

For discussion on
13 January 2020

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

Planning for the Provision of Welfare Facilities in New Districts

Purpose

In accordance with the suggestions of some Members, the Panel on Welfare Services has invited the Government to attend its meeting on 13 January 2020 to brief Members on the planning for welfare facilities in new districts. In response to Members' suggestion, this paper provides background information for reference.

Current situation

2. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has all along adopted a multi-pronged approach, and maintained close liaison with relevant government departments, to identify suitable accommodation for the provision of welfare facilities, so as to meet the ongoing welfare service needs of different districts (including new districts).

3. Under the existing mechanism, when a new development area or site is identified as having potential for housing or "Government, Institution or Community" (G/IC) development, relevant government departments will plan for and coordinate the relevant development and other community facilities (including recreational, education, welfare facilities, etc.), taking into account the views of the community during the process. Under this arrangement, the SWD may at the early planning stage explore comprehensively the provision of suitable welfare facilities (including family and child, elderly, youth, rehabilitation, social security services, etc.) in the development projects. In general, the SWD will take into account the planning standards and guidelines for welfare facilities set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), 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 received on site constraints, development potential 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 to address the community demand at large.

4. The HKPSG provides general guidelines for the Government to determine the scale, location and site requirements of various land uses, community facilities and infrastructures. The relevant guidelines serves as a general reference for the Government to reserve land for providing relevant facilities during the planning process. The HKPSG sets out the planning standards and guidelines for welfare facilities, including welfare facilities with population-based planning ratios, such as Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) and Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs)). In recent years, the Government has formulated or is actively considering formulating planning ratios for various types of welfare facilities on a population basis for incorporation into the HKPSG, so as to facilitate the concerned departments to reserve suitable premises during the planning process of new development projects for the construction of relevant welfare facilities to better meet the service demands in new communities. These initiatives include –

- (a) on elderly services, the Government, having regard to the relevant recommendations in the Elderly Services Programme Plan, promulgated amendments to the HKPSG in December 2018, which stipulate planning guidelines and population-based planning ratios in respect of subsidised residential care services for the elderly, subsidised community care services for the elderly, District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs);
- (b) regarding child care services, the Government will, having regard to the relevant recommendations in the study on “Long-term Development of Child Care Services”, incorporate the planning ratio and guidelines in respect of child care centres into the HKPSG; and

- (c) as for rehabilitation services, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) is formulating a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). The consultant has proposed planning ratios for long-term residential care and long-term community care services, and recommended the incorporation of the relevant planning ratios into the HKPSG. Upon the RAC's completion of the final stage of public engagement and the submission of a final report on the new RPP, the Government will follow up on the relevant recommendations.

5. Besides, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the SWD have adopted a multi-pronged approach to identify suitable sites or premises for the provision of more welfare services which are in acute demand, including –

- (a) monitoring closely if there are suitable vacant government sites or vacant G/IC premises (e.g. vacant government premises, vacant school premises, non-domestic vacant premises in public rental housing estates), and will, having regard to factors such as location, area, nearby environment, supply and demand for services in the local community, etc., explore the feasibility of converting, redeveloping or developing the relevant premises or sites for long term welfare uses. Examples of these include the redevelopment of the ex-Kai Nang Sheltered Workshop and Hostel in Kwun Tong and the ex-Siu Lam Hospital in Tuen Mun by the Government into integrated rehabilitation services complexes for the provision of rehabilitation facilities, and the planned conversion of vacant school premises in Sai Kung, Tai Po and Tuen Mun for the provision of elderly and rehabilitation services facilities;
- (b) reprovisioning or re-demarcating service boundaries of existing service facilities (e.g. IFSCs, DECCs, NECs, Day Care Centres for the Elderly (DEs), ICYSCs, Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Services Centres (IVRSCs), Day Activity Centres and Social Security Field Units, etc.) in new districts, with a view to meeting different welfare service needs of the community. For example, the SWD re-demarcated the service boundaries of

IFSCs in Shatin district in 2016 and included Shui Chuen O Estate within the service boundary of the Shatin (North) IFSC in view of the population increase in the named Estate, and reprovisioned an ICYSC and a NEC in Hung Fuk Estate, Hung Shui Kiu, Yuen Long, to meet the local demand;

- (c) working with the Development Bureau to identify suitable land sale sites and require private developers through land sale conditions to design and construct bare-shell premises for proposed welfare facilities according to the specifications of the SWD, with the construction cost funded by the Lotteries Fund. Upon completion of the construction works, the SWD will take over the facilities and select a suitable service operator through competitive bidding. A recent example is the successful bidder of the Kai Tak Area 4A Site 2 being required to construct specified welfare facilities, so as to provide facilities such as a residential care home for the elderly-cum-day care unit for the elderly, a DE, an integrated home care services team, a NEC, small group homes, an IVRSC and a hostel for moderately mentally handicapped persons;
- (d) making intensive efforts with respect to the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses (the Special Sites Scheme), where non-governmental organisations can apply for grants from the Lotteries Fund for expansion, redevelopment or new development on the sites owned by themselves, thereby providing diversified subvented and self-financing facilities, in particular additional places of elderly, rehabilitation and child care services. The Government also launched a new phase of the Special Sites Scheme in April 2019. As at end 2019, five projects under the Special Sites Scheme had been completed and commenced service, and one had entered the construction stage with expected completion by phases commencing 2019-20. Three other projects are at the pre-works detailed design or study stage and 15 others were at the technical feasibility stage; and
- (e) taking forward the initiative of purchase of premises for the provision of welfare facilities as a short term measure. Subject

to the ceiling of a \$20 billion allocation, we will, over some three years, purchase as many suitable premises as possible for the early provision of various types of welfare facilities. The Government briefed this Panel on the initiative on 10 June 2019, and prepared a list of around 160 welfare facilities spreading across the territory. After securing funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, the SWD and the Government Property Agency will start relevant follow-up work as soon as possible.

Way forward

6. The Government 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. The SWD will sustain its efforts in exploring with the relevant government departments for reserving sites or premises for the provision of welfare facilities, so as to meet the needs of the localities (including new districts) for welfare services.

Advice sought

7. Members are invited to note the above prevailing arrangements on the planning of welfare facilities.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social Welfare Department
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