

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1493/19-20
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 May 2020, at 10:30 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Member absent : Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)

Public Officers attending : Item IV
Dr LAW Chi-kwong, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Johann WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr LAM Ka-tai, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)
Social Welfare Department

Ms Barbara CHU
Senior Principal Executive Officer (Special Duties)
Social Welfare Department

Mr Andy LIU
Chief Executive Officer (Planning)1
Social Welfare Department

Items V and VI

Ms PANG Kit-ling
Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Wendy JAN
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

- I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)775/19-20(01), CB(2)868/19-20(01) and
CB(2)935/19-20(01)]

*(The Deputy Chairman chaired the meeting in the absence of the
Chairman.)*

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the
last meeting:

- (a) joint letter dated 20 March 2020 from 22 Members to Chairmen of committees concerning the meeting arrangements of various committees in the light of the latest situation of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") epidemic;
- (b) information paper provided by the Administration entitled "Extra Allowance for Recipients of Social Security Payments and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy"; and
- (c) letter dated 4 May 2020 from Dr KWOK Ka-ki requesting the Panel on Health Services to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Welfare Services to discuss the provision of medical and financial support for those who had recovered from COVID-19.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)921/19-20(01) to (02)]

2. Members agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Home Affairs at 10:45 am on 8 June 2020 to discuss the following items:

- (a) Work progress of the Family Council; and
- (b) Language support services and dedicated outreach services teams for ethnic minorities.

Members also agreed that the next regular meeting originally scheduled for 8 June 2020 at 10:45 am would be held at 12:00 noon or immediately after the aforesaid joint meeting, whichever was later, to discuss "Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses".

III. Proposal for setting up a subcommittee on issues relating to Silver Age Card under the Panel on Welfare Services

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)513/19-20(01) and CB(2)718/19-20(01)]

3. The Deputy Chairman referred members to the joint letter dated 10 January 2020 from Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr Wilson OR (LC Paper No. CB(2)513/19-20(01)) requesting the Panel to form a subcommittee to discuss issues relating to the provision of Silver Age Card for people aged between 60 and 64 ("the proposed Subcommittee"). The Deputy Chairman said that the proposed terms of reference, work plan and

time frame of the proposed Subcommittee had been set out in Mr LEUNG's letter dated 9 March 2020 (LC Paper No. CB(2)718/19-20(01)).

4. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the proposed Subcommittee should discuss issues relating to the provision of support services for people aged between 60 and 64, such as tax concession to encourage them to engage in employment and health care vouchers to relieve their burden of medical expenses.

5. Members agreed to Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's proposal as set out in his letter (LC Paper No. CB(2)718/19-20(01)). The Deputy Chairman said that the Subcommittee would be placed on the waiting list of subcommittees on policy issues in accordance with the established procedures.

IV. Annual briefing on welfare facility projects funded by the Lotteries Fund

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)868/19-20(02) and CB(2)921/19-20(03)]

6. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed members on new welfare facility projects for which the Administration planned to seek funding from the Lotteries Fund ("LF") in the 2020-2021 financial year and the latest development of projects reported in the last annual briefing.

Implementation progress of welfare facility projects

7. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Wilson OR expressed concern about the lengthy process of implementing the LF-funded welfare facility projects. Mr POON was also worried that the implementation of these projects might be further delayed if the Administration was required to consult the current-term District Councils ("DCs") on projects for which the previous-term DCs had already supported. Mr POON and Mr OR urged the Administration to review the existing procedures and take concrete measures to speed up the implementation of LF-funded welfare facility projects.

8. SLW responded that consultation at district level on provision of welfare facilities could be lengthy, particularly when there were dissenting views on land uses. Moreover, collaboration on projects involving several bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") might take time. He further said that as the development of "Government, Institution or Community" ("GIC") sites

involved a lot of planning work, the service commencement lead time for welfare facilities on GIC sites was around seven to 10 years, which was longer than the lead time of five to seven years for welfare facilities to be incorporated into private development projects on land sale sites. As regards consultation with DCs, SLW said that consultation at district level had been completed for some projects listed in Annex I to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)868/19-20(02)) and relevant DCs would be consulted on other LF-funded welfare facility projects.

