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Report of the Subcommittee to Study Population Policy and Initiatives

Purpose

This paper reports on the deliberations of the Subcommittee to Study Population Policy and Initiatives (“the Subcommittee”).

Background

2. The Government released the [Report on “Population Policy—Strategies and Initiatives”](#) (“Report on Population Policy”) in January 2015, which was compiled following a public engagement exercise and research carried out in 2013 and 2014 by the Steering Committee on Population Policy chaired by the then Chief Secretary for Administration (“CS”). The Report on Population Policy outlined a variety of concrete initiatives as the action agenda, covering the main areas of: promoting sustainable growth, unleashing the potential of the local labour force, enhancing the quality of home-grown talent, attracting talent from outside, importation of labour, fostering a supportive environment for forming and raising families, and embracing opportunities in an ageing society. The key initiatives were announced in the 2015 Policy Address.¹

3. According to the Administration, all the initiatives announced in the Report on Population Policy have been fully implemented by the bureaux and departments concerned and the Steering Committee on Population Policy was dissolved at the same time. At present, population policy is followed up by **the Human Resources Planning Commission (“HRPC”) chaired by the CS.**

¹ Details are set out on pages 107 to 119 of the [Policy Agenda of the 2015 Policy Address](#).

The Subcommittee

4. The Subcommittee was appointed by the House Committee on 2 June 2023 to study population policy and initiatives in Hong Kong. Hon Kenneth LEUNG Yuk-wai and Hon YUNG Hoi-yan are the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee respectively. The terms of reference and membership list of the Subcommittee are set out in [Appendices 1](#) and [2](#) respectively.

5. The Subcommittee has held a total of nine meetings since its commencement of work in June 2024, including one joint meeting with the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Human Resources Training and Planning.

Deliberations of the Subcommittee

6. The Subcommittee has comprehensively reviewed Hong Kong's population policy, examined the Administration's short, medium and long-term measures to address the challenges brought by changes in demographic structure, looked into the demographic structure and manpower resources required for future social development, and engaged in in-depth discussions with the Administration on various aspects such as training up suitable manpower, implementing measures to encourage childbearing, promoting active ageing, improving elderly services, and tackling in the long run the challenges of population ageing in a planned and pragmatic manner.

Population policy

7. Members are concerned that it has been a decade since the Government released the Report on Population Policy in 2015. During the decade, Hong Kong has witnessed significant changes in its social environment, economy and demographic structure, coupled with challenges such as rapidly ageing population, persistently low birth rate and a shrinking overall workforce. In tandem, the extensive application of new technologies such as artificial intelligence ("AI") and automated machinery has reshaped the industrial landscape and the demand for labour. Moreover, with Hong Kong's active participation in the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("GBA") as an initiative to integrate into the overall national development, it is particularly important for Hong Kong to plan its manpower strategy in the light of the development needs. In response to the evolving circumstances, emerging challenges and new opportunities, members have called on the Administration to **set specific targets for future population growth**, and formulate without delay **a new forward-looking population**

policy that keeps pace with the times and aligns with the long-term development needs of Hong Kong.

8. The Administration has highlighted that all the initiatives announced in the Report on Population Policy have been fully implemented and integrated into the work of various bureaux as part of their ongoing policies. The Government would also review the effectiveness of the initiatives in a timely manner and make adjustments in the light of factors such as changes in the social environment and demographic trends. Key performance indicators would be set for policy initiatives aimed at fostering population growth, while the latest manpower demand would be regularly projected so that the initiatives would be adjusted as needed. The Administration has remarked that the CS-chaired HRPC is currently tasked to consolidate the resources and efforts of the Government and various sectors in reviewing, examining and holistically coordinating manpower policies and measures, including issues related to population policy, with a view to promoting the further development of a high value-added and diversified economy in Hong Kong.

9. Members are of the view that **HRPC should further enhance its functions and transparency**, including holding more meetings and improving the information dissemination mechanism, so that the public may have a clearer understanding of the latest development of the population policy and the way forward, while various sectors of the community, including the industry players, may make corresponding planning and coordination. The Administration has remarked that HRPC holds regular meetings to discuss issues relating to population policy and manpower development, and to advise on the relevant work undertaken by various bureaux. A press release on the topics discussed, outcome of discussions and follow-up actions would be issued after each meeting to keep the community informed of the work.

10. Members have repeatedly stressed that **population policy straddles a wide range of policy areas**, including economic development, lands and planning, housing supply, education and training, healthcare services, labour and welfare and childcare support, etc. To effectively address the challenges brought about by demographic changes and to align with the long-term development of Hong Kong, **enhanced inter-bureaux coordination and cooperation** are indispensable so that **a sound plan for the various policy areas can be drawn up**.

11. Members have urged the Government to **re-consolidate and optimize the steering of the population policy**, with **high-level leading officials making overall planning in a holistic manner** and examining from a **macro perspective** the impact of demographic changes on Hong Kong's economy, society and allocation of public resources, with a view to **better**

grasping the crux of Hong Kong’s demographic issues and proposing solutions to them, as well as defining a vision and setting targets for the overall population planning, so as to ensure the sustainable development of Hong Kong’s economy and its long-term competitiveness.

