

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. FC166/20-21  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : FC/1/1(12)

**Finance Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**  
**on Friday, 15 January 2021, from 2:48 pm to 4:11 pm**

**Members present:**

Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH

Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP  
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

**Public officers attending:**

Ms Alice LAU Yim, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Miss CHAN Cheuk-yin, Jennie	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim, JP	Deputy Director (Development and Construction), Transport and Housing Bureau
Mr HONG Wing-kit	Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme), Transport and Housing Bureau
Ms Emily SER Hing-yi	Chief Architect (7), Housing Department
Mr Ringo MOK Wing-cheong, JP	Project Manager (West), Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr Desmond LAM Chi-keung	Chief Engineer (West 1), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr LUK Wai-hung, JP	Project Manager (Major Works), Highways Department
Mr Anthony LUK Kwok-on	District Planning Officer (Fanling, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long East), Planning Department
Mr Patrick HO Kwong-hang	Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Planning)
Mr CHOW Bing-kay	Chief Traffic Engineer (New Territories West), Transport Department
Mr Eric WAN Pak-yan	Principal Transport Officer (New Territories 2), Transport Department
Ms Karen LEUNG Miu-yin	Chief Estate Surveyor (Acquisition Section), Lands Department
Mr HO Kai-ming, JP	Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr KOK Che-leung	Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)
Mr Andrew KWAN Kai-ming	Senior Statistician (Social Welfare), Social Welfare Department
Miss Rita LAU Choi-ha	Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security)1, Social Welfare Department

**Clerk in attendance:**

Ms Anita SIT	Assistant Secretary General 1
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**Staff in attendance:**

Miss Bowie LAM	Council Secretary (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)7

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Action

The Chairman reminded members of the requirements under Rule 83A and Rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure.

**Item 1 — FCR(2020-21)81  
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS  
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 9 DECEMBER 2020**

**PWSC(2020-21)18  
HEAD 711 — HOUSING**

**Civil Engineering — Land development  
776CL — Site formation and infrastructure works for  
public housing developments at Kam Tin South,  
Yuen Long**

Continuation of the discussion on item FCR(2020-21)81

2. The Finance Committee ("FC") continued with the discussion on item FCR(2020-21)81.

3. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation on PWSC(2020-21)18 made by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") at its meeting held on 9 December 2020, i.e. the upgrading of part of 776CL (Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing developments at Kam Tin South, Yuen Long) as 858CL, entitled "Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing developments at Kam Tin South, Yuen Long – Phase 1", to Category A at an estimated cost of \$907.1 million in money-of-the-day prices; and the retention of the remainder of 776CL in Category B. PWSC spent about 2 hours and 48 minutes on scrutinizing the above mentioned proposals. FC had also spent 42 minutes on discussing this agenda item at the last meeting.

4. The Chairman declared that he was a Director and the Chief Executive Officer of Well Link Insurance Group Holdings Limited. He was also a Director of Well Link General Insurance Company Limited and Well Link Life Insurance Company Limited, both under the Well Link Insurance Group.

*Transport facilities and widening works at Kam Sheung Road*

5. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed concern about the lack of comprehensive planning of transport and other supporting facilities for the public housing project at Kam Tin South. Ms Alice MAK said that residents were concerned about the implications of the public housing developments at Kam Tin South on local traffic, and noted the Government's plan to take forward the improvement works of Kam Sheung

Road. Ms MAK and Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired about the details of the works, and requested the Government to undertake to implement the works in order to allay the concerns of the residents. Mr Martin LIAO and Mr Holden CHOW opined that, as a result of the development and population growth in North West New Territories, coupled with the need of some residents to commute to work across districts, the traffic congestion problem of Yuen Long district had deteriorated. It was thus necessary for the Government to improve the ancillary transport facilities in Yuen Long district (including Kam Tin South) by, for instance, expediting the progress of the improvement works to Pok Oi Interchange and enhancing the services of the West Rail (including arranging additional special departures) as early as possible.

6. Mr Tony TSE expressed support for this item, and hoped that FC would expeditiously complete its deliberation so that the site formation and infrastructure works for the public housing developments at Kam Tin South could start as soon as possible. He opined that while it was important to expeditiously increase public housing supply, the Government should concurrently conduct a review, with a view to making more meticulous and forward-looking overall planning. Despite the possible implications of public housing developments on some districts, members of the public should be as accommodating as possible and work harmoniously together so that the Government could build more public housing expeditiously to improve the living conditions of those in need. On the other hand, the Government should also make its best endeavour to explain to the local community the details of the public housing developments, including measures to mitigate traffic or other impacts.

7. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for this item. He pointed out that in the 2020 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Government had identified all of the 330 hectares of land required for providing 316 000 public housing units to meet the demand for about 301 000 public housing units in the coming 10 years (i.e. 2021-2022 to 2030-2031). To achieve the objectives of this blueprint, members should support the public housing developments at Kam Tin South, including the site formation and infrastructure works being scrutinized now. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok also urged the Government to properly address the concerns raised by residents and members about the supporting facilities of the public housing developments.

8. Deputy Director (Development and Construction), Transport and Housing Bureau ("DD(D&C)/THB") advised that the Government had attached great importance to the public housing developments at Kam Tin South and hoped that the public housing developments under this item

could be completed expeditiously; the Government would also provide long-, medium- and short-term supporting facilities having regard to their priorities and the lead time required. Some of the facilities/works (such as the improvement works at Kam Tin Road under the Advance Works of Kam Tin South Development and the construction of more bus lay-bys along Kam Sheung Road) could be completed before the completion of the public housing developments at Kam Tin South. Some other works (such as a few road improvement works) had been covered by this project and could be taken forward in tandem with the public housing developments at Kam Tin South. As for local road improvement works of a larger scale, preparatory work had also been commenced by the Government.

9. Project Manager (West), Civil Engineering and Development Department ("PM(W)/CEDD") and Chief Traffic Engineer (New Territories West), Transport Department (CTE(NTW)/TD) added that the Government substantially completed the Feasibility Study on Traffic Improvement Scheme for Kam Sheung Road, and would take forward the improvement works of Kam Sheung Road in accordance with the established procedures and mechanism. At this stage, the Government had planned to create an item for this project. Depending on the progress of the work (including design, site investigation, public consultation and so on), funding application could generally be submitted to FC within two to three years following the creation of the item. According to the result of the Traffic Impact Assessment, the public housing developments at Kam Tin South would only cause minor traffic impacts on Kam Sheung Road, but considering the concerns of local residents and members, the Government undertook to take forward the widening of Kam Sheung Road. Such works would widen Kam Sheung Road to a standard single two-lane carriageway, which was normally 7.3 m wide, and suitably widen the footpath at each side of Kam Sheung Road in order to enhance road safety. PM(W)/CEDD also said that based on preliminary assessment, the project would involve the resumption of about 60 private lots and clearance/alteration of about 50 temporary structures. The specific scope and design of the project, as well as the arrangements for land acquisition, etc. would have to be finalized in detail at the next stage. Ms Alice MAK urged the Government to strengthen communication with the relevant Rural Committee ("RC") and villagers on the design of the improvement works of Kam Sheung Road. The Administration took note of the views expressed.

10. At the request of Mr LUK Chung-hung, the Administration would provide supplementary information on the implementation timetable of the improvement works at Kam Sheung Road after the meeting.

[*Post-meeting note:* The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. FC108/20-21(01) on 11 February 2021.]

11. In response to Mr Holden CHOW's enquiry about the improvement works to Pok Oi Interchange, PM(W)/CEDD and CTE(NTW)/TD advised that the Government would start the improvement works to Pok Oi Interchange within this year to relieve the traffic congestion. PM(W)/CEDD advised that the Government remained concerned about and continuously improved the traffic condition at Pok Oi Interchange, which included the completion of some improvement works in late 2016 and phased completion of road markings enhancement works at Pok Oi Interchange (southbound) in July 2018 and October 2019. As a result of the aforesaid improvement works, the current traffic condition at Pok Oi Interchange during peak hours saw a significant improvement. It was expected that the traffic flow at Pok Oi Interchange would be at an acceptable level following the population intake of the public housing developments at Kam Tin South. CEDD would commence the improvement works to Pok Oi Interchange within this year to provide an exclusive left turn lane at Pok Oi Interchange from westbound Castle Peak Road, with a view to further improving the traffic flow at the Interchange.

12. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok stated that the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) was originally scheduled for completion in 2023 under the Railway Development Strategy 2014, but the Government reported to the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways of the Legislative Council earlier today that the works of these facilities would be delayed and not be completed until 2035, causing the progress to fall way behind schedule. Mr LUK Chung-hung urged the Government to take forward the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) expeditiously to ensure that the relevant facilities would dovetail with the development of new development areas ("NDAs") (such as the Kwu Tung North NDA). The Administration noted the member's views.