9. Dr CHENG Chung-tai opined that the time gap between the provision of welfare facilities and resident intake in new public rental housing ("PRH") estates had become wider in recent years. Citing the public housing development at Tung Chung Area 103 as an example, he said that there was a two-year gap between the targeted resident intake in the 2024-2025 financial year and the estimated service commencement of the Neighbourhood Elderly Centre and Integrated Home Care Services Team in the 2026-2027 financial year. In his view, the delay in the provision of welfare facilities in new PRH estates, particularly in PRH estates located at remote areas such as Tung Chung or Shui Chuen O, had a profound impact on local residents. He called on the Administration to adopt measures to expedite the provision of welfare facilities in new PRH estates.

10. SLW responded that 26 LF-funded welfare facility projects were in progress and the Administration planned to seek funding from LF in the 2020-2021 financial year in respect of 12 new welfare facility projects. The Administration would continue to explore scope for enhancing inter-departmental coordination when planning for the construction of welfare facilities in new PRH estates in order to speed up the provision of such facilities. He added that the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") had obtained members' support in 2019 for the creation of the post of Assistant Director (Planning and Development) to head a new Planning and Development Branch of the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") with a view to enhancing the coordination of capital works projects of welfare facilities. However, the proposed creation of the post had yet to be examined by the Finance Committee. Notwithstanding this, the Administration would continue its efforts to expedite the implementation of LF-funded welfare facility projects.

11. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that while the feasibility study of converting the premises of ex-Kei Leung Primary School in Tuen Mun into an integrated welfare service complex ("conversion project") had been completed in 2015, the conversion work had not yet commenced. Pointing

out that the premises of ex-Kei Leung Primary School had been vacant for more than 10 years, he enquired about the progress of the conversion project.

12. SLW responded that the integrated welfare service complex under the conversion project was expected to commence operation in the 2023-2024 financial year. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") supplemented that the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee had approved funding for the conversion project in December 2018. The Administration had engaged consultancy services for the conversion project in May 2019 and would submit the detailed design of the integrated welfare service complex to the Independent Checking Unit of the Housing Department for approval. The conversion work was expected to commence in the third quarter of 2021 for completion in 2022-2023.

13. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that the premises of ex-Kei Leung Primary School would be vacant for around 16 years by the time the conversion project was completed in the 2022-2023 financial year. He considered such an arrangement very unsatisfactory. SLW responded that while the Administration had endeavoured to commence the conversion project as early as possible, considerable time was incurred to deal with divergent views about the conversion project.

Planning for the provision of welfare facilities

14. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung took the view that the Administration should provide as many welfare service places as possible under new PRH projects in order to increase the overall supply of welfare service places to better meet the service demand of society as a whole. He also suggested that the Administration should handle cases of cost overruns of LF-funded welfare facility projects with more flexibility so as to speed up the implementation of such projects.

15. Noting that the LF-funded welfare facilities proposed by the Administration were mainly for elderly services, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that the Administration should also increase the provision of other services (e.g. hostels for mentally handicapped persons and girls' hostels) to meet the service demand.

16. SLW responded that in planning for the provision of welfare facilities, the Administration had to take into account various factors such as the constraints in the redevelopment projects, balance between the supply of domestic and non-domestic flats in PRH estates and the

cost-effectiveness of providing relevant welfare facilities. Moreover, the scale and types of welfare services to be provided under a project were restricted by the use and size of the premises/site concerned. In general, more service places could be provided in new development areas or private development projects.

17. SLW further explained that the Administration had reinstated the population-based planning ratios for elderly welfare service facilities in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG"). Planning ratio for rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities would also be incorporated into HKPSG after the new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan had been formulated. The inclusion of these planning ratios in HKPSG would facilitate the Administration to reserve sites and premises in new development projects for the provision of elderly services and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.

18. In response to Mr Wilson OR's enquiry about the planned provision of welfare facilities for the coming five years, SLW said that Annex 2 to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)868/19-20(02)) had set out the latest development of the welfare facility projects which were included in the last annual briefing in April 2019. As for the requisite information, the future provision plans of welfare facilities would depend on the development plans formulated by the Development Bureau as well as the land sale programme and land sale conditions.

Ratio of subsidized to non-subsidized residential care places for the elderly

19. The Deputy Chairman noted that since 2015, a provision had been included in service contracts to allow the Administration to adjust the ratio of subsidized to non-subsidized places ("the ratio") in contract residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHEs") having regard to the demand for and supply of such places in the community. In the light of the acute shortage of subsidized residential care places for the elderly, he took the view that the Administration should cease to adopt the ratio of 6:4 in contract RCHEs.