Population projections

12. Population structure and trend are closely related to social development. The Subcommittee has examined the [statistical report on “Hong Kong Population Projections 2022-2046”](#). Members note that while the trend of natural decrease in Hong Kong’s population will continue with a cumulative decrease of 0.75 million up to 2046, a net population inflow of 1.52 million is expected, which includes holders of Permits for Proceeding to Hong Kong and Macao (commonly known as “One-way Permits”), those who come to Hong Kong through various talent attraction and labour importation schemes, as well as foreign domestic helpers. The net population inflow will offset the natural decrease in population. In 2046, the overall population of Hong Kong is projected to remain broadly on an upward trend, reaching 8.19 million (see Chart 1):²

至2046年的推算人口
Projected population up to 2046

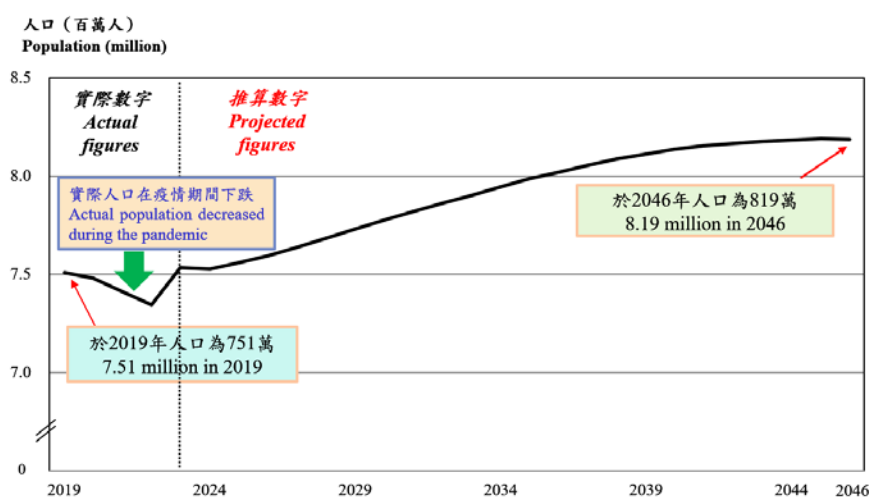


Chart 1: Projected population up to 2046

13. In addition, members are concerned that the population of elderly persons aged 65 and above is projected to increase from 1.45 million in 2021 to 2.74 million in 2046, representing an increase from 20.5% to 36.0% of the total population (see Chart 2):

² Source for Charts 1 to 4: Administration’s paper on “Hong Kong Population and Labour Force Projections up to 2046” (LC Paper No. [CB\(2\)1049/2024\(01\)](#)).

按年齡組別劃分的人口 Population by age group

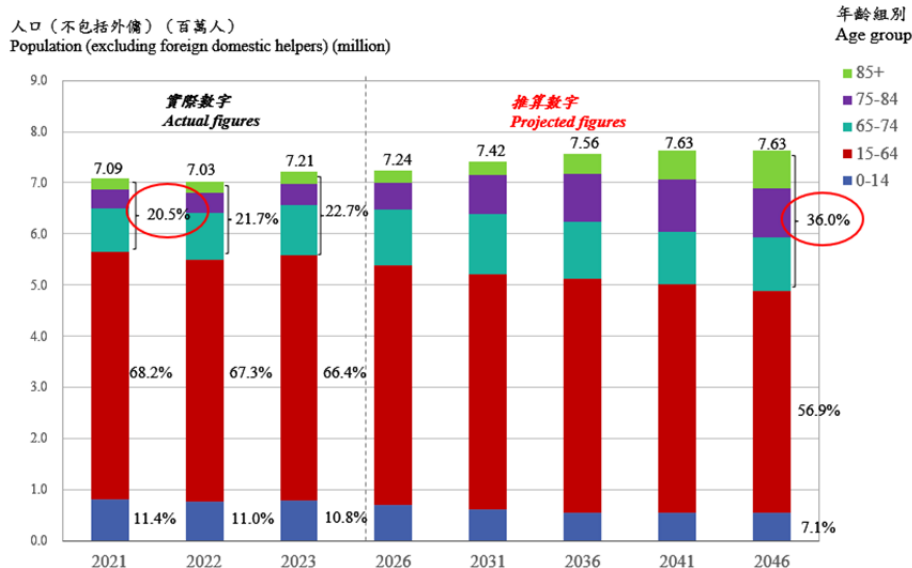


Chart 2: Population by age group

14. On the other hand, Hong Kong's fertility rate is generally on a downward trend over the 30-year period from 1991 to 2021. Factors affecting the fertility trend include late marriages, increasing prevalence of spinsterhood, declining fertility among married women, increasing divorce rate, and changes in the number of births born in Hong Kong to women from the Mainland. Although the total fertility rate in Hong Kong will rebound to 938 live births per 1 000 females in 2046, it will remain well below the replacement level of 2 100 (see Chart 3):³

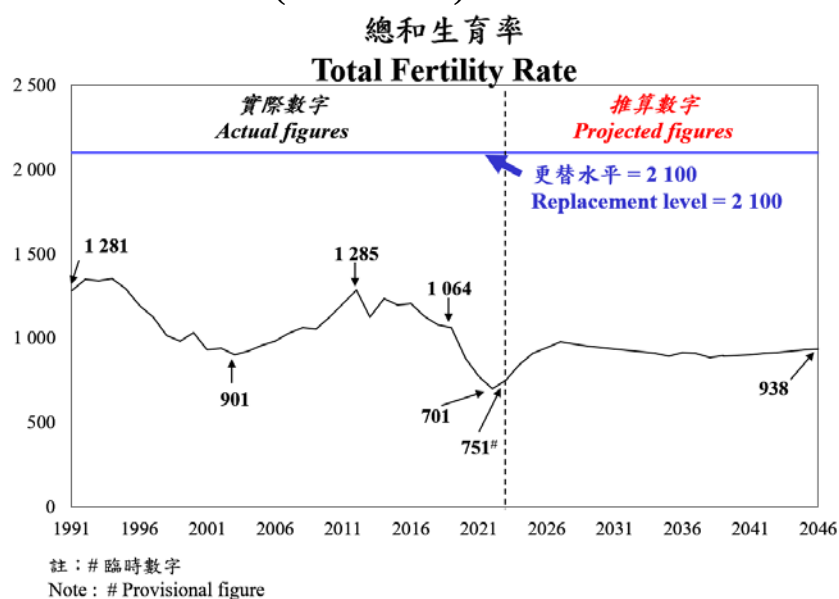


Chart 3: Fertility assumptions

³ A total fertility rate of 2 100 births per 1 000 women is considered to correspond to a level at which a population would replace itself.

