

立法會
Legislative Council

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LC Paper No. CB(4)409/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 9 November 2020, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP (Chairman)
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon HUI Chi-fung

Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

Member attending : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP

Members absent : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

[According to the announcement made by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government on 11 November 2020 pursuant to the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Qualification of the Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Kenneth LEUNG, KWOK Ka-ki, Dennis KWOK Wing-hang and Alvin YEUNG were disqualified from being a member of the Legislative Council on 30 July 2020.]

Public Officers attending : Item VI

Dr LAW Chi-kwong, GBS, JP
Chairperson of the Community Care Fund Task Force under
the Commission on Poverty
Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Patrick LI Pak-chuen, JP
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Ms Carmen KONG Ka-man
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs)

Mr Keith GIANG Tsz-sheung
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Creative Industries)A

Ms May CHAN Wing-shiu, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

Mr CHAN Nap-ming
Project Director (1)
Transport and Housing Bureau

Mr Stephen WONG Wing-hung
Project Director (2)
Transport and Housing Bureau

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

Mr Daniel LO Tsz-chiu
Chief Manager (Allied Health)
Hospital Authority

Clerk in : Miss Connie AU
attendance Chief Council Secretary (2) 3 (Acting)

Staff in : Ms Jasmine TAM
attendance Senior Council Secretary (2) 3

Mr Dennis HO
Council Secretary (2) 3

Miss Meisy KWOK
Legislative Assistant (2) 6

Ms Louisa YU
Legislative Assistant (2) 3

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I. Election of Deputy Chairman

The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session. Mr WONG Kwok-kin was nominated by Mr LUK Chung-hung and the nomination was seconded by Dr Priscilla LEUNG. Mr WONG Kwok-kin accepted the nomination.

2. Mr KWONG Chun-yu was nominated by Dr Helena WONG and the nomination was seconded by Mr WU Chi-wai. Mr KWONG Chun-yu accepted the nomination.

3. As there were no other nominations, the Chairman announced a vote by secret ballot. The result of the vote was that 17 members voted for Mr WONG Kwok-kin and 11 members voted for Mr KWONG Chun-yu. The Chairman declared Mr WONG Kwok-kin elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

4. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Schedule of meetings for the 2020-2021 session

5. The Chairman said that as agreed at the last meeting, the Panel would hold its regular meetings on the second Monday of each month at 4:30 pm (except the one in March 2021 which would be rescheduled to 15 March 2021 at 4:30 pm). Members also agreed that as the special meetings of the Finance Committee would be held from 12 to 16 April 2021 and the second Monday of June 2021 was a public holiday, the regular meetings in April and June would be rescheduled to 8 April 2021 at 2:30 pm and 18 June 2021 at 8:45 am respectively.

(Post-meeting note: The schedule of regular meetings of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)208/20-21 on 10 November 2020.)

IV. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)140/20-21(01) and (02)]

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Regular meeting in December 2020

6. The Panel agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting on 14 December 2020 at 4:30 pm:

- (a) implementation of the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme; and
- (b) proposed retention of one supernumerary post of Government Architect (D2).

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)388/20-21 issued on 24 November 2020 that the Panel would change to receive a briefing by the Secretary for Home Affairs on the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address and discuss the staffing proposal in paragraph 6(b) at its meeting on 14 December 2020. On 7 December 2020, members were further informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)487/20-21 that the policy briefing-cum-meeting originally scheduled for 14 December 2020 would be rescheduled to a later date.)

Items proposed for discussion at future meetings

7. The Chairman invited members to note a letter dated 6 November 2020 from Hon IP Kin-yuen proposing items for discussion by the Panel in the 2020-2021 session.

(Post-meeting note: The letter from Hon IP Kin-yuen was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)218/20-21(01) on 10 November 2020.)

8. Expressing concern about the management of the Chinachem Charitable Foundation ("the Foundation") as the trustee holding the estate of the late Mrs Nina WANG, Dr Priscilla LEUNG proposed that the Panel should discuss issues relating to the monitoring and management of various charitable trusts in Hong Kong (including the Foundation) with a view to better utilizing these charitable resources to assist those hard hit by the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") epidemic.

