

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)281/17-18
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 26 January 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Chairman)
Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung
Dr Hon LAU Siu-lai
- Members absent** : Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HUI Chi-fung

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[According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.]

**Public Officers : Item I
attending**

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Stephen SUI, JP
Acting Secretary for Labour and Welfare

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

Miss Leonia TAI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

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

Mr David LEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Social Welfare Department

Ms Carol YIP, JP
Director of Social Welfare

Miss Cecilla LI
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

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

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Florence HUI Hiu-fai, SBS, JP
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Ms Karyn CHAN Ching-yuen
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic

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Affairs) 2

Miss Gloria LO Kit-wai
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic
Affairs) 3

Mr Nick AU YEUNG Lik
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Community Care Fund)

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

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

Miss Kay CHU
Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Miss LEE Wai-yan
Clerical Assistant (2) 4

I. Briefings by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and the Secretary for Home Affairs on the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)666/16-17(01) to (02), CB(2)672/16-17(01), CB(2)721/16-17(01) to (02), the 2017 Policy Address booklet and the 2017 Policy Agenda booklet]

At the invitation of the Chairman, Acting Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("Atg SLW") and Under Secretary for Home Affairs ("USHA") highlighted the major initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") respectively, as set out in the 2017 Policy Address and the Administration's paper presented to the Panel.

Retirement protection and enhancement measures for Old Age Living Allowance

2. Noting that a higher tier of assistance would be provided under the Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA"), Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern that the new initiative would take the place of a universal retirement protection scheme. He considered that the Administration should implement such a scheme with tripartite contributions from the Administration, employers and employees, which was expected to be financially sustainable. Dr KWOK enquired whether the Administration had assessed the impact of the new initiative on the affordability and sustainability of public finance until 2064-2065.

3. Atg SLW advised that the additional annual expenditure involved would be around \$11.3 billion on average from the first year of full implementation of the proposed OALA enhancement measures to 2064-2065. The proposal accounted for around one fifth of the expenditure of a universal retirement protection scheme as proposed by the academics and could be implemented immediately without a tax increase. In response to Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's enquiry about the timetable for implementing the enhancement measures, he advised that the Administration would accord priority to the proposed OALA enhancement measures and present the detailed arrangements to the Legislative Council in due course.

4. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung recognized the Administration's efforts in implementing new initiatives to alleviate poverty and support the disadvantaged. He, however, expressed concern that the low asset limits of OALA could limit the number of beneficiaries. He considered that the social security pillar, which only covered around 74% of elderly persons, was not adequate in providing retirement protection. The Administration should consider the proposal, put forward by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB"), of lowering the eligibility age of Old Age Allowance to 65, in order to improve retirement protection for elderly persons. Noting that the recurrent expenditure on social welfare in 2016-2017 was estimated to be \$66.2 billion, accounting for 18.1% of the Administration's total recurrent expenditure, Mr LEUNG and Dr Junius HO sought information about the financial arrangements and sustainability of the welfare-related initiatives mentioned in the Policy Address.

5. Whilst recognizing the welfare-related initiatives mentioned in the Policy Address, Mr KWOK Wai-keung considered that the OALA

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enhancement measures could not replace the implementation of a non-means-tested universal retirement protection scheme. He called on the Administration to study the financial arrangements of different suggestions made by concern groups and stakeholders in order to implement universal retirement protection as soon as possible.

6. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the Administration should recognize the efforts of concern groups and members in facilitating the development of the welfare-related initiatives. Expressing concern about the sustainability of the OALA enhancement measures, he requested the Administration to consider the suggestion of a financially sustainable retirement protection scheme with tripartite contributions.

7. Dr LAU Siu-lai, Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the asset limit at \$144,000 for singletons was too low as many elderly persons had savings exceeding the limit and were therefore ineligible. The OALA enhancement measures would not alleviate poverty as most of the grass-roots could not benefit from the new initiative. Mr CHAN expressed dissatisfaction at the Administration's slow progress in reviewing the asset limits of OALA. Dr LAU and Mr YEUNG called on the Administration to implement a financially sustainable universal retirement protection scheme with tripartite contributions, with a view to strengthening support for elderly persons. Dr LAU enquired whether the Administration would put forward other initiatives to alleviate poverty of elderly persons.

