the Administration, employers and employees, so as to ensure that elderly persons could lead a dignified and financially-secured life in their twilight years. These Members considered that retirement protection was a basic right of individual elderly people in recognition of their past contribution and should not be considered from the perspective of poverty alleviation. Some other Members, however, were opposed to the "regardless of rich or poor" principle having regard to the imposition of a very heavy burden on the public finances and the younger generation over time. Considering a non-means-tested universal retirement protection scheme to be unsustainable, these Members preferred the adoption of the "those with financial needs" principle to provide a means-tested non-universal retirement protection scheme which could direct public resources to help the elderly most in need.

² The Administration's Commission on Poverty published on 22 December 2015 a consultation document on retirement protection and launched on the same day a six-month public engagement exercise on the subject.

21. The Administration advised that it was open-minded on the way forward for retirement protection in Hong Kong. This was the first time since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region that the Administration engaged the public to discuss retirement protection, which demonstrated the current-term Government's commitment and sincerity. As a responsible government, the Administration had to clearly explain its position to Hong Kong people. In a nutshell, the Administration had reservations over any options that were not means-tested and applied equally to all the elderly regardless of being rich or poor. Nonetheless, the Administration agreed that the existing retirement protection system had room for improvement and did not wish to see the retirement protection efforts coming to a standstill.

22. According to the Administration, CoP would make good use of the public engagement exercise to listen to a wide spectrum of public views on how to improve the retirement protection system in Hong Kong. The Administration would also organize public forums and focus groups to gauge public views. CoP appealed to the community to actively participate in the public engagement activities to express their views. LWB had commissioned an independent consultant to collate, consolidate and analyse all the views received during the public engagement exercise. It was expected that the direction for way forward for retirement protection in Hong Kong would be identified by the fourth quarter of 2016, which, including the timetable and the roadmap, would be set out in the CE's 2017 Policy Address.

Relevant papers

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

Appendix

Relevant papers on sustainable development and planning for elderly services

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Legislative Council	25 February 2015	Written question (No. 17) "Dementia"
Subcommittee on Retirement Protection	30 December 2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes	15 January 2016 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Welfare Services	25 January 2016 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Poverty	26 January 2016 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes	22 March 2016 (Item I)	Agenda
Legislative Council	13 April 2016	Written question (No. 13) "Housing for elderly"
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes	25 April 2016 (Item I)	Agenda