20. SLW responded that the ratio in contract RCHEs would be affected by factors such as the supply of relevant service places in the districts and the size of the RCHEs. He added that not all contract RCHEs provided subsidized and non-subsidized places at a ratio of 6:4. Some contract RCHEs had adopted a ratio higher than 6:4. DDSW(S) supplemented that the ratio in the contract RCHE at Pratas Street in Sham Shui Po, which commenced service in April 2016, was 8:2 and the ratio in the contract RCHE at Wing Shun Street in Tsuen Wan, which commenced service in

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August 2017, was 8.3:1.7. He further said that among the five contract RCHEs which would commence/had commenced service between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 financial years, three had provided subsidized and non-subsidized places at a ratio of higher than 6:4. At the Deputy Chairman's request, the Administration undertook to provide information on the numbers of contract RCHEs funded by LF which had adopted/would adopt a ratio higher than 6:4.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1158/19-20(01) on 5 June 2020.)

Construction cost of specified welfare facilities

21. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the construction cost of welfare facilities which were specified by the Government under the land sale conditions should be met by the private developers concerned rather than by LF. SLW responded that private developers would factor in the relevant construction cost in the purchase price of the land concerned if they were required to absorb the construction cost. He further said that under the current arrangement whereby the construction cost was funded by LF, the Administration would be able to better monitor the project concerned and ensure that the welfare facility would meet the Administration's requirements.

Management of Lotteries Fund

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that as stipulated in the Government Lotteries Ordinance (Cap. 334), LF should be used for the purpose of financing, by way of grant, loan or advance, the support and development of social welfare services. However, the Administration had allocated \$1 billion for the provision of quarantine centres, resulting in a reduction of the LF reserve by 10%. Moreover, the construction work of the quarantine centres was commissioned to a developer without going through the established tendering procedures required for other LF-funded projects. He considered that the above arrangement was a serious management problem of LF. He was also concerned that the use of LF for financing non-welfare facilities had thinned out the funding for welfare facility projects, thereby delaying the provision of welfare facilities.

23. SLW responded that as it was difficult to estimate the development of the COVID-19 epidemic, especially at its early stage, the Administration considered it necessary to set up new quarantine camp units as soon as possible in order to get prepared for the need to accommodate a large

number of people who were required to be placed under quarantine. Given the exigency of the situation, tender had not been invited for some contracts relating to the construction of the aforesaid quarantine camp units. Considering the welfare/medical nature of the quarantine camp units concerned and that "camps and hostels" was one of the categories under the list of services/projects considered as within the ambit of LF, the use of LF for the construction of quarantine camp units was in line with the objective of LF. He further advised that in view of a more stable epidemic situation, the Development Bureau had indicated that the Administration would invite tenders for the provision of facilities in quarantine centres as appropriate.

Motion

24. Mr Wilson OR moved the following motion which was seconded by Mr LEUNG Che-cheung:

"本會要求政府全面檢討推行政程序，加快及壓縮相關行政程序，使籌劃多年的社福措施，特別是安老、康復服務等項目可盡快落實及投入服務。"

(Translation)

"This Panel requests the Government to review comprehensively the implementation procedures, and to expedite and compress the relevant administrative procedures, so that social welfare initiatives which have been under planning for years, especially projects related to elderly and rehabilitation services, etc., can be implemented and commissioned as soon as possible."

25. The Deputy Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Deputy Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

V. Arrangements made and support measures provided by the Social Welfare Department for the homeless
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)921/19-20(04) to (05) and CB(2)950/19-20(01)]

26. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare ("AD(Family and Child Welfare)") briefed members on

the social welfare support services provided by SWD for street sleepers.

Statistics on street sleepers

27. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the statistics on street sleepers, AD(Family and Child Welfare) said that in 2019-2020 (up to 31 March 2020), the three Integrated Services Teams for Street Sleepers ("ISTs") and related service units had approached 1 423 street sleepers. She advised that SWD had received 538 applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") from street sleepers.