8. Atg SLW responded that Hong Kong should continue to adopt a multi-pillar retirement protection model. It comprised four pillars that were complementary to one another in serving the various needs of different groups of elderly persons. Each of the existing pillars should be strengthened while maintaining the sustainability and financial viability of the system. In terms of the social security pillar, OALA was more relaxed in terms of income and asset requirements when compared to those of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") and benefited around 37% of the elderly population. Besides, the public services pillar would be improved through extending the coverage of the medical fee waiver system and enhancing the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme. In the coming 10 years, it was estimated that an additional average recurrent government expenditure of over \$9 billion would be incurred per year. Details of the financial arrangements for the welfare-related initiatives mentioned in the Policy Address would be included in the Budget.

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9. Atg SLW supplemented that according to the fiscal sustainability assessment on public finance in the report of the Working Group on Long-term Fiscal Planning, the Administration might start facing a structural deficit problem around 2029-2030 even if there was no service enhancement. In view of the foreseeable surge in demand for long-term care services and the shrinking labour force, the Administration would have to raise taxes or introduce new taxes to tackle the deficit problem.

Raising the eligible age for elderly Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

10. Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung held the view that raising the eligible age for elderly CSSA from 60 to 65 was a retrogression. Mr LEUNG considered that the initiatives in relation to care for elderly persons and poverty alleviation were insufficient within the current term of the Government. Given that age discrimination and physical weakness were common problems faced by many elderly job seekers, they might suffer from the increase in the eligible age for elderly CSSA. Dr KWOK sought justifications for such an increase.

11. Atg SLW advised that in the light of the improved life expectancy, the increase in the eligible age was to align with the direction of the Administration's population policy to extend retirement age and the initiative would be implemented in the fourth quarter of 2018 at the earliest. Meanwhile, the Administration would continue to take initiatives to encourage young-olds to join the workforce, including the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") Scheme and the Low-income Family Working Allowance ("LIFA"). The Labour Department ("LD") and the Employees Retraining Board would continue to enhance employment support services and promote an inclusive working environment for the middle-aged. In addition, LD implemented the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged to encourage employers to provide job opportunities for mature persons.

12. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that out of the 400 000 elderly persons aged between 60 and 64, the labour population was only around 80 000. Given that a statutory retirement age had not been set, he suggested that the Administration should raise the eligible age for CSSA from 60 to 65 after the elderly employment market had developed. Atg SLW responded that according to crude estimates, some 2 600 able-bodied elderly persons would be affected in the first year of the implementation of the increase in the eligible age for elderly CSSA. Elderly persons aged between 60 and 64 who were receiving CSSA before the new policy took effect

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would not be affected, except when they re-applied for CSSA after having left the CSSA net, in which case the revised definition of old age would apply to them. The CSSA payments of disabled persons or persons in ill health, regardless of their age, would also not be affected by the new policy.

13. Taking the view that LD only helped around 300 elderly persons secure employment annually, Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that the provision of such assistance was not adequate if the eligible age was to be raised. He opined that the requirements of CSSA had adversely affected the relationship among family members. Needy elderly persons could not live with their children if they intended to apply for CSSA on their own. Dr CHEUNG requested the Administration to allow elderly persons and persons with disabilities to apply for CSSA on an individual basis. Atg SLW responded that while maintaining the requirement that applicants under the CSSA Scheme must apply on a household basis, the Administration would continue to offer appropriate financial assistance to people in need through the scheme and strengthen the support for people or families with special needs.