15. Moreover, in 2046, the labour force in Hong Kong will fall back to 3.58 million and the labour force participation rate (i.e. the proportion of the labour force in the population aged 15 and over) will drop to 51.6% (see Chart 4):

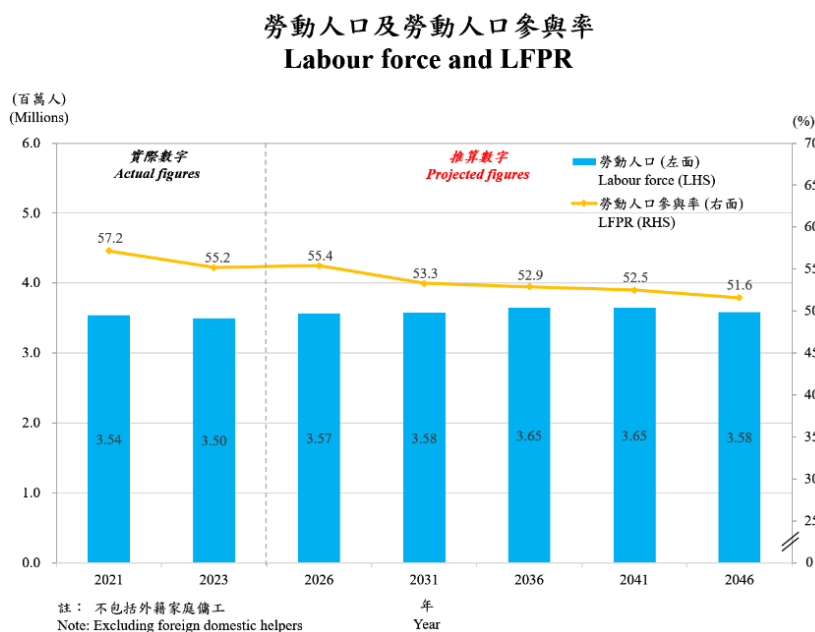


Chart 4: Labour force and labour force participation rate

16. In view of the above population projections, members are gravely concerned about the impact of **Hong Kong's continuing ageing trend, persistently low fertility rate, and rising elderly dependency ratio** on its overall development and public finance in the future. Members are also worried that the **shrinking local labour force** would **undermine the potential for economic growth**. Members have urged the Administration to **actively explore counter-measures**, including encouraging childbearing and attracting quality talents to Hong Kong, so as to accelerate the increase in the young and middle-aged population and maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness in the long run. Members are of the view that as **population projections** are an important basis for formulating policies and measures, the Administration should be **more proactive in updating** the relevant data **on a continuous basis**, so as to ensure that the projection results can effectively reflect the actual situation, including the latest development of Hong Kong's political, economic and social landscape, with a view to **enhancing the accuracy of the projections**, and **adjust more promptly the relevant policies in the light of the latest projection results**.

17. The Administration has advised that population projections are outlooks based on past trends, a set of assumptions and the policy situation known at the time. The Government would take into account the latest

situation in using the results of the population projections in individual policy areas. In addition, a population census is conducted every five years, during which population data will continue to be compiled and population trends examined on a regular basis. The Administration plans to commence the next round of population projections after the completion of the 2026 Population Census.

Manpower projections

18. The Subcommittee has also studied the Report on 2023 Manpower Projection published by the Administration in November 2024.⁴ Members have expressed grave concern about the **future manpower shortage in Hong Kong**. According to the projection, the manpower gap in Hong Kong will widen from 50 000 in 2023 to **180 000 in 2028**. Members are particularly concerned that while the National 14th Five-Year Plan explicitly supports the development of Hong Kong as a leading centre in eight key areas (i.e. **“eight centres”**)⁵, **these areas are facing serious manpower shortage** at present, with other sectors also experiencing manpower gaps of varying degrees. Moreover, members have also observed that the **age profile of skilled technical workers is on the high side**, and the lack of vocational training elements in the secondary school curriculum has resulted in few local young people joining the skilled technician trades. Coupled with the fact that **vocational training fails to cope with the market demand in a timely manner**, the **shortage of technical workers** can hardly be addressed effectively.

19. The Administration has advised that various bureaux and departments have formulated a number of measures to address the manpower shortage, including reforming the training strategy of the Employees Retraining Board, removing the cap on academic qualifications, updating the Talent List, and enhancing the General Employment Policy and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals. A new channel will be introduced to attract young and experienced non-degree skilled workers to Hong Kong, and the development of education programmes related to the “eight centres” will also be promoted to increase the supply of local talents.

⁴ In [the Report on 2023 Manpower Projection](#), the year 2023 is adopted as the base year for manpower projection for the next five years (i.e. 2028).

⁵ The “eight centres” are an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, an international aviation hub, an international financial centre, an international innovation and technology centre, an international trade centre, an international transportation centre, a regional centre for international legal and dispute resolution services as well as a regional intellectual property trading centre.

20. Given that **AI is changing the structure of the labour market**, some members have highlighted the importance of giving due consideration to the **impact** of the rapid development of AI **on the demand and supply of manpower** in making manpower projections. The Administration has advised that in conducting the 2023 Manpower Projection, it has drawn on reference materials and consulted the industry on the impact of AI and automation technologies on the labour market. It would keep in view the developments with a view to updating the projection more accurately in mid-term.

21. In addition, members have suggested that the Administration should **conduct manpower projections more frequently** and **apply big data and AI in its analyses**. There is also a suggestion that **rolling projections** may be made **for major policies**, such as the development of the Northern Metropolis and the Northern Metropolis University Town. The Administration has responded that in conducting the 2023 Manpower Projection, it has adopted big data to analyse data on, among others, recruitment websites and graduates, and shortened the projection cycle from 10 years to 5 years. It would conduct a mid-term update in late 2025, with the base year being changed to 2025, in order to make a more accurate projection of the manpower demand for 2028.

