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Panel on Welfare Services

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the special meeting on 21 December 2017**

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 ("ESPP").

Background

2. According to the Administration, the latest population projection by the Census and Statistics Department reveals that population ageing is expected to continue. The number of elderly persons will increase from 1.16 million (16.6% of the total population) in 2016 by over a million to 2.37 million (31.1%) in 2036. The elderly population will remain at over 2.3 million for at least 30 years. In 2066, the number of elderly persons is projected to reach 2.59 million (36.6%), and the expectation of life at birth is projected to increase to 87.1 years for males and 93.1 years for females.

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 ESPP within two years. To take forward the task, EC has set up the Working Group on Elderly Services Programme Plan ("WGESPP") and engaged a consultant team from the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of The University of Hong Kong ("the Consultant Team") to assist in collating and analysing information related to the provision of long-term care ("LTC") services for elderly persons, as well as engaging relevant stakeholders and other interested

groups in the process.

4. According to the Administration, the formulation of ESPP is structured into three stages, namely Scoping, Formulation and Consensus Building. EC and WGESPP conducted the first public engagement exercise under the Scoping Stage from October to November 2014 to open up the discussion with stakeholders and solicit their views in defining the scope of ESPP. After defining the scope and identifying the key issues that needed to be addressed, stakeholders were consulted through the second public engagement exercise from June to August 2015 on the directions and possible alternatives for handling these issues to enable EC and WGESPP to draw up at the end of the Formulation Stage the preliminary recommendations to be put forward in ESPP. At the Consensus Building Stage, EC and WGESPP engaged stakeholders through the third public engagement exercise from October to December 2016 with a view to finalizing and building consensus on the recommendations. Upon completion of the engagement exercise, WGESPP considered the comments received and prepared ESPP, which was endorsed by EC at its meeting on 23 June 2017. ESPP was subsequently submitted to the Administration and released on 28 June 2017.

5. The Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") of the Fifth Legislative Council ("LegCo") appointed the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes ("the Subcommittee") in June 2015 to study relevant policies and measures relating to the future development of elderly services, follow up the work of ESPP, discuss relevant policies with the Administration and make timely recommendations. The Subcommittee completed its work and submitted its report to the Panel in July 2016. Recommendations made by the Subcommittee are set out in **Appendix I**.

Deliberations by Members

Coverage of the Elderly Services Programme Plan

6. Members had time and again urged the Administration to make early planning on the provision of elderly services. While agreeing that the formulation of ESPP 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.

7. The Administration advised that it had all along accorded high priority to address LTC needs of elderly persons. In mapping out ESPP, 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 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 for 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.

8. 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 ESPP. 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 ("the Carer Allowance Pilot Scheme") under the Community Care Fund and the feasibility study of introducing a voucher scheme on RCS for the elderly.¹

9. Members took the view that ESPP 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 ESPP, the Administration should prepare a high-level blueprint of elderly care policy with input from relevant government bureaux/departments. The Administration advised that ESPP 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.

¹ CE announced in his 2014 Policy Address that EC had also been tasked to study the feasibility of introducing an RCS voucher scheme for the elderly. A consultant team was engaged to conduct the feasibility study. The consultant team concluded that introducing an RCS voucher scheme would be both desirable and feasible. EC endorsed the consultant team's final report on the feasibility study in 2016. The Administration generally agreed with the findings and recommendations of the consultant team and launched the Pilot Scheme on RCS Voucher for the Elderly in March 2017.

10. Some 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. These Members also considered that ESPP 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. Some other Members suggested that the Administration should be flexible in setting the age criteria for LTC services so that elderly persons aged below 65 would be provided with the required services.

11. According to the Consultant Team, WGESPP considered that the eligibility criteria for each service category should be based on different factors and recommended that different age criteria should be set for different services. The age requirement for LTC services was 65 but the care needs of an elderly person would be subject to assessment results of the Standardized Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services ("SCNAMES"). There should be flexibility in age criteria so that individual circumstances of the elderly persons could be taken into account.

12. 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.

13. 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 ESPP, EC would take into account the schemes mentioned in paragraph 8 above in the wider context of ESPP. 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.

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.

14. The Panel was briefed on the progress of the preparation of ESPP at its meetings on 20 January 2015 and 14 March 2016. 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 ESPP and press the Consultant Team to extend its scope of study to cover social welfare services, medical services, housing and needs after retirement.