14. The Chairman, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern about the Administration's effort in consulting the public on the increase in the eligible age for elderly CSSA. They enquired about the reasons for implementing the initiative in 2018. Atg SLW reiterated that the increase in the eligible age was to align with the direction of the Administration's population policy and extending retirement age was included in the Steering Committee on Population Policy's strategy of unleashing the potential of local labour force. As the Administration would accord priority to implementing the OALA enhancement measures and the Social Welfare Department had to upgrade the computer system for necessary preparation work, the initiative would be implemented in the fourth quarter of 2018 at the earliest. In response to Mr LEUNG's concern about the assistance provided for elderly persons aged between 60 and 64 after the increase in the eligible age for elderly CSSA, Atg SLW advised that persons aged between 60 and 64 would be provided with appropriate assistance under the CSSA Scheme. The CSSA payments of disabled persons or persons in ill health, regardless of their age, would also not be affected by the new policy.

15. Noting that there was no statutory retirement age in Hong Kong and retirement age of many serving civil servants was set at 60, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that DAB was opposed to the

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recommendation to raise the eligibility age for elderly CSSA from 60 to 65. He sought details from the Administration about the public annuity scheme proposed to support elderly persons in investment management.

16. Atg SLW advised that the retirement age of new recruits appointed to the civil service had been raised to 65. Besides, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau would study the feasibility of a public annuity scheme so as to help elderly persons turn their one-off assets into a stable monthly retirement income.

Review of Low-income Working Family Allowance

17. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung and Mr Nathan LAW expressed concern that the Administration had expected that around 200 000 eligible households would apply for LIFA but there were only around 36 000 successful applications so far. Noting that the Administration had abolished the absence rule under the LIFA Scheme, Mr LEUNG urged the Administration to relax the income limits and the working hour requirements. He enquired whether the Administration would implement improvement measures to refine the Scheme. Mr LAW held the view that with the working hour threshold set at 192 hours, the Scheme was not in line with the trend of shortening working hours. In the light of the low application rate, he called on the Administration to review the eligibility criteria and simplify the application procedures of the Scheme. The Deputy Chairman considered that given that casual workers had difficulty asking their employers to certify their working hours, many low-income families with children were unable to benefit from the LIFA Scheme. He suggested that the Child Allowance should not be tied to the Scheme. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern that singletons, even if they were low-income households who were neither public housing tenants nor CSSA recipients (hereunder referred to as the "N have-nots"), could not benefit from the LIFA Scheme since one-person households were not covered by it.

18. Atg SLW advised that the Administration would conduct a comprehensive policy review on the LIFA Scheme one year after its implementation. It had been receiving feedback and suggestions from concern groups and stakeholders on various aspects of the LIFA Scheme. All the suggestions, such as relaxing the working hour requirements, extending the LIFA Scheme to cover singletons as well as the interface between LIFA and WITS, would be carefully considered in the policy review. Besides, the Administration had been undertaking measures to refine the Scheme since its implementation, which included abolishing

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the absence rule with effect from 6 December 2016.

Supporting ageing in place for the elderly

19. Mr Alvin YEUNG expressed concern about the problem of shortage in residential care places for the elderly. He asked whether the Administration would strengthen community care services for elderly persons in order to make up for the shortfall. Dr LAU Siu-lai opined that the scope and quota of the pilot schemes mentioned in the Policy Address in relation to community care services for elderly persons were limited. She enquired about the Administration's planning on community care services for the elderly.

20. Atg SLW and Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("PSLW") responded that the Administration provided quality and cost-effective long-term care services under the policy of promoting "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". The Administration would seize every opportunity to improve elderly services, particularly community care services, before the completion of the report on the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("ESPP"). The Administration would invite the Community Care Fund ("CCF") to consider implementing two pilot schemes: (a) providing necessary transitional care and support for elderly persons newly discharged from public hospitals after treatment; and (b) providing home care and support services for elderly persons with mild impairment. Meanwhile, the Administration would continue to implement the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly and increase the funding for Infirmary Care Supplement and Dementia Supplement. Besides, it was estimated that about 9 100 residential care places and about 2 800 day care places for the elderly would be provided in the coming 10 years.

Alleviating poverty

21. Noting that there was a rate of 75% grant under the Grant for School-related Expenses for Kindergarten Students, the Deputy Chairman called on the Administration to provide an additional level of rate at 75% for other government student financial assistance schemes. He also enquired whether the Administration would provide assistance for grass-root families to gain access to computer facilities. Atg SLW advised that CCF had been serving the functions of plugging gaps in the existing system. CCF would continue to collect views of stakeholders in considering the launch of new programmes to support grass-root families.