Measures to address manpower shortage

22. In the face of a **widening manpower gap**, members opine that the Government should continue to adopt a **multi-pronged strategy to tackle the issue**, including recruiting talents from outside Hong Kong, importing labour, as well as unleashing and upgrading the local workforce.

23. Members are concerned about the **implementation of various measures to attract talents**. Regarding the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, members note that the Administration has enhanced the General Points Test under the scheme in November 2024 by introducing more objective and clear scoring criteria, streamlining the selection process and expediting the vetting and approval procedures. Members have also enquired about the visa extension situation under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (“TTPS”). The Administration has advised that as indicated by preliminary data, successful applications for extension of stay are mainly made by talents from the financial, business and innovation and technology sectors, reflecting the strong demand for professionals in these sectors. The Administration remains optimistic about the visa extension situation. On the suggestion of extending the eligibility criteria of TTPS to include postgraduate qualifications, the Administration has remarked that currently TTPS mainly seeks to attract talents with undergraduate qualifications, and

it would continue to monitor the implementation of TTPS and make adjustments as necessary.

24. Members are also concerned about how the Administration would **assess the effectiveness of the various measures to attract talents**. In response, the Administration has advised that the effectiveness of Hong Kong's talent admission initiatives is mainly reflected by their ability to meet the manpower demand of local industries and support the development of the local economy. In this connection, various bureaux would closely monitor changes in the local population and manpower situation of different industries, and would review and refine the strategies and initiatives in a timely manner.

25. Members note that the Administration would **introduce a new channel under the General Employment Policy and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals** to attract young and experienced skilled workers to Hong Kong for specific trades with acute shortage of manpower. Members have urged the Administration to **expedite the implementation of such measure** and have suggested that **imported workers** should be **required to undergo the necessary training and obtain qualification recognition before coming to Hong Kong**, so that they could **enter the labour market as soon as possible** after their arrival. The Administration has advised that it is planning and consulting on matters such as the list of relevant trades and the quota arrangements, and the measure is expected to be rolled out in the first half of 2025.

26. On the other hand, members have called on the Administration to **introduce more measures to boost the labour force participation rate in Hong Kong**, including exploring ways to enhance work incentive through different policies and unleashing the local labour force. The Administration has advised that it would continue to promote the nurturing of local talents and unleashing local labour force, and at the same time import labour and talents as appropriate to fill the manpower gap on the premise of safeguarding the employment priority of local workers.

Education planning required for Hong Kong's development

27. The Subcommittee has explored the education planning required for the overall development of Hong Kong and examined the relevant policies and measures of the Government.

Building Hong Kong as an international education hub

28. Expressing support for the Administration's **strategic direction and objective** of developing Hong Kong into an **"international education hub and a cradle of talents for the future"**, members have agreed that the relevant strategies would play a crucial role in **promoting talent cultivation, meeting Hong Kong's long-term development needs**, and providing the **talent required for the development of Hong Kong's "eight centres"** as outlined in the 14th Five-Year Plan. To build the **"Study in Hong Kong" brand**, members have suggested that the Government should **coordinate the efforts of local post-secondary institutions in organizing large-scale international education conferences and exhibitions**, and step up the promotion of the Belt and Road scholarships. The Government should also organize exhibitions in countries along the Belt and Road in collaboration with local secondary schools to help institutions **attract more students from overseas, especially ASEAN and other Belt and Road countries, to study in Hong Kong**.

29. In view of the demand for accommodation driven by the growth of students from outside Hong Kong, members have also expressed concern about how **the provision and quality of student hostels could be improved**. The Administration has advised that it is currently supporting the University Grants Committee-funded universities in expediting the construction of student hostels under the Hostel Development Fund. The universities are actively pursuing a number of projects with the target of increasing the total number of student hostel places by 13 500 by 2027. The 2024 Policy Address also announced that the Government would further improve student hostel facilities, including launching a pilot scheme to encourage the market to convert hotels and other commercial buildings into student hostels on a self-financing and privately-funded basis, and releasing land for the construction of new hostels.

30. In addition, members note that the Administration has anticipated that TTPS and other talent admission schemes will attract a significant number of **foreign talents and their family members to settle in Hong Kong**. The **dependent children** of such talents under the age of 18 **may study in Hong Kong as local students**, including accessing publicly-funded post-secondary education. Members have urged the Administration to ensure that the admission arrangements **would not be abused** and to **make long-term planning for the future demand for school places at all levels** to protect the educational opportunities of local students. The Administration has responded that it would review the definition of "local student" adopted by post-secondary institutions for admission of students and consider different options in a holistic manner.

Development of vocational and professional education and training

31. Members have urged the Government to continuously **enhance the quality of vocational and professional education and training (“VPET”), strengthen the international development of the Vocational Training Council (“VTC”) and universities of applied sciences (“UAS”)** in areas such as student recruitment and teaching staff, attract more overseas vocational and professional talents to study in Hong Kong, and enrich Hong Kong’s **diverse talent pool**. According to the Administration, to support the joint promotion between UAS, post-secondary institutions aspiring to develop into UAS and also the industry, it has promoted the establishment of the Alliance of UAS and allocated \$100 million as a start-up fund to support the alliance in organizing international conferences, strengthening exchanges and cooperation with applied science institutions around the world, and initiating cooperation and research on post-secondary applied education.

32. There is a view that the Government should review the curriculum design at the education system level and **strengthen career-oriented education**, to nurture young people to become skilled talents more effectively and encourage them to join relevant skilled trades. The Administration has advised that the Committee on Education, Technology and Talents, chaired by the CS, has been established to coordinate the integrated development of education, technology and talents, and promote the cultivation of relevant talents and industrial development.

Promoting STEAM Education

33. Members opine that the Administration should **assist primary and secondary schools in expanding STEAM (i.e. science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) education spaces**, such as utilizing vacant school premises for relevant teaching activities of local schools, so as to foster a STEAM education atmosphere and strengthen innovation and technology talent cultivation. The Administration has advised that it will provide schools with funding to renovate their premises and establish STEAM teaching facilities or resource centres. Furthermore, community organizations are offering off-site or on-campus teaching activities to support schools in promoting STEAM education.