### *District facilities*

13. Referring to paragraph 14 of PWSC(2020-21)18, Mr YIU Si-wing pointed out that both the Housing, Town Planning and Development Committee of the Yuen Long District Council and the Pat Heung Rural Committee were concerned about the implications of the public housing developments at Kam Tin South on district facilities, traffic and transport. Mr YIU requested the Government to explain whether the facilities currently planned for the public housing project complied with the relevant planning standards, and how a balance could be struck between planning and the concerns raised by the residents.

14. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr Holden CHOW said that since as many as 90 000 to 100 000 people would move to Kam Tin South in Yuen Long upon full development of the area, the Government could not plan for district facilities simply by taking into account the population of 22 700 involved in the current public housing developments at Kam Tin South. They expressed grave concern about a serious shortage of supporting facilities in the public housing developments at Kam Tin South given that the Government had not adopted a new town approach in developing the area. Mr LEUNG continued that despite its pledge to provide appropriate social service facilities at the "Government, Institution and Community" ("GIC") sites nearby to make up for the lack of facilities in the public housing developments at Kam Tin South, the Government had not yet decided the specific facilities to be provided at the GIC sites. Hence, he said that it would be difficult for him to support the funding proposal at this stage.

15. DD(D&C)/THB advised that the Government had conducted public consultation on the site formation and infrastructure works for the public housing developments at Kam Tin South, including consulting the relevant District Council ("DC") and RC. The Government noted the views of local residents, and had provided detailed written reply in response to the concerns raised by the DC/RC. DD(D&C)/THB further advised that the public housing developments at Kam Tin South would involve about 8 100 housing units and a projected population of about 22 700. An initial proposal was to provide, in the public housing, one day care centre for the elderly, one district elderly community centre, one integrated family service centre, two child care centres, three kindergartens, one parent resources centre, a wet market and retail facilities, etc. In addition, the Government would also provide appropriate facilities in the GIC sites in Sites 1 and 6 of Kam Tin South, including two primary schools and a community complex (the facilities proposed to be provided in the complex included a sports centre, a small library, a clinic, a community health centre, a home for the elderly providing services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and public car parking spaces). The relevant departments were discussing the details and implementation of the relevant facilities. Based on the current assessment, the facilities to be provided in the public housing and GIC sites at Kam Tin South would be adequate to cater for the demand of local residents. DD(D&C)/THB stressed that the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address had laid down the goal of increasing the plot ratio of public housing projects, so that about 5% of the gross floor area could be set aside for the provision of social welfare facilities. The public housing project at Kam Tin South would also follow this direction in its development. Although a new town approach was not adopted in developing Kam Tin South, the Government would still provide



appropriate supporting facilities for the public housing developments at Kam Tin South in accordance with the population and other development parameters of the area.

*Job opportunities*

16. Mr Martin LIAO noted that according to the Government's rough estimate, the five housing development sites at Kam Tin South could generate about 3 000 job opportunities, while the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area ("NDA") and the Lok Ma Chau ("LMC") Loop, the Kwu Tung North NDA and the New Territories North NDA could generate a total of over 250 000 job opportunities involving various industries, many of which were related to hi-tech sectors. Mr LIAO asked whether the Government had assessed how many of the job opportunities created in the above NDAs would suit the background and needs of local residents, and whether appropriate training would be provided to support same-district employment for local residents. Mr LIAO suggested that the Government should develop consumer industries in NDAs, so as to offer jobs with lower entry thresholds.

17. DD(D&C)/THB advised that job opportunities in North West New Territories was not necessarily related directly to this project, but he stressed that certain job opportunities had been provided in Kam Tin South. PM(W)/CEDD added that, Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen NDA was a diversified NDA involving various commercial activities such as catering and retail industries. These industries would provide job opportunities with a wide range of entry requirements and demands and it was believed that most jobs created would be suitable for local employment. As for the development of LMC Loop, although it would be developed as an innovation and technology park, it also required different types of elementary jobs to complement and support. These would provide job opportunities for local residents in North West New Territories with different academic qualifications and working experience.

18. Mr Martin LIAO considered that the provision of job opportunities for people living in public housing was significantly concerned with the public housing development of Kam Tin South, and should therefore be discussed together to facilitate members' consideration of the present funding proposal. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of the aforesaid views.

19. Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) stated that during the different stages of implementation of each project, the general public and members would probably have different

concerns, the relevant bureaux would seek to arrange for the corresponding public officers to attend meetings to respond to members' enquiries as far as possible. She would be pleased to reflect Mr Martin LIAO's views to the relevant bureaux.

