

Transcript of remarks by SLW on Budget initiatives

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on initiatives under the Labour and Welfare Bureau in the 2019-20 Budget after attending a radio programme this morning (March 4):

Reporter: Mr Law, can I ask a few English questions? The issue that the Government – just now you acknowledged that there may be a little impact on the market with this plan. In what ways can the Government minimise its impact on the property market?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: We will take it (purchase of premises for provision of welfare services) very cautiously. As I have mentioned, in 2018, there were about slightly more than 8 000 transactions involving the type of premises (non-residential building units) that we are thinking of. We are considering only buying around 20 such premises in one year. Out of 8 000, the impact should be very minimal. I can't say nil, but definitely it should be minimal. We will try our very best effort to make sure that we will not use a very high price to buy. That will not be consistent with the procurement policy of the Government.

Reporter: But the overall plan is to buy 60 properties, so are you saying that you are going to do that gradually? If there is any money left, what would you be spending that on?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: The initial plan is about (purchasing) 60 sets of premises that involve around 134, to be exact, facilities for welfare use. In fact, on our list, we have more than 400 such kind of service facilities that we require, so the more we can buy, the better. It depends on the availability and the suitability of such premises. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)