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29 May 2017

Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Mr Anthony CHU)

Dear Mr CHU,

Public Accounts Committee

Consideration of Chapter 6 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 68

Management of projects financed by the Lotteries Fund

I refer to the following questions raised in your letter of 18 May 2017 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (Special Scheme) –

“According to paragraphs 2.19 and 2.24, as of November 2016, of the 63 preliminary proposals targeting to provide 17 000 additional service places, only 1 project providing 100 service places had been completed, 11 projects that would provide 3 609 service places were at different implementation stages, and the remaining 51 projects were still at the planning stage. Given that the completion of these projects will substantially improve the provision of welfare services to persons in need of the services, will the Administration strengthen actions to implement these projects as early as possible? What improvement measures will be taken in this regard?”

I am authorised to reply as below –

The Government sought the approval of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee in 2014 for the transfer of \$10 billion from the General Revenue Account to the Lotteries Fund (LF) for the implementation of the Special Scheme, and reported its progress to the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services on three occasions in 2015 and 2016. At these meetings, the Government stated clearly that the technical feasibility of the preliminary proposals submitted by the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were subject to confirmation, and that the details would be adjusted in light of the discussion between the NGOs and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), as well as the comments made by other departments on the development parameters of the sites. The progress of the proposed projects would hinge on various factors, including the site location and surrounding environment, availability of communal facilities and transport facilities, restrictions stipulated in the land lease conditions and outline zoning plan on uses and development intensity, feedback received from local consultations, distribution of the existing services as well as demand and supply of the proposed services, and therefore the implementation schedules vary under different projects.

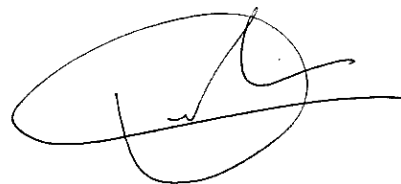
The Government has been closely monitoring the implementation of the Special Scheme and assisting the applicant NGOs in delivering their projects as soon as possible. Since the launch of the Special Scheme, SWD has held rounds of meetings with the applicant NGOs to refine their proposals and address issues of mutual concern. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and SWD have altogether conducted six information exchange sessions with the applicant NGOs. Various arrangements under the Special Scheme have been further clarified and refined in response to the views raised at these sessions, such as assisting the NGOs, through the LF, in preparing funding applications for the conduct of technical feasibility studies (TFSs) and monitoring the project delivery during the project implementation stage; subsidising the construction and fitting-out costs of some ancillary facilities; subsidising the costs of furniture and equipment items in respect of the self-financing facilities on the list of facilities specified by the Government; considering relaxation of the height restriction for individual facilities on a project-by-project basis; and exercising discretion in handling the redevelopment projects that involve demolition of buildings less than 25 years old. These arrangements can help the applicant NGOs in handling the required procedures for the expansion, redevelopment or new development of facilities and speed up the work flow. LWB and SWD have

also adopted other suitable measures to strengthen communication with the applicant NGOs, such as visiting the applicant NGOs and conducting on-site inspection and discussion of their respective projects, facilitating early resolution of the key issues among the departments concerned. Besides, the Policy and Project Co-ordination Unit (PPCU) under the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office assists LWB in coordinating the applicant NGOs' submission of the required information and applications in respect of each project to the relevant departments. LWB and SWD have maintained close contact with PPCU, and convened interdepartmental meetings on a need basis to help the applicant NGOs resolve some technical issues.

As at the date of this letter, one project under the Special Scheme has been completed and commenced service, and five other projects are expected to be completed in 2018-19 or before. In addition, LF grants have been approved for eight projects to proceed with TFSs. One of these projects completed the TFS in November 2016, and has been provided with an LF grant to commission a consultant to conduct detailed design, tender exercise, contract administration for construction, etc. The aforementioned projects are expected to provide about 4 870 additional elderly and rehabilitation service places in total.

The Government will continue to provide the required assistance to the other projects under the Special Scheme, and having regard to the circumstances of individual projects, SWD will consider supporting the respective applicant NGOs to proceed with TFSs with a view to implementing the projects as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line and a short vertical stroke.

(Kelvin MA)
for Secretary for Labour and Welfare

c.c. Director of Social Welfare (Attn: Kenneth WOO)