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28. The Deputy Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Prof Joseph LEE were of the view that the Administration would not be able to aptly provide the necessary support for street sleepers in the absence of relevant statistics. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, Prof Joseph LEE and Mr POON Siu-ping, AD(Family and Child Welfare) undertook to provide information on (a) the number of street sleepers who had given up street sleeping and a breakdown of the reasons for giving up street sleeping; (b) the increase in the number of street sleepers in recent months due to the rise in the unemployment rate under the COVID-19 epidemic; (c) the number of street sleepers approached by ISTs and their related service units during the COVID-19 epidemic; and (d) an update on the total number of street sleepers.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1372/19-20(01) on 16 July 2020.)

Financial and medical support for street sleepers and the needy

29. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that according to the survey conducted by the Society for Community Organization on the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the homeless who were not on CSSA ("SoCO's survey") (LC Paper No. CB(2)950/19-20(01)), many people became street sleepers for the first time during the COVID-19 epidemic because they had lost their jobs or could not afford the high rental of private housing in Hong Kong after they had moved back from the Mainland. He enquired whether the Administration would provide these "first-time" street sleepers with unemployment allowance and shelters. He also asked whether subsidies would be provided for ISTs to rent guesthouses as short-term accommodation for street sleepers.

30. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that SWD had specifically requested ISTs to reach out to "first-time" street sleepers and assist them in

addressing their short-term accommodation need. To her understanding, ISTs had used the emergency fund ("EF") provided by SWD to cover short-term payment of rent or rental deposit of some "first-time" street sleepers. Some non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") had also set up funds to provide emergency financial assistance to the homeless.

31. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would consider, in the light of the COVID-19 epidemic, increasing the provision for EF and relaxing the requirements for applying for additional funds. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that an annual allocation of \$90,000 would be provided to each IST as EF and ISTs might apply for additional funding when the balance of EF dropped to \$22,500. The Administration would keep in view the balance of EF of individual ISTs and make flexible arrangements on the funding allocation if necessary.

32. In response to Prof Joseph LEE's enquiry about the medical support provided for street sleepers in need, AD(Family and Child Welfare) said that as many street sleepers were suffering from chronic illness or mental illness, the Administration had earmarked resources for the provision of an additional psychiatric nurse for each IST in 2020-2021.

33. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern that some needy people were unable to seek assistance in meeting their basic needs, such as food and shelter, due to the suspension of welfare services during the COVID-19 epidemic. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that the Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs") remained in operation under the COVID-19 epidemic. A contact number was provided and for display at the entrances of all IFSCs for members of the public to contact IFSC staff outside normal office hours if necessary. She further said that IFSCs might provide temporary cash grants from charitable trust funds for CSSA applicants to tide over financial difficulties while they were waiting for the disbursement of CSSA payment. Short-term food assistance would also be provided for people in need.

34. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would consider waiving the daily fee of \$200 for accommodation and meal arrangements for street sleepers who were required to undergo compulsory quarantine at the temporary accommodation sites, namely Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre and Lady MacLehose Holiday Village. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that as the above-mentioned temporary accommodation sites were managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"), she did not have the requisite information. On the instruction of the Deputy Chairman,

the Clerk would request LCSD to provide its response in this regard.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1372/19-20(01) on 16 July 2020.)

Employment support for street sleepers

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35. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that the government of Taiwan had provided free storage facilities for street sleepers there so that they did not have to carry their personal belongings with them when going to work or looking for jobs. He considered that the Administration should make similar arrangements for street sleepers. Sharing a similar view, the Deputy Chairman suggested that lockers should be set up in parks for street sleepers. At Dr KWOK Ka-ki's request, AD(Family and Welfare) undertook to provide a response to the suggestion.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1372/19-20(01) on 16 July 2020.)

36. Noting that a majority of the street sleepers covered by the SoCO's survey were male aged between 40 and 59, Prof Joseph LEE enquired whether the Administration had assisted these street sleepers in seeking employment. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that street sleepers in need might approach the Labour Department for assistance. The Employment Support Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund also provided time-limited financial support for employers to retain employees. She further said that street sleepers who had become unemployed were encouraged to apply for CSSA to meet their basic needs. In response to Prof Joseph LEE's concern that some street sleepers had not applied for CSSA because they did not have a correspondence address, AD(Family and Child Welfare) said that street sleepers might use the addresses of ISTs for applying for social welfare benefits.

Accommodation needs of street sleepers

37. Noting that the Administration would open temporary shelters for people in need only during extreme weather conditions, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired whether the Administration would consider setting up permanent centres for street sleepers to address their accommodation needs.

38. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that at present, NGOs provided a total of 635 places of overnight or temporary accommodation

for street sleepers, including 222 subvented places and 413 places on a self-financing basis. The Administration would continue to identify suitable premises with a view to increasing the provision of short-term accommodation for street sleepers.

39. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the inadequate provision of accommodation places for street sleepers. Dr KWOK Ka-ki requested the Administration to provide a timetable for meeting the accommodation needs of the 1 423 street sleepers who had been approached by ISTs and their related service units in 2019-2020. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that the Administration would endeavour to address the accommodation needs of street sleepers as far as practicable. She further said that some people resorted to street sleeping because they could not afford the high rental of private housing. The Administration had therefore proposed to increase the maximum rent allowance under the CSSA scheme with a view to relieving the rental burden of CSSA recipients.

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40. At the request of Dr KWOK Ka-ki, AD(Family and Child Welfare) undertook to provide information on when the Administration would be able to arrange overnight or temporary accommodation for all the 1 423 street sleepers who had been approached by ISTs and related service units in 2019-2020, and whether the Administration would provide rental allowance for street sleepers who were not receiving CSSA and had difficulties in meeting rental expenses.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1372/19-20(01) on 16 July 2020.)

41. Mr CHU Hoi-dick suggested that in order to alleviate the shortage of accommodation places for street sleepers, the Administration should, when granting GIC sites for provision of welfare facilities or religious facilities, impose a condition to require the applicants to provide overnight accommodation for street sleepers in these facilities. In addition, the Administration should absorb the management and administrative costs incurred in providing accommodation for street sleepers at these facilities. AD(Family and Welfare) responded that the Administration would consider the suggestion.

Strengthening the support for street sleepers

42. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Dr CHENG Chung-tai referred to the recent incidents at Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po and Fortress Hill in

North Point where some street sleepers' personal belongings were vandalized and expressed concern that some people might have a bad impression on and a hostile attitude towards street sleepers. They called on the Administration to strengthen the support for street sleepers. Mr LEUNG also urged the Administration to step up efforts to create a humane and friendly atmosphere in society towards street sleepers and formulate policies on the provision of support services for them.

43. Mr CHU Hoi-dick was dissatisfied that the Administration had not offered help to street sleepers who were affected by the incident in Tung Chau Street. Taking the view that social workers of SWD should provide necessary assistance proactively for street sleepers who were in need of help, he urged SWD to strengthen the support for street sleepers. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that SWD's social workers stood ready to offer assistance to street sleepers in need. Street sleepers might approach IFSCs or ISTs for assistance.

44. Prof Joseph LEE and Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed dissatisfaction that while various B/Ds had a role to play in providing support for street sleepers, AD(Family and Child Welfare) was the only public officer attended the discussion of this item. They were of the view that the Government did not attach importance to addressing the needs of street sleepers. Noting with concern that the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") had refused to send representatives to attend the discussion of this item, Dr KWOK Ka-ki called on AD(Family and Child Welfare) to request HAB and other relevant B/Ds to collaborate in enhancing the support for street sleepers. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that she would convey Dr KWOK's view to LWB for consideration.

45. Expressing great dissatisfaction about the Administration's failure in addressing the needs of street sleepers, the Deputy Chairman said that the Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") should assign a bureau or department to take the lead in tackling street sleeping problem as the issue straddled across the purview of various B/Ds. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the needs of street sleepers had not been addressed properly because no policy bureau had been appointed to steer the provision of support for street sleepers, and he considered it a major policy deficiency. Dr CHEUNG further said that although some members had conveyed to CS the need for assigning a policy bureau to formulate homeless-friendly policies and oversee their implementation, no positive response had been provided by CS. Given that the problem of street sleeping had exacerbated during the COVID-19 epidemic, he considered that there was an imminent need to formulate policies on the homeless. In this connection, he

suggested that the Panel should write to the Chief Executive ("CE") and request her to direct a policy bureau to steer the provision of support for the homeless and formulate homeless-friendly policies. He also suggested that the Panel should discuss the subject matter with the Administration again in future.

(Post meeting note: the aforesaid letter from the Panel Chairman to CE dated 19 May 2020 and the reply from the Administration dated 17 July 2020 were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1391/19-20(01) and (02) on 21 July 2020.)

