

The Legislative Council Meeting on 30 November 2011
Motion on “Comprehensively reviewing and perfecting the
Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme”

Progress Report

At the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting held on 30 November 2011, the motion on “Comprehensively reviewing and perfecting the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme” moved by Hon WONG Sing-chi and amended by Hon IP Wai-ming, Hon IP Kwok-him and Hon Miriam LAU was carried. The wording of the motion is at Annex.

2. We are grateful for the views expressed by Members at the Motion Debate. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare also gave a detailed response on that occasion. Since then, the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme has continued and we have been closely monitoring its operation. The Administration will further brief the LegCo Panel on Manpower on the latest progress at its meeting on 16 February 2012.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
January 2012

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Comprehensively reviewing and perfecting the
Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme”
moved by Hon WONG Sing-chi
at the Council meeting of 30 November 2011**

**Motion as amended by Hon IP Wai-ming, Hon IP Kwok-him and
Hon Miriam LAU**

That, given that travelling expenses are an important item of daily expenses borne by the vast number of employees and job-seekers in Hong Kong, the Government thus announced last year the idea of the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme (‘WITSS’) and started to receive applications in October this year, but there are still voices in society calling for further review and improvement of WITSS, so that more low-income workers and grass-root people may benefit from WITSS; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to:

- (a) immediately review afresh all the details of WITSS, including simplifying and improving its application procedure, as well as re-assessing and announcing the latest number of people who will benefit from WITSS, instead of waiting for a year to conduct a mid-term review;
- (b) relax the eligibility criteria of WITSS, adopt a dual-track approach for each unit of application, relax the income and asset limits, including specifying the exclusion of the cash value of insurance policies, severance payments and long service payments, etc., from asset calculation, and consider calculating applicants’ total assets and incomes on the basis of their household expenditure patterns, so as to achieve the purposes of subsidizing low-income grass-root employees and promoting employment;
- (c) review the amount of monthly allowance per person under WITSS, and consider raising the amount having regard to actual living circumstances;
- (d) study including the Job Search Allowance provided under the former Transport Support Scheme in WITSS, and refrain from tightening the eligibility requirements for applicants for the Job Search Allowance and from lowering the ceiling of reimbursement;

- (e) to introduce employment and livelihood protection and activate the assistance mechanism of the Community Care Fund, so as to assist grass-root workers who fall outside government labour and welfare protection in obtaining wage subsidies and basic livelihood protection, including offering subsidy support to people with monthly personal incomes below \$6,500 who are ineligible for WITSS on a household basis; and
- (f) to formulate a comprehensive review mechanism for the regular and comprehensive review of WITSS-related matters and periodic adjustments; and
- (g) in the long run, study replacing WITSS by a ‘maintenance grant scheme for low-income families’, so as to enable more families whose incomes are on the low side but who are ineligible for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance to receive maintenance grant; and
- (h) in respect of the eligibility criteria of WITSS, rationalize the unreasonable arrangement of small discrepancies in household income limits among families with two or more members.