Promoting family-friendly measures

34. Members have considered that **promoting family-friendly measures** is crucial to implementing population policies. This includes enhancing citizens’ willingness to have children, supporting working families, unleashing labour force in families, and promoting intergenerational harmony. In the long term, this would help address challenges such as an

ageing population and a shrinking labour force. Members have suggested that **the CS should lead the establishment of an interdepartmental planning group tasked with stepping up efforts to promote family-friendly policies**, coordinating policies on childbearing, healthcare, housing, education and childcare, and building a social environment conducive to parenting and family development. Members have called on the Government to **promote tripartite cooperation among the Government, the business sector and the community**, and adopt a two-pronged approach involving institutional design and cultural nurturing in order to make family-friendliness a core pillar of population policy.

35. Members have emphasized that **the Government should lead by example and actively promote family-friendly employment practices** to create a family-friendly working environment for government employees. Members note that the Government currently provides eligible government employees with 14 weeks of fully paid maternity leave and five days of fully paid paternity leave, as well as newly introduced marriage leave and bereavement leave starting from April 2024, allowing employees to take up to three days of leave per occurrence for marriage or the death of a family member. The Government will also provide three days of childcare leave annually for each child under the age of three for government employees starting from April 2025, and continue to actively promote the five-day week initiative. Members have urged the Government to **regularly review these measures** and enhance the establishment of breastfeeding and childcare facilities in government office buildings.

36. Members have also considered that the Government should **encourage enterprises to participate**, including setting up childcare facilities in commercial areas, industrial buildings and the airport, providing flexible work arrangements, and allowing employees to bring their children to work. In this regard, some members have suggested that the Government should **provide enterprises with more incentives**, such as awarding extra points in tenders for government-outsourced services and offering tax concessions. The Administration has advised that it had adopted the Good Employer Charter 2024 to encourage employers to implement good human resource management and family-friendly employment practices.

37. Members support the Government's efforts to **help families with childcare**. They are particularly concerned about the progress of the Government's plan to provide an additional of 11 aided standalone child care centres in phases by 2024, as well as the low average utilization rate of some aided child care centres attached to kindergartens. Members acknowledge that the Government will consider the demographic changes and demand in various districts when planning child care services. As of April 2025, four

aided standalone child care centres have commenced operation, providing 344 service places. On the other hand, members also support the expansion of after-school care services and note the Government's plan to increase the number of after-school care centres for pre-primary children from 16 to 28 within three years, with the number of service places increasing to nearly 1 200. Some members have suggested further extending the School-based After School Care Service Scheme to all primary schools and even kindergartens, and reviewing the effectiveness of the service through a consultancy study.

Policies and measures to encourage childbearing and creation of a more favourable childbearing environment

38. In the light of Hong Kong's persistently low birth rate, members support the Government's proactive implementation of various measures, particularly the series of measures announced by the Chief Executive in the 2023 Policy Address to **encourage childbearing**. These measures **provide a clear policy direction** and provide support in areas such as childcare, parenting, housing, taxation, assisted reproduction, and family education, with the aim of **increasing families' willingness to have children and creating a favourable environment for childbearing**.

39. Members have recommended that the Administration **provide further economic incentives to encourage childbearing**. These incentives could include extending tax exemptions for children from the tax year following their birth to the first three years after their birth; studying tax deductions for foreign domestic helper expenses; and exploring the introduction of child allowances. Members have also suggested that the Administration explore ways to optimize working hours and strengthen support for children with special educational needs, as well as other policies aimed at alleviating childcare burden.

40. Apart from introducing measures to encourage childbearing, members have also considered that the Administration should **create a suitable social environment**. This should include encouraging young people to form families and promoting family values. They have suggested that the Administration produce promotional videos to encourage childbearing, as well as launching activities and measures to help young people in life planning and family formation.

41. Members are concerned that the current **maximum storage period of gametes** is 10 years for non-medical reasons, which is shorter than many other countries and regions. They have urged the Council on Human

Reproductive Technology and its Ethics Committee to **expedite discussions on matters relating to the extension of the storage period for gametes.**

42. In addition, members have pointed out that the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) stipulates that absences due to prenatal check-ups for pregnant employees may be treated as sick leave. However, this does not cover absences of female employees due to check-ups for undergoing artificial insemination. Members have therefore suggested that the Administration should **consider amending the Employment Ordinance** to provide **statutory sick leave for women who are preparing for artificial insemination for their absence from work** due to **medical check-ups prior to the procedure.** The Administration has advised that the legislative amendment proposals would first require consensus between employers and employees, and that it would discuss the proposals with the labour sector or the Labour Advisory Board.

Planning for the medical and elderly service needs of the elderly

43. In the light of Hong Kong's ageing population, there is a strong demand for medical and elderly care services. Members have explored ways to provide the elderly with more appropriate medical, elderly care and support services, with the long-term goal of creating an environment in which they can enjoy their retirement years to the fullest.

Primary healthcare services for the elderly

44. Members share the Administration's **strategy of promoting primary healthcare services in accordance with the Primary Healthcare Blueprint ("the Blueprint")**, which is prevention-oriented, community-based and family-centric, with the aim of establishing a sustainable healthcare system through early detection and intervention. Members have expressed concern that although the **Elderly Health Centres ("EHCs")** under the Department of Health currently provide preventive and health promotion services for the elderly, the elderly have to **wait for quite a long time to access them.** The Administration has pointed out that it will integrate EHC services into District Health Centres in phases to enhance synergy, and is considering a new approach to improve services for the elderly through non-governmental organizations ("NGOs").

45. Members have suggested that the Administration should **promote public-private-partnership in providing** healthcare services, such as **general outpatient services**, to **alleviate the pressure on the public healthcare system.** The Administration has advised that it has been encouraging the public to make better use of private healthcare resources through subsidies such as the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

(“EHCVS”) and the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme. In line with the Blueprint’s development direction, EHCVS is being continuously improved to provide incentives for the elderly to use the vouchers for health assessments, chronic disease screening and management, and other primary healthcare services.