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V. Proposed appointment of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project in the 2020-2021 session

[LC Paper No. CB(1)26/20-21(03)]

9. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Development supported the proposed appointment of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") Project at its meeting on 27 October 2020.

10. Members present supported the proposed appointment of the Joint Subcommittee and noted that the arrangements for its activation would be subject to the relevant decision of the House Committee. Expressing concern about the cost overrun of the WKCD project and the delay of the M+ project, Mr KWONG Chun-yu considered that the Administration should be requested to provide an update on the financial situation of the WKCD project at the first meeting of the Joint Subcommittee.

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)503/20-21 on 10 December 2020 that the immediate activation of the Joint Subcommittee was endorsed by the House Committee.)

VI. Community Care Fund

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)140/20-21(03) and (04)]

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chairperson of the Community Care Fund Task Force ("C of CCF Task Force") briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)140/20-21(03)].

(Post-meeting note: A submission from an organization (關注綜援低收入聯盟) was tabled at the meeting and issued to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(2)218/20-21(02) on 10 November 2020.)

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Discussion

Provision of assistance to people affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic

12. Mr Christopher CHEUNG and Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed appreciation of the work of CCF in providing prompt assistance to people facing financial difficulties and in plugging gaps in the existing system. They hoped that CCF could introduce short-term programmes to help needy individuals and especially the unemployed to tide over the difficulties arising from the COVID-19 epidemic. They were concerned that a number of companies might lay off their staff or even close their businesses upon the end of the second tranche of the Employment Support Scheme ("ESS") in November 2020. Sharing a similar view, Mr YIU Si-wing also hoped that CCF could introduce measures to assist those with temporary financial difficulties amidst the current economic situation. Mr KWONG Chun-yu was of the view that CCF should play a more active role in providing relief to individuals hard hit by the epidemic. Noting that the Administration had no plan to establish a new unemployment assistance system, Mr KWONG asked whether CCF would launch any assistance programmes to address the imminent needs of the unemployed.

13. C of CCF Task Force said that the Administration had already introduced three rounds of measures under the Anti-epidemic Fund ("AEF") to provide targeted relief to sectors and individuals hard hit by the epidemic or affected by the Government's anti-epidemic measures. The Administration would also utilize the unspent balance of AEF to introduce enhancements or new assistance measures as needed having regard to the development of the epidemic and the situations of different sectors. C of CCF Task Force further said that the Administration had launched the "Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed" under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme to provide temporary support to the unemployed and their families with immediate financial difficulties.

14. C of CCF Task Force said that considering the scale of impact caused by COVID-19 on the community and the available resources of CCF, the Administration considered it more appropriate to deploy the financial resources of the Government instead of CCF to introduce the relevant relief measures. C of CCF Task Force further said that the current balance of CCF was about \$10 billion after deducting the funds that had been committed but not yet disbursed and this was barely enough to cover the

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amount required for providing a single month of wage subsidies to eligible employers under ESS. That notwithstanding, CCF had launched the first round of the "One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA" Programme ("Living Subsidy Programme") and the "One-off Allowance for New Arrivals from Low-income Families" Programme in July and September 2020 respectively to provide assistance to persons from low-income families. In addition, the second round of the Living Subsidy Programme would be rolled out in January 2021.

15. Mr Wilson OR considered that the application procedures for the Living Subsidy Programme should be streamlined so that the subsidies could be disbursed to the applicants in a timely manner. Mr KWONG Chun-yu asked whether or not CCF would launch another round of the Living Subsidy Programme in addition to the existing two rounds. C of CCF Task Force responded that the relevant vetting procedures to establish the eligibility of applicants had been kept to the minimum necessary. CCF currently had no plan to implement the third round of the Living Subsidy Programme.

16. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong estimated that if each unemployed person was granted a subsidy of \$8,000 per month, it would only take about \$15 billion to implement such an unemployment assistance scheme for a period of six months. Mr SHIU Ka-fai said that the number of unemployed should be much less than the number of employees being subsidized under ESS. C of CCF Task Force responded that the number of unemployed was not a static figure and the financial resources that would be required to implement an unemployment assistance scheme would be much greater than what members had anticipated. He stressed that while the Administration would implement various measures to render support to individuals and businesses affected by the epidemic, it also had to ensure the prudent use of public funds.

17. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the Administration would consider making a further injection of funds into CCF so that more assistance programmes could be launched. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired about the possible ways to enhance the investment returns of the funds of CCF. C of CCF Task Force explained that CCF had placed part of its funds with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority ("HKMA") to earn investment returns linked to the performance of the Hong Kong Exchange Fund, and HKMA was responsible for managing the funds that CCF had deposited with it.

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In response to Mr Christopher CHEUNG's enquiry, C of CCF Task Force said that CCF would withdraw the funds from HKMA according to the cash flow requirements of CCF. For instance, with the implementation of a number of new large-scale CCF assistance programmes from the second half of 2020, it was anticipated that the current bank deposit of CCF would be inadequate to meet the required cash flow of the assistance programmes. The Commission on Poverty had, therefore, approved an early withdrawal of \$7 billion principal from HKMA in late 2020.

18. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired why some of the assistance programmes had not been regularized despite the fact that they had been implemented by CCF for years. C of CCF Task Force responded that depending on the evaluation results concerned, programmes that were proven effective would be regularized and the schedule for regularizing these programmes would vary. Besides, some of CCF's assistance programmes were one-off programmes.

Pilot schemes on living allowances for carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities ("PWDs")

19. The Chairman and Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low-income Families ("Pilot Scheme for Carers of Elderly Persons") and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of PWDs ("Pilot Scheme for Carers of PWDs") should be enhanced. The Chairman said that CCF should relax the eligibility criteria of the two pilot schemes in order to benefit more carers. Sharing a similar view, Mr SHIU Ka-chun queried why the number of carers receiving living allowances under the two pilot schemes was less than the respective available quotas. Noting that carers receiving CSSA or Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA") could not apply for any one of the two pilot schemes concurrently, Mr SHIU said that it was imperative that the payment under CSSA and the living allowances provided under the two pilot schemes were sufficient for the carers to meet their needs. The Chairman suggested that CCF should consider increasing the living allowances provided under the two pilot schemes with a view to encouraging more carers to take care of the elderly persons and PWDs.

20. C of CCF Task Force said that the Administration had provided various support services to carers of elderly persons and PWDs. The living allowances provided under the two pilot schemes were a form of financial assistance aiming to supplement the living expenses of carers with difficulties. C of CCF Task Force further said that the Labour and Welfare

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Bureau had launched a study on support for carers to explore the needs of carers with a view to formulating a more comprehensive policy. A multi-disciplinary consulting team of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University was commissioned to assist in carrying out the study. Pending the completion of the study in 2021, the two pilot schemes were extended for 36 months until end-September 2023 to continue to provide living allowances for carers in need. C of CCF Task Force added that the quotas prescribed for the two pilot schemes were provided for budgetary purpose. Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) of the Social Welfare Department said that while the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") would issue letters to selected elderly persons and PWDs to invite their carers to apply for the allowances, it was up to the eligible elderly carers and PWD carers to decide whether or not to participate in the relevant pilot schemes. In addition, some carers might withdraw from the schemes for various reasons, e.g. the elders or the PWDs being taken care of had begun receiving residential care or had passed away, or the carers concerned had started to receive CSSA or OALA.

21. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern that some carers were unable to attend to urgent personal matters or take a short break due to the lack of emergency respite service. He urged the Administration to enhance the provision of support services for carers so that they could be temporarily released from their caring responsibilities. C of CCF Task Force responded that the Administration would continue to enhance the provision of residential respite service and day care service for elderly persons and PWDs.

Home care service and dental service for elderly persons

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the interface between the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support for Elderly Persons with Mild Impairment ("Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support") implemented by CCF and the Integrated Home Care Services administered by SWD. Dr CHEUNG pointed out that he had come across cases where the elderly persons, who had been receiving services under the Pilot Scheme on Home Care and Support, were assessed to be no longer suitable for the services under the said pilot scheme due to physical deterioration. They were asked to apply for the Integrated Home Care Services instead, resulting in a "vacuum period" during which no home care services were provided to the elderly persons concerned. C of CCF Task Force undertook to follow up the issue raised by Dr CHEUNG.