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22. Mr Michael TIEN considered that the rates of CSSA and OALA were not adequate in relieving the financial burden of people living below the poverty line from renting private housing. Meanwhile, the provision of different allowances might trigger an increase in the rental level in private housing and those recipients could not benefit from the assistance. He called on the Administration to implement a policy of partial rent control and study how to assist those underprivileged and low-income households directly.

23. Atg SLW reiterated that Hong Kong's retirement protection system had four pillars that were complementary to one another in serving people's needs. Public housing was part of the public services under the fourth pillar to alleviate poverty. He undertook to relay Mr TIEN's views to relevant government departments for consideration.

Support measures for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

24. Mr Nathan LAW noted that the Panel on Home Affairs passed a motion at its meeting on 21 December 2016 urging the Administration to continue with the One-off living subsidy for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA ("the One-off Living Subsidy Programme"). The Deputy Chairman, Mr LAW and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that the Administration should not terminate the One-off Living Subsidy Programme because some of the short-term relief measures, e.g. paying one month's rent for tenants of public rental housing, had discontinued. They urged the Administration to regularize the One-off Living Subsidy Programme since the N have-nots fell outside the safety net.

25. USHA advised that the One-off Living Subsidy Programme provided one-off cash subsidy for the N have-nots who could not benefit from the short-term relief measures introduced by the Budget. Given that fewer short-term relief measures were introduced by the 2016-2017 Budget, there was insufficient justification for CCF to re-launch the One-off Living Subsidy Programme. The Administration had no plan to incorporate the One-off Living Subsidy Programme into its regular assistance programmes. Nevertheless, the Administration would invite CCF to consider launching six new assistance programmes to help more needy people .

26. Dr LAU Siu-lai held the view that the Administration had benefited many property owners by waiving rates in previous years but only spent a

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little amount to provide financial assistance for the N have-nots. She expressed dissatisfaction at the Administration's reluctance to respond to members' suggestion on regularizing the One-off Living Subsidy Programme.

Residential care homes for the elderly and for persons with disabilities

27. Noting that the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly would be implemented in 2017, Dr KWOK Ka-ki called on the Administration to increase the provision of residential care places for elderly persons in the light of the long waiting time for such places. Atg SLW responded that the Administration would continue to increase the supply of subsidized residential care places for elderly persons through a multi-pronged approach. Besides, ESPP would put forward recommendations to improve elderly services in the medium-to-long term and the Administration would make arrangements for implementation of ESPP's recommendations. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to review the Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance (Cap. 613) so as to enhance the service quality of residential care homes for persons with disabilities.

(At 4:20 pm, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time to allow sufficient time for discussion.)

Children services

28. Dr Helena WONG recognized the Administration's efforts in providing additional resources for enhancing the remuneration for qualified child care staff. She asked whether the Administration would provide additional child care service places. Dr WONG sought information from the Administration on the completion date and details of the consultancy study on the long-term development of child care services. The Chairman suggested that the study should also include a review of the planning and positioning of child care services since the Administration had not provided sufficient resources in this area.

29. PSLW responded that the Administration would continue to provide additional aided child care centre places. Regarding the consultancy study on the long-term development of child care services, PSLW advised that it would take stock of the existing child care services in Hong Kong and draw on the experiences of other places in providing child care services. It would also conduct in-depth analyses of different aspects of child care services and make recommendations with reference

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to the results of the analyses. It was expected that the study would take at least a year to complete. At the request of the Chairman, PSLW undertook to provide the proposed outline of the report on the consultancy study.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1145/16-17(01) on 6 April 2017.)

Community support services for ex-mentally ill persons

30. Noting that there were increasing numbers of adults suffering from severe mental illness and common mental disorders, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan took the view that the provision of employment support services for patients with mental illness was insufficient, and they had a higher poverty risk. She called on the Administration to provide adequate community support services for ex-mentally ill persons to facilitate their re-integration into the community. The Chairman expressed concern that some Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness ("ICCMWs") did not have permanent sites upon commencement of service.

