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Panel on Welfare Services

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 11 January 2021**

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

The Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities ("the Fare Concession Scheme") has been implemented since 2012 with the policy objective of building a caring and inclusive society in Hong Kong by enabling elderly persons aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities¹ to travel on designated public transport modes at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip. The Administration reimburses specified Public Transport Operators ("PTOs")² the actual applicable fares charged by them minus the uniform flat rate of \$2 per trip paid by an eligible beneficiary on an accountable basis.

2. The Administration engaged a consultancy firm in 2018 to conduct a comprehensive review of the effectiveness and fiscal sustainability of the Fare Concession Scheme having regard to the ageing demographic trend, operation of public transport, effectiveness of anti-abuse measures, public aspirations and the Government's overall fiscal affordability, etc. According to the Administration, following the announcement by the Chief Executive in January 2020 of the Administration's proposal to lower the age

¹ Eligible persons with disabilities are persons aged below 65 with 100% disabilities receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and recipients of Disability Allowance in the same age group.

² The services of these specified PTOs currently being covered by the Fare Concession Scheme include general lines of the Mass Transit Railway, general franchised bus services, regular franchised and licensed ferry routes and green minibus services.

eligibility of the Fare Concession Scheme from 65 to 60, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Transport Department ("TD") had requested the consultant to accord priority to studying practical options to implement the proposal in the review. Upon receipt of the consultant's report, the Administration would consider carefully the feasibility, detailed arrangements, timing of implementation, financial assessment and so on of the improvement measures proposed therein. As announced by the Chief Executive in her Policy Address on 25 November 2020, the Administration had largely completed the internal assessment and on the premise of being able to combat and prevent abuse effectively, the required funding would be included in the 2021-2022 Budget with a view to progressive implementation within the financial year.

3. At the Council meeting of 4 November 2020, Hon Frankie YICK raised a written question about whether the Administration would extend the coverage of the Fare Concession Scheme to red minibuses, non-franchized buses providing residents' services, kaitos and trams. In its reply, the Administration advised that the Fare Concession Scheme currently covered most of the public transport modes, which accounted for 88% of the overall public transport journeys in 2019. The fare adjustment and service arrangements of these public transport modes were subject to government regulation. Nevertheless, the Administration would carefully consider the proposal of covering more public transport modes and explain in detail the decision on various proposals upon completion of the review.

4. According to the Administration's replies to relevant questions raised by Members at Council meetings, TD had asked PTOs to step up ticket inspection and passenger identity verification to prevent any abusive use of concessionary fare, and had proactively arranged site monitoring surveys on the usage of the Fare Concession Scheme. Ineligible passengers found travelling at the concessionary fare would be required by PTOs to pay a surcharge and/or the shortfall. Depending on the circumstances, PTOs might prosecute or refer individual cases to the Police for follow-up actions.

5. The Administration will brief the Panel on Welfare Services on the progress of the proposal to lower the age eligibility of the Fare Concession Scheme at the meeting on 11 January 2021.