46. Members have suggested that the Administration should assess **the effectiveness of the various preventive primary healthcare programmes**, including making projections on how their implementation could alleviate pressure on secondary and tertiary specialized healthcare services in hospitals and healthcare institutions in the long term. This would **enable more precise planning of the overall healthcare resources**, particularly long-term healthcare manpower projections, to cope with the demand and **ameliorate excessively long waiting times for public healthcare services**.

47. Members have urged the Administration to **make greater use of technology in medical services and health promotion**. This should include the application of **telemedicine** and the integration of **health assessment applications** developed by various local organizations. Given the varying quality of health information received by the elderly in the community, members have also suggested **providing accurate health information via official mobile applications**. The Administration has advised that it will explore ways to provide one-stop service from health promotion to drug collection for the public via remote applications, as well as integrating different medical applications into the eHealth System.

Chinese medicine services

48. Members note that the claim amounts for Chinese medicine (“CM”) services under EHCVS have increased year-on-year and approached \$1,141 million in 2023, which is the second highest amount among professions under the scheme after Western medicine practitioners. Given the wide acceptance and popularity of CM services among the elderly, members have suggested that the Administration should **strengthen the role of CM services in primary healthcare for the elderly**, including promoting collaboration between CM and Western medicine in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases. The Administration has responded that upon the commissioning of the Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong, expected to be completed by the end of 2025, CM special disease programmes will be developed for selected suitable types of diseases, including elderly degenerative diseases and other common diseases affecting the elderly. Meanwhile, the Hospital Authority will continue to expand the integrated Chinese-Western medicine services to cover more diseases in

which CM has an advantage, including respiratory diseases and knee osteoarthritis.

Planning of elderly services

49. Members support the Administration's **policy direction of "ageing-in-place as the core, institutional care as back-up" for elderly services**. Members note that the Government currently identifies the care needs of frail elderly persons through the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services ("SCNAMES"). Elderly people assessed as needing care services under SCNAMES may apply subsidized community care services, including "centre-based" day care services or "home-based" care services, or subsidized residential care services. Members have further suggested **setting up a register of elderly people**, particularly those living alone and those at high risk in situations involving "the elderly taking care of the elderly", and provide relevant information to elderly centres, District Services and Community Care Teams, etc., with a view to providing different levels of care for elderly people in a more comprehensive manner.

50. Under the ageing-in-place approach, members have suggested that the Administration should continue to **improve subsidized community care services** to meet the needs of elderly people to age in place, including **extending the opening hours of day care centres for elderly people** and **providing support for them in renting accommodation**. Members have also suggested that the Administration should **conduct large-scale surveys or compile statistics to understand the healthcare and elderly care programme needs of elderly people**, so as to facilitate **appropriate planning**. The Administration has pointed out that it has been implementing the proposed follow-up arrangements in accordance with the Elderly Services Programme Plan completed in 2017, and has been making continuous adjustments to meet the latest demand for elderly services.

Enhancing cross-border medical and cross-border elderly care services

51. Members consider improving **cross-border healthcare services** to be a major challenge in planning for cross-border elderly care. They have urged the Administration to further **expand the locations and services covered by the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme ("EHCV GBA Pilot Scheme")** and, with regard to **the measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in GBA**, to **extend the arrangements to more healthcare institutions in GBA**. The Administration has pointed out that it notes that many elderly people have undergone medical check-ups and used specialist services such as CM, dental and stomatology services in Mainland healthcare institutions through the EHCV GBA Pilot Scheme. The

Administration is preparing to set up additional service points under the scheme, with the aim of achieving full coverage of the nine Mainland cities in GBA and facilitating the use of primary healthcare services by Hong Kong elderly people residing there. Regarding the measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in GBA, the Administration will continue to communicate with the Mainland authorities and cooperate with them in the vetting and approval process, with a view to expanding the relevant arrangements.

52. Regarding the support provided to **elderly people living across the border**, members have expressed their support for the Government to **offer** a monthly **cash allowance** to eligible Hong Kong residents who choose to reside in Guangdong Province or Fujian Province **through the Guangdong Scheme and the Fujian Scheme**, and the option for eligible Hong Kong elderly people with needs for long-term residential care services to participate in **the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (“GDRCS Scheme”)** and reside in Mainland residential care homes. Members have suggested that the Administration should consider **extending these schemes to other provinces**, enabling more elderly people to choose to return to their hometowns. The Administration has advised that it would not rule out providing subsidized residential care services in other provinces in future. However, as this would involve various considerations and arrangements, it will initially launch the GDRCS Scheme in other cities within GBA proactively and refine the scheme. This will include sharing, on a pilot basis, part of the medical expenses that elderly participants of the GDRCS Scheme required to pay out of their own pockets under the National Basic Medical Insurance Policy.

Application of gerontechnology

53. Members have urged the Administration to continue **promoting the popularization of gerontechnology** and to consider pre-installing suitable **gerontechnology devices** in newly built or redeveloped **public housing flats**. They have also suggested **stepping up efforts to promote gerontechnology products** that could facilitate the daily lives of the elderly and their carers through various channels, for example through community activities. According to the Administration, it has been encouraging elderly service units and elderly people to make good use of gerontechnology in various areas, with the aim of improving the quality of life of the elderly, alleviating the care burden of their carers and care staff, and encouraging the business sector to provide more gerontechnology products and expand the market, with a view to promoting the development of the “silver industry”.

54. Members are concerned about the details of the Administration’s **injection of additional funding into the Innovation and Technology Fund**

for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care, as well as the fund's expansion of scope. In response, the Administration stated that the 2023 Policy Address proposed injecting an additional \$1 billion into the fund in the 2024-2025 financial year, expanding its scope to include gerontechnology products intended for household use. It has added that the fund would continue to operate as it does now, providing financial support to eligible service providers for elderly care, rehabilitation and community care and residential care homes to procure, rent or trial gerontechnology products. Eligible service units could also procure suitable technological products for lending to the elderly and their carers for use at home.