31. Atg SLW advised that 24 ICCMWs had been providing one-stop and district-based community support services since 2010. In 2016-2017, the draft estimation of annual allocation to ICCMWs amounted to about \$286 million. In 2017-2018, the Administration would further increase the number of social workers and supporting staff at ICCMWs to provide more in-depth support for ex-mentally ill persons. In addition, the Administration would continue to implement the two-year Pilot Project on Peer Support Service in Community Psychiatric Service Units. Suitable ex-mentally ill persons would be employed to provide peer support services. The Administration would prepare for the regularization of the pilot project by reviewing its implementation and effectiveness. This apart, the Administration would inject an additional funding of \$100 million into the Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise Project to promote employment for persons with disabilities. So far, 110 social enterprises were set up and about 800 jobs were specially created for persons with disabilities.

Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities

32. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether the Administration had set a timetable for the remaining green minibus routes to join the Government

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Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities. PSLW responded that operators would be required in the new tenders to join the scheme with a view to achieving a full coverage of the green minibus routes under the scheme.

Setting up a maintenance board

33. The Chairman requested for additional support measures and resources before the implementation of the proposed legislation in relation to the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access. He took the view that the Administration should take measures to improve the system of maintenance, e.g. setting up a maintenance board.

34. USHA advised that the Administration had carefully examined the suggestion of setting up a maintenance board before and considered that the suggestion would unlikely bring any significant benefits over and above those which could be achieved by improving the existing system. Measures taken to improve the system of maintenance included: (a) relaxing the requirement for the court to make Attachment of Income Orders to make the issuance procedure more flexible; (b) imposing interest or even surcharge against defaulting maintenance payers; and (c) upon request from legal professionals who could provide sufficient information, allowing designated government departments (i.e. Immigration Department, Transport Department and Housing Department) to disclose the addresses of maintenance payers against whom legal actions would be taken to recover arrears in maintenance. USHA said that HAB would through the Family Council commission a study to examine various divorce-related issues including maintenance.

Facilitating the development of women

35. Dr Helena WONG said that the Democratic Party urged the Administration to extend the duration of both the maternity leave and paternity leave. She requested the Administration to provide: (a) a list of Gender Focal Points ("GFPs") in bureaux/departments ("B/Ds"); (b) a list of B/Ds which had referred to the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist adopted by the Administration when formulating major government policies and initiatives, and the respective outcomes; and (c) information on measures to be taken by the Administration to facilitate GFPs in the some 160 listed companies to promote the concept of gender mainstreaming and raise the awareness of gender-related issues in these companies.

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36. PSLW undertook to provide the above information as appropriate after the meeting. She further advised that the Administration would continue to designate a GFP within B/Ds and the District Councils. All B/Ds were required to refer to the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist when formulating major government policies and initiatives. The Administration had established a GFP network among listed companies at end-2016 to raise the awareness of gender-related issues in the business community.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1201/16-17(01) on 12 April 2017.)

Motions

37. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung moved the following motion which was seconded by Mr KWOK Wai-keung:

"本委員會強烈要求政府保留長者綜合社會保障援助年齡限制於 60 歲；及高齡津貼免審查年齡下降至 65 歲。"

(Translation)

"This Panel strongly requests the Government to maintain the age restriction for the elderly Comprehensive Social Security Assistance at 60, and lower that for the non-means-tested Old Age Allowance to 65."

38. The Chairman put the motion to vote. He said that while a member abstained from voting on the motion, the other members present were in favour of the motion. He declared that the motion was carried.