Processing applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

46. Noting that SWD had pledged to process CSSA applications within 28 days, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration had revised the pledge for processing CSSA applications received during the COVID-19 epidemic. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that SWD targeted to process CSSA applications as pledged. In the light of a substantial increase in the number of CSSA applications received during the COVID-19 epidemic, SWD had engaged retired SWD staff to handle the applications with a view to maintaining the pledge to keep the processing time within 28 days. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, AD(Family and Child Welfare) undertook to find out if there was available information on the average number of days SWD had taken to process CSSA applications received during the COVID-19 epidemic.

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(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1372/19-20(01) on 16 July 2020.)

VI. Social welfare support provided at community housing after its completion

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)921/19-20(06) to (07)]

47. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, AD(Family and Child Welfare) briefed members on the provision of social welfare support services for residents of community housing at district level.

Attendance of public officers

48. As the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") had set up a task force to provide one-stop coordinated support to facilitate the implementation of community housing projects, the Deputy Chairman and

Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed disappointment that no representatives from THB had attended the meeting to respond to members' relevant questions.

Welfare services for residents of community housing

49. Pointing out that residents of community housing were low-income households or those who had long been on the waiting list for PRH, Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the inadequate provision of welfare services for these residents. Dr CHEUNG and the Deputy Chairman considered that the Administration should earmark funding for setting up dedicated social worker teams in community housing to provide services for residents. Mr CHU Hoi-dick opined that the Administration should, at an early planning stage of the community housing projects, discuss with the NGOs implementing these projects ("operating NGOs") the provision of welfare services for prospective residents, with a view to reserving suitable premises for providing such services.

50. Noting that the planning standard of the Neighbourhood Level Community Development Project ("NLCDP") was that one NLCDP team would be provided for deprived and transient communities with a population of around 3 000, Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the Administration would consider reducing the population size required by the aforesaid standard so as to set up more NLCDP teams to provide welfare services for residents of community housing.

51. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that depending on the scale and nature of individual community housing projects, operating NGOs would provide their residents with various types of support services according to their residents' needs. SWD would discuss with these NGOs and the relevant district service units the provision of welfare services for residents of community housing.

52. Mr CHU Hoi-dick said that according to his understanding, there would be large-scale community housing projects implemented by NGOs in the coming two years, such as the proposal to provide 2 000 community housing units near Kam Sheung Road with a population of about 6 000. In his view, the provision of welfare services through the operating NGOs and the relevant district service units might only be suitable for small-scale community housing projects located in developed areas. He enquired about the Administration's plan on the provision of welfare services for residents of large-scale community housing projects located in remote areas.

53. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that, similar to the current arrangement on the provision of welfare services in new PRH estates, SWD would, before resident intake stage of large-scale community housing projects, discuss with the operating NGOs and relevant district service units the welfare service needs of prospective residents. SWD would then make the necessary arrangements on the provision of welfare services for these residents.

54. Referring to a case in which the IFSC had ceased to provide welfare services to a family in need after the latter had moved into community housing, the Deputy Chairman enquired about the division of responsibilities between SWD and the operating NGOs in the provision of welfare services to residents of community housing, and whether SWD had provided adequate support for these NGOs to cater for the needs of their residents.

55. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that support services provided by the operating NGOs for their residents should not be regarded as mainstream welfare services. These NGOs should refer residents in need to appropriate social welfare services provided by SWD or NGOs subvented by SWD if necessary.

Pilot Scheme on Relocation Allowance for Beneficiaries of the Community Housing Movement

56. The Deputy Chairman sought information from the Administration on the number and outcome of the applications received under the Pilot Scheme on Relocation Allowance for Beneficiaries of the Community Housing Movement ("the Pilot Scheme"), and the reasons for rejecting applications under the Pilot Scheme. He asked whether the Administration would review the Pilot Scheme.

57. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that the three-year Pilot Scheme was launched in December 2017 and was expected to benefit about 1 000 households. As at end of April 2020, a total of 311 applications were received under the Pilot Scheme, with 288 applications were vetted to be eligible and granted the relocation allowance. For the remaining 23 applications, 14 applications were under vetting, seven applications had been withdrawn upon receipt of other funding for the same relocation, and two applications were rejected because the family income of the applicants had exceeded the eligibility threshold.

VII. Any other business

58. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:48 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 September 2020