Voting on FCR(2020-21)81

20. At 3:29 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2020-21)81 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division. The Chairman declared that 19 members voted in favour of and 5 members voted against the item. No member abstained from voting. The votes of individual members were as follows:

*For:*

Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him	Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan
Mr Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung	Dr Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Mr WONG Kwok-kin	Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee
Mr YIU Si-wing	Mr MA Fung-kwok
Mr KWOK Wai-keung	Mr Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung
Mr POON Siu-ping	Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok
Mr Jimmy NG Wing-ka	Dr Junius HO Kwan-yiu
Ms YUNG Hoi-yan	Dr Pierre CHAN
Mr CHAN Chun-ying	Mr LUK Chung-hung
Mr Tony TSE Wai-chuen	
(19 members)	

*Against:*

Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun	Mr Steven HO Chun-yin
Mr LEUNG Che-cheung	Mr Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Dr CHENG Chung-tai	
(5 members)	

21. The Chairman declared that the item was approved.

**Item 2 — FCR(2020-21)82****HEAD 170 — SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

<b>Subhead 179</b>	<b>Comprehensive social security assistance scheme</b>
<b>Subhead 180</b>	<b>Social security allowance scheme</b>
<b>Subhead 700</b>	<b>General non-recurrent</b>
<b>Subhead 809</b>	<b>Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed</b>

22. The Chairman advised that the item invited FC to:

- (a) approve a 2.7% increase in the standard payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme and the rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance ("SSA") Scheme with effect from 1 February 2021;
- (b) note the financial implications of an extra \$1,448 million each year arising from item (a) above; and
- (c) approve the extension of Item 809 "Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed" ("Special Scheme") under Head 170 Social Welfare Department ("SWD") Subhead 700 "General non-recurrent" to implement the time-limited arrangement for six months from 1 April to 30 September 2021, under which the total cash value of insurance policies of able-bodied applicants of CSSA will be disregarded as assets, with the expenditure to be met by existing provisions.

23. The Chairman advised that the Labour and Welfare Bureau consulted the Panel on Welfare Services on items (a) and (b) on 23 November 2020 and briefed the Panel on item (c) on 30 December 2020. The Panel spent about 1 hour and 7 minutes on deliberating the proposal.

#### Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed

##### *Manpower Arrangements*

24. Mr POON Siu-ping noted that the latest arrangement of the Special Scheme was announced in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address, under which during the six-month period from 1 April to 30 September 2021, the cash value of insurance policies of able-bodied CSSA applicants would not be counted as assets during the grace period of one year ("disregarding arrangement"). Considering that the number of applications might continue to increase and the Administration would impose a freeze on staffing level, Mr POON expressed concern about whether the Administration could process the applications in a timely manner. Dr CHENG Chung-tai suggested that the Administration should set up a dedicated team to handle the work.

25. Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") and Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) ("DDSW(S)") responded that the number of CSSA applications had been increasing steadily over the past period of time. After the applicants submitted all the required documents, SWD would complete the approval of their applications in accordance with its performance pledge. SWD currently engaged more than 70 retired social security grade officers under the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme to assist in the relevant vetting work, and would continue to monitor the work progress and consider applying for the creation of additional supernumerary posts where necessary. In response to Dr CHENG Chung-tai's comment that short-term engagement of retired civil servants to assist in processing CSSA applications was not an ideal arrangement, USLW explained that the former civil servants engaged on a short-term basis were newly retired with experience in vetting CSSA applications, and they would help expedite the vetting and approval of applications.

*Assets that can be disregarded*

26. Mr Christopher CHEUNG, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Dr Priscilla LEUNG and Mr YIU Si-wing supported the arrangement under which the cash value of insurance policies would be disregarded as assets. Mr YIU enquired about the reasons for this arrangement to be applicable only to CSSA applications submitted within the proposed six-month period, and the anticipated effects of the new measures. Mr CHEUNG was concerned that the new measures might be abused in the absence of restrictions on the quantity, type and cash value of insurance policies that can be disregarded, and enquired why the Administration had not disregarded the value of shares held by applicants as assets as well. Noting that CSSA applicants would convert their assets into insurance policies during the effective period of the measure, Mr YIU opined that the Administration could show leniency and exercise discretion according to individual circumstances as far as possible, considering that insurance policies provided the insured with future protection and there was little chance for them to deploy or obtain cash from the money invested within a short period of time.

