

For discussion on
19 July 2018

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services Special Meeting

Planning for Social Welfare Facilities

Purpose

This paper briefs the Panel on the planning for social welfare facilities.

Planning for welfare premises

2. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has all along been adopting a multi-pronged approach, and maintaining close liaison with the relevant Government departments, to identify suitable accommodation for the provision of welfare facilities so as to cater for the ongoing welfare service needs, both territory-wide and at the district level.

3. Under the existing mechanism, when a development site is identified as having potential for housing development (including public rental housing (PRH) and private development projects), government departments and the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) will plan for and coordinate the relevant development and other community facilities (including recreational, education and welfare facilities, etc.), taking into account the views of the community during the process. Under this arrangement, the SWD can explore comprehensively at the early planning stage the provision of suitable welfare facilities (including family and child, elderly, youth, rehabilitation and social security services, etc.). In general, the SWD will take into account the needs of the local community, the overall demand for welfare services, the floor area requirements of different welfare facilities, the location and accessibility of the site, as well as the advice from the Planning Department or the HA on site constraints, development parameters and limitations (including environmental issues such as noise and air quality) in drawing up appropriate proposed welfare facilities to meet the service demand arising from the development, and also to address the community demand at large. The HA, when considering whether the proposed welfare

facilities could be incorporated into a new PRH development, will take into consideration such factors as individual site constraints, feasibility and suitability of the required facilities, demands for various community facilities, funding arrangements for the facilities, relevant ordinances, rules and regulations (such as the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), the Town Planning Ordinance, the Building (Planning) Regulations and the Practice Note). In respect of new PRH developments or large development projects, the proposed welfare facilities preliminarily assessed as feasible will be included in the planning briefs of the PRH developments concerned. Besides, the SWD has also maintained close contact with the Development Bureau with a view to imposing land sale conditions in appropriate land sale site projects, under which developers will be required under the land sale conditions to design and construct the bare-shell premises of the proposed welfare facilities according to the specifications required by the SWD. Upon completion of the construction works, the SWD will take over the facilities and select a suitable service operator through invitation for tenders.

4. Apart from the above mechanism, the SWD maintains liaison with the relevant government departments, and if there are suitable vacant government sites or vacant “Government, Institution or Community” premises (e.g. vacant government premises, vacant school premises, non-domestic vacant premises in PRH estates), the SWD will, having regard to factors such as the location, area, nearby environment, the supply and demand for services in the local community, etc. explore the feasibility of converting, redeveloping or developing the relevant premises or sites into long term welfare uses

5. Besides, the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and the SWD launched the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (the Special Scheme) in September 2013 to encourage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to make better use of the sites owned by them through expansion, redevelopment or new development to provide or increase the provision of those welfare services considered by the Government in acute demand, in particular to increase elderly and rehabilitation service places. By the closing of application for the Special Scheme on 18 November 2013, preliminary proposals submitted by 43 NGOs involving 63 projects had been received. Based on the rough estimation of the applicant NGOs, if all the projects under the Special Scheme could be implemented smoothly, a range of welfare facilities would be provided, including about 9 000 additional elderly

service places and about 8 000 additional rehabilitation service places.

Elderly services

6. As at end-June 2018, the SWD has reserved sites in 30 development projects for the construction of new contract residential care homes for the elderly and day care centres/units for the elderly. It is estimated that about 3 300 residential care places for the elderly (including subsidised and non-subsidised places) and about 1 010 day care places for the elderly will be progressively provided starting from 2018-19. Apart from actively identifying suitable sites for the setting up of elderly services facilities, the Government is increasing the service supply through a number of other measures, which include making better use of space in subvented homes, converting non-subsidised places in existing contract homes to subsidised places, purchasing places from quality private homes, implementing the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly and the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly, etc.

7. In order to strengthen the planning of elderly services facilities, the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP) recommended the reinstatement of population-based planning ratios for elderly facilities in the HKPSG to allow better forward planning of the relevant department(s) in reserving sites and premises. According to the projections in the ESPP, the indicative planning ratios for subsidised long term care services in 2026 are 21.4 subsidised residential care places and 14.8 subsidised community care places per 1 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above. In addition, the ESPP recommended that there should be one District Elderly Community Centre in each new residential area with a population reaching 170 000. Where appropriate, there should be one Neighbourhood Elderly Centre in each new or redeveloped PRH estate; and for each new residential area, if the private housing portion has a population of 15 000 to 20 000, there should also be one Neighbourhood Elderly Centre.

8. To follow up on the recommendations concerned, it is stated in the “2017 Policy Agenda” that the Government plans to reinstate the population-based planning ratios for elderly services in the HKPSG. The LWB and the SWD have commenced discussions with the Development Bureau and the Planning Department in this regard, including the drawing up of specific amendments to the HKPSG. After

the HKPSG has been amended, we will review and update the relevant planning ratios at suitable junctures, to ensure that the planning of facilities could meet the service demand.

Rehabilitation services

9. The SWD has been identifying suitable sites or premises for setting up rehabilitation facilities for persons with disabilities to cope with the increasing service demand. As at June 2018, the SWD has reserved sites at 36 development projects, which are expected to provide around 6 800 additional rehabilitation places by 2025-26.

10. In addition, to keep the services for persons with disabilities abreast with the times, the Government has asked the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) to formulate a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). The RAC has commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Consulting Team) to provide consultancy service and launched a public engagement exercise for the formulation of the new RPP. The RAC's consultation work for the Scoping Stage will be completed soon, and the RAC recommends the inclusion of planning of residential care and community support services in the scope of the current review. In view of the diverse service needs of persons with disabilities and the different requirements on services from persons with different disabilities, the Consulting Team will examine the parameters and basis for the planning of rehabilitation services and facilities. The Consulting Team will consult stakeholders on the issues concerned in the next stage of the consultation exercise.

Way forward

11. The SWD will sustain its efforts in maintaining close liaison with the relevant Government departments to identify suitable accommodation for the provision of welfare facilities for meeting the needs of the localities or the community at large for welfare services. Meanwhile, we will assess from time to time the community's demand for different services, and will continue to allocate resources to increase the provision of relevant services.

Advice sought

12. Members are invited to note the above arrangements concerning the planning for social welfare facilities.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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