Promotion of active ageing

55. Members have suggested that the Administration should provide suitable **learning and work opportunities** for the elderly, to **facilitate their ongoing engagement with the community** and help them maintain their **physical and mental health**. The Administration has responded that, in addition to implementing the Elder Academy Scheme to encourage lifelong learning among the elderly, it also supports NGOs in encouraging the elderly to start their own businesses or develop second careers. Furthermore, the Working Group on Promoting Silver Economy, led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, has been established to review and further develop the relevant work.

Building an inclusive society

56. The Subcommittee has discussed the Government's relevant measures to promote an inclusive society. Members are of the view that the Government should continue its efforts to promote social participation and employment opportunities for different groups, including persons with disabilities ("PWDs"), ethnic minorities ("EMs") and new arrivals to Hong Kong. This would enhance overall social cohesion, expand the local workforce, and optimize the allocation of manpower resources while addressing to the needs of Hong Kong's long-term development.

Support for persons with disabilities

57. Members have expressed concern about the effectiveness of various **measures to promote the employment of PWDs** and have urged the Administration to **provide more support to employers of PWDs**. According to the Administration, the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department provides job-matching and follow-up services for not less than six months after employment to help PWDs adapt to their new jobs. In addition, the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme and the Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities currently provide subsidies to

employers of PWDs. The Administration also plans to introduce a “Caring Employer” Medal to recognize employers who actively employ PWDs.

58. Members have expressed support for the Administration to provide funding for NGOs to set up social enterprises (“SEs”) through the **Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise** Project, with the aim of creating more employment opportunities for PWDs. They have also suggested allowing **non-profit companies limited by guarantee to participate in the project** instead of only allowing tax-exempt charitable organizations or trusts under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). Given that some SEs may encounter operational difficulties due to their low profitability, members acknowledge that the Administration will share the operational experience of successful SEs by establishing a “SEs and Public Organizations” category under the “Caring Employer” Medal.

Support for ethnic minorities

59. Members have suggested that the Administration should **provide religious facilities for EMs in various districts**, and promote mutual understanding between EMs and other members of the public through **publicity and education**. The Administration has advised that it would introduce EM culture to the public through activities such as school talks and roving exhibitions, with the aim of promoting racial harmony. Members have also expressed concern about the education and employment prospects of EMs, suggesting that a dedicated Chinese language programme should be developed for EM students to ensure that their Chinese language proficiency meets the standards required by the job market.

Support for new arrivals

60. Members note that the Administration **regularly updates and publishes the Service Handbook for New Arrivals**, which provides new arrivals from the Mainland with a wide range of important information. The **Hong Kong Talent Engage** also **provides additional information** on areas such as education for talent coming to Hong Kong. Furthermore, the Administration conducts quarterly surveys on identity card applicants aged 11 and above who have recently arrived, to ascertain their employment propensity and service demand. The survey data is then provided to relevant departments and NGOs for reference.

Supporting carers

61. In the light of situations involving **“the elderly taking care of the elderly” and “the elderly taking care of PWDs”**, members have urged the Administration to **strengthen support for carers of the elderly and PWDs**,

and to explore **the use of AI technology to identify high-risk cases**. The Administration has advised that it will extend the District Services and Community Care Teams - Scheme on Supporting Elderly and Carers to the whole territory within 2025. It will also study the collection of relevant information from the Housing Department and public utility companies to enhance the identification of high-risk cases involving singleton or doubleton elderly households, with the aim of providing assistance.

Recommendations

62. The Subcommittee has recommended the Administration to consider:

Population policy

- (a) **setting specific targets for Hong Kong's future population growth** and formulating without delay **a new forward-looking population policy that keeps pace with the times and aligns with Hong Kong's long-term development needs** (please refer to paragraph 7 above);
- (b) **re-consolidating and optimizing the steering of the population policy**, with **high-level leading officials making overall planning in a holistic manner, and defining a vision and setting targets for the overall population planning**, so as to **ensure the sustainable development of Hong Kong's economy and its long-term competitiveness** (please refer to paragraph 11 above);

Population projections and manpower projections

- (c) **updating** population projection data **on a continuous basis** and **adjusting policies more promptly in the light of the latest projection results** (please refer to paragraph 16 above);
- (d) conducting manpower projections **more frequently, applying big data and AI to the analysis** and giving due consideration to the impact of the **rapid development of AI** on the demand and supply of manpower when making manpower projections; and **rolling projections** may be made **for major policies**, such as the development of the Northern Metropolis and the Northern Metropolis University Town (please refer to paragraphs 20 and 21 above);

Measures to address manpower shortage

- (e) continuously adopting a **multi-pronged strategy to tackle manpower shortage**, including recruiting talents from outside Hong Kong, importing labour and unleashing and upgrading the local workforce (please refer to paragraph 22 above);
- (f) **expediting the introduction of a new channel under the General Employment Policy and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals** to attract young and experienced skilled workers to Hong Kong for specific trades with acute shortage of manpower, and **requiring imported workers to undergo the necessary training and obtain qualification recognition before coming to Hong Kong** (please refer to paragraph 25 above);
- (g) **introducing more measures to boost the labour force participation rate in Hong Kong**, including exploring ways to enhance work incentive through different policies and unleashing the local labour force (please refer to paragraph 26 above);

Education planning required for Hong Kong's development

- (h) **coordinating the efforts of local post-secondary institutions to organize large-scale international education conferences and exhibitions**, and helping institutions **attract more students from overseas to study in Hong Kong** (please refer to paragraph 28 above);
- (i) ensuring that the arrangement for **dependent children** under the TTPS and other **talent admission schemes to study in Hong Kong as local students is not abused**, while **making long-term planning for future demand for school places at all levels** to protect the educational opportunities of local students (please refer to paragraph 30 above);
- (j) continuously **enhancing the quality of VPET and strengthening the international development of VTC and UAS** in areas such as student recruitment and teaching staff, while also **strengthening career-oriented education** to more effectively nurture young people to become skilled talents and encourage them to join relevant skilled trades (please refer to paragraphs 31 and 32 above);

