

LCQ2: Planning of facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Fernando Cheung and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (June 27):

Question:

Regarding the planning of facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities (PWDs), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Whether the planning of various types of facilities for the elderly and PWDs has been conducted under the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030", which is expected to be promulgated within this year; if so, of the standards adopted, as well as the numbers of various types of facilities (including residential care places) needed to be provided in accordance with the planning results, and the floor areas they will occupy;

(2) As the Government indicated in October last year that it planned to reinstate "population-based planning ratios for elderly services" in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), of the progress of such work, the reasons for deleting such ratios in the past, the ratios and per capita space standards to be adopted in providing the various types of facilities, and how the new ratios and standards compare with the old ones; and

(3) Whether it has plans to include the planning ratios for services for PWDs in HKPSG; if so, of the timetable, and the ratios and per capita space standards to be adopted for the provision of various types of facilities; whether such ratios were included in the past; if so, of the reasons for the subsequent deletions, and how the new ratios and standards compare with the old ones?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) According to information provided by the Development Bureau (DEVB), DEVB and the Planning Department (PlanD) completed the public engagement exercise for the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" (Hong Kong 2030+) last year. They are now analysing the views received from the public, and planning to complete the relevant technical assessments within this year before finalising the latest territorial development strategy. The Hong Kong 2030+ study is a broad-brush assessment on the long-term land requirements of various uses including housing, economic as well as "Government, Institution and Community" (G/IC) facilities, and facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities are among the G/IC category. To

update the territorial development strategy for Hong Kong, DEVB and PlanD will discuss with the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and other relevant policy bureaux on how to incorporate additional land requirements arising from the latest policy measures concerning elderly and rehabilitation services as well as other areas in our future development strategies.

(2) The planning standards and guidelines on the facilities for the elderly are set out in Chapter 3, "Community Facilities", of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG). In fact, the existing planning standards on the facilities for the elderly were amended in 2008. Prior to the amendment, the previous planning standards were 17 Care-and-Attention places for every 1 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above, one Day Care Centre for the Elderly per 17 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above, one Multi-service Centre for the Elderly (note 1) per 17 000 elderly persons and one Social Centre for the Elderly (note 2) per 2 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above.

According to the existing planning standards and guidelines in the HKPSG, in force since 2008, the number of District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) as well as the number of places for Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly in a district should not only be determined with reference to the size of the elderly population, but also factors such as the demographic characteristics, geographical environment and actual demand and supply of the services, etc. As regards the number of subsidised residential care places, the demand, resources and the availability of suitable premises should also be considered.

As set out in the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP), the development of public elderly facilities takes considerable time (note 3). The ESPP therefore recommended the reinstatement of population-based planning ratios in the HKPSG to allow better forward planning of the relevant department(s) in reserving sites and premises.

According to the projections in the ESPP, the indicative planning ratios for subsidised long term care services in 2026 are 21.4 subsidised residential care places and 14.8 subsidised community care places per 1 000 elderly persons aged 65 or above. In addition, the ESPP recommended that there should be one DECC in each new residential area with a population reaching 170 000. Where appropriate, there should be one NEC in each new and redeveloped public rental housing estate and one in private housing areas with a population of 15 000 to 20 000 in new residential areas. The ESPP has also proposed that the planning ratios should be reviewed from time to time and where appropriate, be adjusted to reflect the changing demographic structure of the elderly population.

To follow up on the recommendations concerned, "The Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Agenda" sets out that the Government plans to reinstate the population-based planning ratios for elderly services in the HKPSG. LWB and the Social Welfare Department have commenced discussions with the DEVB and PlanD in this regard, including the drawing up of specific amendments to the HKPSG. After the HKPSG has been amended, we will review and update the relevant planning ratios at suitable junctures, to ensure that the planning of facilities could meet the service demand.

(3) To ensure relevance of the services for persons with disabilities, the Government has asked the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) to formulate a new Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP). The RAC has commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Consulting Team) to provide consultancy service and launched a public engagement exercise for the formulation of the new RPP. The RAC's consultation work for the Scoping Stage will be completed soon, and the RAC recommends the inclusion of planning of residential care and community support services in the scope of the current review. In view of the diverse service needs of persons with disabilities and the different requirements on services from persons with different disabilities, the Consulting Team will examine the parameters and basis for the planning of rehabilitation services and facilities. For instance, whether a population-based planning ratio should be set as in the case of the ESPP. The Consulting Team will consult stakeholders on the issues concerned in the next stage of consultation exercise. Depending on the progress of the consultation work, the RAC aims to submit a report on the new RPP to the Government by end-2019. The Government has not included any planning ratio for rehabilitation services in the HKPSG in the past.

Note 1: Multi-service Centre for the Elderly is now known as District Elderly Community Centre.

Note 2: Social Centre for the Elderly is now known as Neighbourhood Elderly Centre.

Note 3: Based on past experience, the development of a new elderly facility takes around 10 years from site identification to actual service provision.