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Panel on Welfare Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 January 2020**

Planning for social welfare facilities

Purpose

This paper provides a brief account of past discussions of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on the planning for social welfare facilities.

Background

2. According to the Administration, in the light of community demand for welfare services, it has all along been adopting a multi-pronged approach to increase the provision of social welfare facilities. Relevant government departments have been maintaining close communication among each other to explore various means to secure suitable accommodation to cater for ongoing welfare service needs. 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), the government departments concerned and the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") will plan for and coordinate the relevant development and community facilities (including recreational, education and welfare facilities, etc.), taking into account the views of the community during the process.

3. When considering whether the proposed welfare facilities could be incorporated into a new PRH development, HA 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.

4. Apart from the above mechanism, the Social Welfare Department ("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 and non-domestic vacant premises in PRH estates), SWD will, having regard to factors such as location, area, nearby environment, the supply of 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.

Deliberations of the Panel

Planning standards for welfare facilities

5. Some members took the view that it was difficult to set indicators and timetables for providing various welfare facilities due to the lack of specific planning standards for such facilities in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG"). These members called on the Administration to draw up specific planning standards for welfare facilities in HKPSG and formulate a long-term strategy for welfare services.

6. According to the Administration, it had reinstated the population-based planning ratios in HKPSG in respect of subsidized residential care services, community care services, district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres ("NECs") in December 2018. The Administration planned to incorporate the population-based planning ratio for the provision of child care centre ("CCC") places into HKPSG in 2019-2020. The relevant planning ratio for certain rehabilitation facilities would be stipulated into HKPSG upon completion of the projections on the demand for rehabilitation services and the facilities required to meet such demand. These planning ratios would facilitate the planning and reservation of suitable premises for the provision of various welfare facilities.

Planning for welfare facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities

7. Expressing concern about the long waiting time for residential care places for the elderly and persons with disabilities, members urged the Administration to increase and speed up the provision of such places. The Administration advised that in order to address the shortage of welfare facilities and premises, the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") launched Phase One of the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses ("Special Scheme") in September 2013 to encourage social welfare organizations to provide the necessary welfare facilities, in particular elderly and rehabilitation facilities, through in-situ expansion or redevelopment. Based on the Administration's

rough estimation, if all the projects under Phase One of 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. In April 2019, LWB had launched Phase Two of the Special Scheme inviting applications from social welfare organizations.

8. Given the serious shortfall of elderly services and rehabilitation services, some members took the view that the Administration should explore the use of sites which were owned by social welfare organizations but had not yet been included in the Special Scheme. The Administration advised that it had made efforts in identifying suitable premises (e.g. vacant premises in PRH estates and vacant government premises) for provision of residential care and rehabilitation services for the elderly. In this connection, three vacant school premises would be used to provide rehabilitation services. This apart, the Financial Secretary had announced in the 2019-2020 Budget that \$20 billion would be allocated for purchasing properties over some three years for accommodating welfare facilities, including, day care centres for the elderly, NECs, CCCs, on-site pre-school rehabilitation services, etc. to help meet the acute shortfall of premises.

Planning for child care facilities

9. Some members noted that it was estimated that around 30 000 places in aided CCCs would be required according to the planning ratio proposed by the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services ("the Study"). Expressing concern about whether the proposed planning ratio was feasible, these members enquired about the Administration's plan for implementing the proposed planning ratio.

10. The Administration advised that in the course of planning, relevant bureaux/departments were expected to reserve suitable premises for operating CCCs according to the planning ratio. Given that it might require 10 years or more to meet the proposed planning ratio, the Administration would continue to look for suitable sites for operating CCCs in the meantime. In addition, CCC service was included in the "Shopping List" of welfare facilities under Phase Two of the Special Scheme.

11. Pointing out that the population size of children aged zero to six varied from district to district, some members enquired about the basis for determining the proposed planning ratio and the supply of child care services for various districts in future. The Administration advised that in proposing the planning ratio, the Consultant Team of the Study had taken into account the

existing demand for and supply of child care services. The proposed planning ratio would be the only planning standard for CCC places for children aged below three. During the planning process, the Planning Department would adopt a macro perspective instead of taking into account the demography of individual districts. Given that the demand for child care services would be affected by factors such as changes in the number of families with domestic helpers or grandparents who could help look after the children, changes in the number of small children, etc., the planning ratio would need to be reviewed periodically.

Planning for welfare facilities in private development projects

12. Some members took the view that the Administration should promote provision of welfare facilities by private developers, particularly in districts which were not covered by the Administration's welfare facility projects. They suggested that the Administration should specify in the land sale conditions that developers should allocate not less than 10% of the construction area of residential development projects and development projects along the Mass Transit Railway stations for provision of long-term care services and welfare facilities.

13. According to the Administration, it had all along been encouraging the business sector to use its sites owned for welfare uses. In drawing up development plans, the relevant government departments would seek SWD's views on the requirements for welfare facilities. The Lands Department would, by modifying lease conditions if necessary, require developers to provide the welfare facilities in need. The Administration would also incorporate land sale conditions for suitable land sale sites, requiring private developers to construct welfare facilities specified by the Administration with the construction cost to be met by the Lotteries Fund.

Relevant papers

14. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Relevant papers on planning for social welfare facilities

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Welfare Services	12 December 2016 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	19 July 2018 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	10 December 2018 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	20 May 2019 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	10 June 2019 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes

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