Projections on demand for subsidized long-term care services

15. 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 were of the view that the Consultant Team's projection on the supply of and demand for CCS in 2016 did not reflect the real life situation, and the demand for RCS would not be so great if there was adequate provision of CCS. These Members considered that it was a wrong policy direction to recommend a higher planning ratio for RCS than CCS in ESPP, given that most elderly persons wished to age in place. 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 ESPP. The Administration should have better provision plans for both CCS and RCS and should put equal emphasis on these services.

16. According to the Consultant Team, the projections on the demand for RCS and CCS were based on the average demand for and usage of these services in the past few years as well as the projected changes in the population of Hong Kong and of different age groups up to 2064. Various assumptions (e.g. the needs for LTC services would be deferred with improved health conditions) had already been made in preparing the projections. Under these assumptions, the ratio of the projected demand for RCS places and for CCS places would trend towards 1:1 in the medium-to-long term (i.e. down from the existing imbalanced ratio of around 3:1). The Administration further advised that the existing ratio of RCS usage to CCS usage was 3:1 mainly because of premature and unnecessary institutionalization. Through strengthening CCS to facilitate elderly persons to age in place, the Administration hoped that the demand ratio for RCS and CCS could ultimately be improved to 1:1. Besides, ESPP 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.

17. Some Members considered that many elderly persons were discouraged to use CCS by some service providers. Apart from actual service utilization, service needs of these elderly persons should be taken into account in projecting the demand for CCS and drawing up long-term plans for provision of CCS.

18. According to the Consultant Team, elderly persons who were assessed to be of moderate level of impairment under SCNAMES were eligible for CCS. The Consultant Team had recommended that for prevention of health deterioration, provision of suitable services for elderly persons with mild impairment should be explored and the service provision of Integrated Home Care Services (Ordinary Cases) for users should be systematized. There might be a need to explore improvement in providing services for elderly persons with frailty not reaching the moderate to severe level (i.e. the threshold for LTC services). According to the Administration, since the scope of the existing assessment was too wide and the time required for a complete assessment was rather long, it would launch a simple and standardized assessment tool for identifying elderly persons with mild impairment and their service needs.

19. Some Members held the view that it was unrealistic to project the growth in the elderly population up to 2064 as the Administration could not control and predict the number and composition of families who would immigrate to Hong Kong from the Mainland. They enquired whether the Administration had required the Consultant Team to adopt certain criteria in projecting the future demand for elderly services.

20. The Administration advised that the parameters for formulating ESPP were proposed by the Consultant Team and were adopted after they had been discussed between the Consultant Team and the Administration. While reference would be made to the longer term projections in long-term elderly services planning, the recommendations made in ESPP covered the coming 10 years. As such, there should not be great deviations in the projections. Recognizing that there would be changes in family structure, housing situation, etc., the Administration would consider ESPP a "living document" and would keep in view the development.

Setting service targets for elderly care services

21. Members expressed grave concern about the insufficient provision of elderly care services to meet the huge demand for such services arising from the rapid ageing population and elderly poverty. Some Members urged the

Administration to set service targets for various kinds of elderly care services, in particular CCS and RCS, in order to facilitate the welfare sector to bid for resources and formulate service provision plan. The need for setting service targets for elderly care services and the basis for providing LTC services should be spelt out in ESPP.

22. According to the Consultant Team, consideration would be given to including in ESPP a service target for the elderly population in need of RCS. The Administration, however, advised that it was difficult to set service targets for provision of elderly care services, in view of the various service options being available for elderly persons in need. Instead of setting service targets, the Administration would examine the interaction amongst CCS, RCS and carer support services in service planning. In drawing up the preliminary recommendations for enhancing elderly care services in ESPP, WGESPP would take into account the implementation of various pilot schemes, e.g. the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly and the Carer Allowance Pilot Scheme.

Financing for provision of elderly services

23. Some Members were gravely concerned about the incompatibility of views between the community and the Administration towards financing for provision of elderly services. The major views of the community were that more public resources should be allocated to provision of elderly services, and these services should be provided on a non-means-tested basis. The Administration, however, had adopted the principle of "co-payment", under which service users with less financial means were provided with a greater amount of government subsidy. Noting the Administration's projection that a structural deficit could strike in within 15 years due to the continuous trend of ageing population, these Members urged the Administration to conduct a comprehensive review of the provision of elderly services and draw up a plan for such service provision, and make projection on relevant expenditure. The Administration was also requested to signify its commitment by setting aside a sum of money for implementing ESPP.