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23. Mr Wilson OR suggested that CCF should consider relaxing the eligibility criteria of the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme with respect to the minimum age so as to enable more elderly persons to benefit from the Programme. C of CCF Task Force said that after the fourth phase of expansion, the Programme now covered all recipients of OALA and aged 65 or above, CCF had no plan to change the eligibility criteria of the Programme but would closely monitor the implementation of the Programme when formulating future plans. He explained that free removable dentures were provided to eligible elderly persons under the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme. As for other dental treatments, elderly persons could make use of the vouchers provided under the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme as necessary. Dr Priscilla LEUNG suggested that the Administration should deploy mobile dental vehicles to provide dental service to elderly persons living in remote areas and then extend the service to 18 districts. C of CCF Task Force said that he would relay the suggestion to the Food and Health Bureau for consideration.

C of CCF
Task Force

Improvement of the living environment of elderly persons

24. Dr Junius HO said that he had carried out a programme recently to help some elderly singletons living in Kwai Shing West Estate to replaster and repaint the ceiling of their homes. He said that the programme was well received by the elderly persons as it could substantially improve their living environment. Dr HO pointed out that such kind of minor repair works only cost about a thousand dollars per flat. He urged CCF to launch a similar programme. He added that the application and vetting procedures should be made simple.

25. C of CCF Task Force responded that CCF had launched the Assistance Programme to Improve the Living Environment of Low-income Subdivided Unit Households ("SDU Programme") to provide a one-off subsidy in kind for low-income households living in subdivided units to improve their living environment through carrying out minor improvement/repair works and purchasing furniture and household goods etc. Eligible households would be entitled to a one-off subsidy in kind according to the number of their household members, for instance, the ceiling of the subsidy in kind was set at \$8,500 for one-person households and \$10,000 for two-person households etc. C of CCF Task Force said that although the SDU Programme did not cover Public Rental Housing estates, similar assistance programmes were also available from some other organizations.

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Assistance for patients with uncommon diseases

26. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that families with members suffering from uncommon diseases were often under huge financial pressure. She hoped that more assistance could be provided to these patients and their families and that more kinds of drugs could be included in CCF's drug subsidy programmes. C of CCF Task Force responded that new drugs were selected to be covered under CCF's drug subsidy programmes based on the expert advice of medical professionals of the Hospital Authority and their clinical experience. He said that the CSSA Scheme would provide a safety net for those who could not support themselves financially and special grants were also available under the CSSA Scheme to meet the specific needs of eligible applicants.

Implementation of the transitional housing projects

27. Noting that three out of six transitional housing projects subsidized by CCF had begun tenant in-take from August 2020, Mr Kenneth LAU asked if there were any successful applicants who had eventually declined the offer. Project Director (2) of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("PD(2)/THB") responded that the occupancy rate averaged over 90% for the three transitional housing projects which had commenced operation. In general, no successful applicants had refused offer so far. In response to Mr LAU's further enquiry, PD(2)/THB said that public engagement activities with local stakeholders would be conducted by the NGOs concerned on the proposed transitional housing projects when required.

Provision of Subsidy to Needy Primary and Secondary Students for Purchasing Mobile Computer Devices to Facilitate the Practice of e-Learning ("MCD Subsidy")

28. In response to Mr Wilson OR's concern, Deputy Secretary for Education (6) clarified that CCF had already expanded the MCD Subsidy programme so that all public sector schools implementing e-learning at home during the class suspension period could submit applications to the Education Bureau for the MCD Subsidy for their students who met the relevant eligibility criteria.

Use and management of the estate of the late Mrs Nina WANG

29. Dr Priscilla LEUNG reiterated her concern about the management of

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the Foundation as the trustee holding the estate of the late Mrs Nina WANG. She said that to her understanding, the interim administrators of the estate appointed by the Court had collected a very high fee for their services. Dr LEUNG said that the Secretary for Justice, as the protector of charities, should impose appropriate control on the management of the Foundation. Dr LEUNG and Mr SHIU Ka-fai shared a similar view that the estate should be used expeditiously for charitable purposes and for helping members of the public adversely affected by the epidemic in particular. C of CCF Task Force responded that members' views would be referred to the Secretary for Justice for consideration.

C of CCF
Task Force

VII. Any other business

30. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:25 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 January 2021