39. Dr LAU Siu-lai moved the following two motions:

Dr LAU Siu-lai's Motion 1

"有鑒於在2015年12月展開為期6個月的'退休保障前路共建'公眾諮詢期間，扶貧委員會所收集的18 365份書面意見中，有16 830份都同意落實不設經濟審查而財政可持續的全民退休保障，但政府仍強行違反民意，在2017年施政報告中，政府只建議在現行長者生活津貼中，增加一層高額長者生活津貼，並設有經濟審查。"

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就此，本委員會強烈譴責政府違反民意，於專家精算、民意支持及財政持續可行的前提下，拒絕實行免審查的全民退休保障計劃；本委員會要求政府立即推行全民退休保障計劃。"

(Translation)

"Despite the fact that, of the 18 365 written submissions received by the Commission on Poverty during the six-month public consultation on "Retirement Protection Forging Ahead" launched in December 2015, 16 830 agree that universal retirement protection which is non-means-tested and financially sustainable should be implemented, the Government still arbitrarily acts against public opinion by merely proposing in the 2017 Policy Address to add a higher tier of means-tested allowance under the Old Age Living Allowance.

In this connection, this Panel strongly condemns the Government for going against public opinion by refusing to implement a non-means-tested universal retirement protection scheme notwithstanding experts' actuarial evaluations, support of public opinion and financial sustainability; this Panel requests the Government to immediately implement a universal retirement protection scheme."

40. The Chairman put the motion to vote. He said that while a member voted against the motion and two members abstained from voting, the other members present were in favour of the motion. He declared that the motion was carried.

Dr LAU Siu-lai's Motion 2

"在2015年施政報告第119段中表明，政府要求財政司司長預留500億元，用作落實退休保障之用，但在2017年施政報告中，政府卻將預留的500億元除了用作高額長者生活津貼外，還用作政府在取消強積金'對沖'的10年過渡期所提供的補貼，估算共62.2億元，而'對沖'牽涉的長期服務金及遣散費不應被視作退休保障中的項目，是勞工被解僱或公司倒閉下所得的應有權益和保障。政府應另撥財政資源作為取消強積金'對沖'的過渡期所提供的補貼。

就此，本委員會反對政府挪用為退休保障撥備的基金轉作處理強積金'對沖'及優化長者生活津貼，並強烈要求政府必須

保留500億元用作全民退休保障的專款專項基金。"

(Translation)

"While paragraph 119 of the 2015 Policy Address states that the Government has asked the Financial Secretary to earmark \$50 billion for the implementation of retirement protection, the 2017 Policy Address indicates that the Government will use the earmarked \$50 billion not just for the provision of a higher Old Age Living Allowance, but also as a subsidy, estimated to be \$6.22 billion in total, to be provided by the Government in a 10-year transition period for the abolition of the "offsetting" arrangement of the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF"). However, the long service payments and severance payments involved in the "offsetting" arrangement are entitlements and protection which should be enjoyed by workers upon dismissal or closure of business of the employing company instead of being regarded as items covered by retirement protection. The Government should separately allocate resources for the provision of the subsidy in the transition period for the abolition of the 'offsetting' arrangement of MPF.

In this connection, this Panel opposes the Government's use of the fund set aside for retirement protection to address the MPF 'offsetting' issue and enhance the Old Age Living Allowance, and strongly requests that the Government should reserve the \$50 billion as dedicated funding for universal retirement protection."

41. The Chairman put the motion to vote. The majority of members present voted for the motion. He declared that the motion was carried.

42. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion:

"本委員會促請政府檢討現時綜合社會保障援助("綜援")制度，並讓長者及殘疾人士以個人為單位申領綜援。"

(Translation)

"This Panel urges the Government to review the existing system for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") and allow elderly persons and persons with disabilities to apply for CSSA on an individual basis."

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43. The Chairman put the motion to vote. The majority of members present voted for the motion. He declared that the motion was carried.

II. Any other business

[LC Paper No. CB(2)708/16-17(01)]

44. The Chairman referred members to the letter from four organizations inviting them to visit street sleepers in the community (LC Paper No. CB(2)708/16-17(01)). It was agreed that that visit would be arranged on 6 February 2017 to enable members to understand the living conditions of street sleepers and the corresponding social welfare service support before the Panel's discussion of "Support for street sleepers" at its regular meeting on 13 February 2017.

45. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:41 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 November 2017