27. DDSW(S) explained that the disregarding arrangement aimed to provide short-term assistance to people who had lost their jobs during the epidemic, thus the Government set the application period to six months with a one-year grace period for cash value of the insurance policies involved to be disregarded as assets. SWD would ensure that the method of computing the cash value of insurance policies adhered to the principle of prudent use of public funds. USLW advised that the Government would consider the pre- and post- application asset changes of CSSA

applicants and their family members to examine the abnormal changes in asset distribution, so as to avoid abuse of the measure. At present, the Government was unable to provide an estimate of the number of beneficiaries of the arrangement. On the other hand, USLW explained that some people subscribed to insurance policies to provide long-term retirement protection for the future; on the contrary, it was generally easier for members of the public to cash out their stocks to meet urgent needs, thus the disregarding arrangement would not cover the value of shares.

28. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan remarked that even though SWD had raised the asset limits for applicants by 100% in light of the economic impacts of the epidemic, as many as 250 000 people were currently unemployed and only around 19 000 of them had successfully applied for CSSA, accounting for less than 10%; she was worried that the application threshold of the Special Scheme was still too high for people in short-term unemployment. Ms YUNG and Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that due to their reluctance to apply for CSSA, some unemployed people were compelled to cash out their owner-occupied properties.

29. USLW advised that the assets of CSSA applicants could not exceed the ceiling set in the Scheme. Under the existing arrangement of the CSSA Scheme, the value of owner-occupied properties of able-bodied applicants would be disregarded as assets for a grace period of 12 months. The Special Scheme was merely one of the Government's measures to support the unemployed. The unemployed could join the programmes of the Employees Retraining Board and receive an allowance upon completion of the relevant programmes.

#### Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

30. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr YIU Si-wing supported the proposed 2.7% increase in the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the rates of allowances under the SSA Scheme. Mr LUK suggested the Administration consider temporarily relaxing the requirement that applications had to be made on a household basis under the CSSA Scheme, so that the unemployed could apply for assistance on an individual basis; and enquired about the amount of money involved in the proposal.

31. USLW replied that Hong Kong's welfare system founded its basis on the ideas of mutual care and support of family members as well as mutual family support, and formulated various household-based welfare policies. He further explained that even for the Old Age Living Allowance under the SSA Scheme, the asset value of both husband and

wife was used as a factor for considering applications. If the concept of welfare policies using household as the basic unit of society was changed, not only was public money unable to be used prudently, but might also bring about negative impacts on social ethics.

32. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that the Government would very likely be plagued by fiscal deficits in the next few years. He urged the Administration that, when adjusting the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and the rates of allowances under the SSA Scheme, instead of making sole reference to the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices, it should also take into account the general environment of society and the needs of the grass roots of the time. USLW noted the suggestion.

33. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan considered that the current rate of increase of CSSA rent allowance was minor and out of tune with the leasing market's current situation, the Administration should therefore review the basis applicable to the adjustment of rent allowance. USLW advised that FC had approved the Government's proposal of increasing the maximum rent allowance significantly at the meeting on 29 May 2020, and the relevant measures had already come into effect on 1 July 2020. The Government would adjust the levels of various CSSA allowances on an annual basis in accordance with changes to the relevant price indices.

#### Other measures for supporting the unemployed

34. Dr CHENG Chung-tai remarked that many people were underemployed due to the impacts of the epidemic, and suggested the Administration reduce the working hour requirements to be eligible for the allowance under the Working Family Allowance Scheme, so as to relieve the financial hardship of the underemployed. USLW noted the suggestion.

35. Mr YIU Si-wing suggested the Administration temporarily raise the maximum amount of allowance under the "Love Upgrading Special Scheme". USLW said that the Administration had conducted a review of the relevant measure to take account of inflation, and increased the maximum amount of allowance disbursement to an eligible trainee under the "Love Upgrading Special Scheme" to \$5,800 per month.

#### Establishing an unemployment assistance

36. Mr LUK Chung-hung, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan and Dr Priscilla LEUNG urged the Administration to consider afresh providing temporary unemployment assistance to the unemployed. Dr LEUNG considered that

temporary unemployment assistance represented society's recognition of the contribution made by the unemployed in the past. USLW replied that members could raise the proposal at the meeting of relevant Panels or their subcommittees for discussion.

Voting on FCR(2020-21)82

37. At 4:08 pm, there being a lack of quorum, the Chairman ordered that the quorum bell be rung. At 4:11 pm, with a quorum present, the Chairman put item FCR(2020-21)82 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item and the item was approved.

38. The meeting ended at 4:11 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat  
4 June 2021