24. The Administration advised that in the formulation of ESPP, consideration would be given to optimizing public resources for provision of elderly care services as appropriate. In addition, the current and planned provision of elderly services would be taken into account and reference would be made to relevant studies, reports, initiatives and demographic/service statistics relating to elderly persons. Upon receipt of the final report of ESPP, the Administration would work on the financial arrangements and draw up short, medium and long-term plans for implementing ESPP.

Relevant papers

25. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in **Appendix II**.

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Legislative Council Secretariat
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Recommendations made by the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes

The Subcommittee recommends that the Administration should:

Policy, planning and financing

- (a) set service targets for various kinds of elderly care services, in particular community care services ("CCS") and residential care services ("RCS");
- (b) spell out in the Elderly Services Programme Plan ("ESPP") the need for setting the aforesaid service targets and the basis for provision of long-term care services (i.e. based on service user needs instead of their age);
- (c) extend the six-month case management service to strengthen the support for service users;
- (d) conduct a comprehensive review of the provision of elderly services, draw up a service provision plan and make projection on relevant expenditure;
- (e) set aside a sum of money for implementing ESPP to signify the Administration's commitment to provision of elderly services;

Community care services

- (f) instruct the consultant team to assess the need for CCS, and explore the relationship among Integrated Home Care Services, Enhanced Home and Community Care Services, the Pilot Scheme on CCS Voucher for the Elderly and services provided by Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly;
- (g) allocate more resources to increase provision of CCS and change the arrangement of meal delivery service during holidays from delivery upon request to automatic delivery unless advised otherwise by individual users;

- (h) further develop the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families with increase in the amount of the monthly allowance;
- (i) engage female homemakers with income supplement for providing elderly care services in the community;

Residential care services

- (j) provide a specific timetable for strengthening the Administration's monitoring of private residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs");
- (k) make legislative amendments for enhancing manpower provision and spatial requirements of private RCHEs, as well as prescribing liability of private RCHE operators;
- (l) consider providing a wage supplement for frontline staff of private RCHEs to enhance their service quality;
- (m) introduce an evaluation system for RCHEs and allow public access to evaluation results of individual RCHEs;

Care services for elderly persons with special needs

- (n) set future direction of service provision for demented elderly and draw up relevant service provision plan to ensure adequate provision in this regard;
- (o) consider implementing a pilot scheme on provision of RCS for demented elderly;
- (p) review the policy on allocation of RCS places, and exercise due care to ensure that disparity of special needs of elderly persons residing in the same RCHEs would not be too great to defeat the purpose of the Administration's inclusive policy on provision of elderly services;
- (q) address the issue of identity recognition for elderly persons from sexual minorities;
- (r) consider accommodating elderly persons from sexual minorities in need of RCS in the same RCHEs and form small groups for them in these RCHEs;
- (s) collect information on population of elderly persons from sexual minorities during population census;

- (t) clarify whether elderly persons aged over 60 with disabilities are provided with elderly care services or rehabilitation services;
- (u) address the problem of service gap between elderly care services and rehabilitation services, so that elderly persons with disabilities can be properly taken care of;
- (v) work collaboratively among various government bureaux/departments to address the deficiencies in elderly care services, including those for elderly persons with special needs, and set priority as appropriate;

Other issues

- (w) identify a suitable site in each of the 18 districts for providing an assembly place for elderly persons;
- (x) consider deputations' suggestion of implementing a subsidy scheme for low-floor green minibuses running to and from hospitals; and
- (y) address elderly persons' need for dental services and relax the age limit of participants of the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme.

2. The Subcommittee suggests that the Sixth Legislative Council should continue to follow up the provision of services by the Administration for elderly persons with chronic diseases, elderly persons with dementia, elderly persons with disabilities as well as elderly persons from ethnic minorities and from sexual minorities.

Appendix II

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 301-326 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	8 December 2014 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Welfare Services	20 January 2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Welfare Services	14 March 2016 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes	-	Report of the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Future Development of Elderly Services Schemes (issued on 12 July 2016)
Panel on Welfare Services	14 November 2016 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	29 November 2016 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes LC Paper No. CB(2)283/16-17(01) (Chinese version only)
Panel on Welfare Services	10 July 2017 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes

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