- (k) **assisting primary and secondary schools in expanding STEAM education spaces**, such as utilizing vacant school premises for relevant teaching activities of local schools, so as to foster a STEAM education atmosphere and strengthen innovation and technology talent cultivation (please refer to paragraph 33 above);

Promoting family-friendly measures

- (l) **establishing an interdepartmental planning group led by the CS** tasked with stepping up efforts to **promote family-friendly policies** (please refer to paragraph 34 above);
- (m) **actively promoting family-friendly employment practices** to create a family-friendly working environment for government employees, while also providing more incentives for enterprises to implement family-friendly employment practices, such as awarding extra points in tenders for government-outsourced services and offering tax concessions (please refer to paragraphs 35 and 36 above);

Encouraging childbearing and creating a more favourable childbearing environment

- (n) providing **further economic incentives to encourage childbearing** and exploring policies aimed at alleviating childcare burden (please refer to paragraph 39 above);
- (o) producing promotional videos to encourage childbearing and launching activities and measures to help young people in life planning and family formation, so as to **create a suitable social environment** (please refer to paragraph 40 above);
- (p) expeditiously **discussing** matters relating to **the extension of the storage period for gametes**, and studying **amendments to the Employment Ordinance** to **provide statutory sick leave for women who are preparing for artificial insemination for their absence from work due to medical check-ups prior to the procedure** (please refer to paragraphs 41 and 42 above);

Planning for the medical and elderly service needs of the elderly

- (q) promoting **public-private-partnerships in the provision of** healthcare services such as **general outpatient services**, to

alleviate the pressure on the public healthcare system (please refer to paragraph 45 above);

- (r) **assessing the effectiveness of the various preventive primary healthcare programmes**, with a view to enable more **precise planning of the overall healthcare resources** to cope with the demand and **ameliorate** the problem of **excessively long waiting times for public healthcare services** (please refer to paragraph 46 above);
- (s) **enhancing the use of technology in medical services and health promotion**, and **providing accurate health information via official mobile applications** (please refer to paragraph 47 above);
- (t) **strengthening the role of CM services in primary healthcare for the elderly**, including fostering collaboration between CM and Western medicine in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases (please refer to paragraph 48 above);
- (u) meeting the needs of elderly people to age in place by **setting up a register of elderly people**, continuously **improving subsidized community care services** and **providing support** for elderly people **in renting accommodation**, as well as conducting **large-scale surveys or compiling statistics** to facilitate **appropriate planning** in the light of the needs of elderly people with regard to **healthcare and elderly care programmes** (please refer to paragraphs 49 and 50 above);
- (v) enhancing **cross-border healthcare and cross-border elderly services**, including **expanding the locations and services covered by the EHCV GBA Pilot Scheme**, extending the measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in GBA to more **healthcare institutions in GBA**, as well as **expanding** various support schemes for cross-border elderly care **to more provinces** (please refer to paragraphs 51 and 52 above);
- (w) continuously promoting the **popularization of gerontechnology**, including considering pre-installation of suitable **gerontechnology devices** in newly built or redeveloped public housing flats, and stepping up efforts to **promote gerontechnology products** to the elderly and their carers (please refer to paragraph 53 above);

- (x) promoting **active ageing** by providing suitable **learning and work opportunities** for the elderly and **facilitating their ongoing engagement with the community** to help them maintain their **physical and mental health** (please refer to paragraph 55 above);

Building an inclusive society

- (y) continuously promoting **social participation and employment opportunities** for different groups, including **PWDs, EMs and new arrivals to Hong Kong**, so as to enhance overall social cohesion, expand the local workforce, and optimize the allocation of manpower resources while addressing to the needs of Hong Kong's long-term development (please refer to paragraph 56 above); and
- (z) **strengthening support for carers of the elderly and PWDs**, and exploring **the use of AI technology to identify high-risk cases** (please refer to paragraph 61 above).

Advice Sought

63. The Subcommittee has concluded its work. The House Committee is invited to note the deliberations and recommendations of the Subcommittee.

Council Business Divisions
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 June 2025

Subcommittee to Study Population Policy and Initiatives

Terms of reference

To comprehensively review Hong Kong's population policy, formulate short, medium and long-term measures to address the challenges brought by changes in demographic structure, find out the demographic structure and manpower resources required for future social development, and tackle in the long run the challenges of population ageing in a planned and pragmatic manner by training up suitable manpower, implementing measures to encourage childbearing, promoting active ageing, and improving elderly services.

Subcommittee to Study Population Policy and Initiatives

Membership list*

Chairman	Hon Kenneth LEUNG Yuk-wai, JP
Deputy Chairman	Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Members	Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP Hon KWOK Wai-keung, BBS, JP Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP Hon Doreen KONG Yuk-foon Dr Hon Hoey Simon LEE, MH, JP Prof Hon CHOW Man-kong, JP Hon Nixie LAM Lam Hon Duncan CHIU Hon Dennis LEUNG Tsz-wing, MH Hon Judy CHAN Kapui, MH, JP Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, JP Hon Benson LUK Hon-man Hon TANG Fei, MH Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP Dr Hon NGAN Man-yu Hon Adrian Pedro HO King-hong (Total: 18 members)
Clerk	Ms Maisie LAM (up to 30 June 2024) Ms Doris LO (from 1 July 2024)
Legal Adviser	Mr Timothy WU

* Changes in membership are shown in [Annex to Appendix 2](#)

Annex to Appendix 2

Subcommittee to Study Population Policy and Initiatives

Changes in membership

Member	Relevant date
Hon JoePHY CHAN Wing-yan	Up to 14 June 2024
Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu	Up to 28 November 2024