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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 10th meeting
held at the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 20 June 2001, at 10:45 am**

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kwok-keung (Chairman)
Hon NG Leung-sing (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok

Non-Subcommittee Member attending:

Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Members absent:

Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon HUI Cheung-ching
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP

Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon CHOY So-yuk

Public Officers attending:

Mr Stanley YING, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mrs Jessie TING	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service
Mr W K LAM, GBS, JP	Secretary for Home Affairs
Mrs Juliana CHEN Yam Wai-fun	Deputy Director of Information Services
Mr Peter LAI Pong-woon	Principal Executive Officer, Information Services Department
Mr W S CHAN, JP	Deputy Secretary for Works
Mrs May TAM	Legal Advisor, Works Bureau
Mr Helius NG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Works
Mr Albert WONG	Principal Executive Officer, Works Bureau
Mr Thomas YIU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare
Dr MAK Sin-ping, JP	Deputy Director of Health
Dr Constance CHAN Hon-yee	Assistant Director of Health
Miss Janet WONG	Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower
Mr Patrick LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (2)
Mr John LEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (9)
Mr Brian LO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport
Mr LI Shu-ming	Assistant Commissioner for Transport
Mr NG Sek-hon, JP	Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs
Mr Eddy YAU Kwok-yin	Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
Ms Lolly CHIU, JP	Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Administration)
Mr Isaac Y N CHOW, JP	Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services)
Mr Johnny W M WOO	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Mrs Mary TANG	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)2
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EC(2001-02)14

Proposed creation of one permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Information Services Department to serve as the Press Secretary to the Financial Secretary

Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Home Affairs at its meeting on 12 June 2001.

2. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong drew members' attention to the letter addressed to Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) by the Panel on Home Affairs (the Panel) regarding the passage of the Panel's motion at its meeting on 12 June 2001 objecting to the proposed creation of the Press Secretary post. The Panel questioned the rationale for pitching the proposed post at D2 level and requested additional information on the proposal. It had also requested the Administration not to submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) until after the Panel had a chance to further deliberate the proposal at its next meeting on 10 July 2001. It was after the Administration's refusal to defer the submission of proposal to ESC that the Panel passed the above-said motion.

3. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that the present arrangement for Panels to be consulted on legislative and financial proposals was an agreed procedure between the Administration and the Legislature. He failed to see the reason for the Government to have ignored the Panel's objection and insisted on submitting the proposal as scheduled. Referring to the establishment of the Information Services Department (ISD) which consisted of quite a number of directorate posts, he would not accept that these officers could not in the interim provide the necessary support to the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) and the Financial Secretary (FS), who had all along been sharing the same Press Secretary. To take account of time constraints and the need to meet the deadline for submission to Finance Committee (FC), the Administration could have requested the Panel to hold a special meeting for the purpose before the last ESC meeting so that the proposal could be fully deliberated by the Panel before it was considered by ESC. Sharing the same view, Miss Emily LAU said that it would be best if the proposal could be reverted back to the Panel as it appeared that the Panel had not completed its deliberation.

4. In response, SHA said that the Administration was not disrespectful of the Panel's motion. He understood that the motion was not passed unanimously, with divided views among members of the Panel at the meeting. Some members expressed support for the proposal while others had strong reservations in view of insufficient information from the Administration. Under normal circumstances, the Administration would have acceded to the Panel's request for deferred submission to ESC. However, in the present case when the legislative session was drawing to a close, the Administration had little choice but to submit the proposal as planned, but with the additional information requested at the Panel meeting. There were still ample opportunities for members to deliberate the proposal at ESC and FC meetings.

5. Mr Jasper TSANG expressed support for the proposal, adding that his support was not meant to be neglectful of the Panel's decision but was based on careful

consideration of the points raised during the Panel's discussion and the supplementary information provided to members. He pointed out that while a Panel could take a stance on an Administration's proposal when it was first put before it, ESC might not necessarily share the same view. It was also possible for FC to have another view. There were occasions where proposals which were not objected to by the Panels were subsequently negated by FC and its subcommittees.

Need for an additional Press Secretary post

6. In response to Miss Emily LAU and Mr MAK Kwok-fung, SHA provided further justifications for splitting the current Press Secretary post into two and why the new post should be pitched at the rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2). He explained that over the years, in particular after 1997, the Administration was committed to establishing an open and transparent Government. As such, senior Government officials were devoting more time to explain their policies to the public through the media and to answer media enquiries. Both CS and FS had to attend numerous functions to explain government policies and made frequent overseas duty visits to promote Hong Kong's image under "one country two systems". The Press Secretary, who serviced both the CS and FS, was required to accompany these two principal officials and provide them with effective media and public relations (PR) support. The number of functions and events that CS and FS each attended in Hong Kong in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 was around 150 each year. On top of that, CS had made eight duty visits, totalling over 30 days and attended 88 functions while FS had made seven duty visits, totalling over 50 days and attended 129 functions. From these figures, it could be seen that workload of the Press Secretary, who was required to accompany CS and FS on these visits and to provide PR support, was extremely heavy.

7. Mr SZETO Wah pointed out that the existing arrangement of having one Press Secretary serving both CS and FS had been in place for a long time, including the period after 1997. He sought elucidation on what had prompted this emerging need for an additional Press Secretary post. SHA explained that the proposed post had been considered as early as 1997 when increasing demands on the media and PR fronts emerged after the change of sovereignty. However, the proposal was not taken forward because of the economic downturn and the freezing of recruitment. The current arrangement of having one Press Secretary serving both CS and FS was undesirable because it required the redeployment of the already stretched resources of ISD to meet the service demands on an ad hoc basis when both principal officials needed PR support. This unsatisfactory arrangement had been tolerated for a long time and the Administration considered it timely to propose the creation of an additional post of Press Secretary to meet the needs of CS and FS.

8. While supporting the need for timely and effective response to public reaction, Miss Emily LAU queried the justification for an additional post to undertake the work involved as it appeared that part of the duties of the Press Secretary had duplicated with those of CS or FS's Administrative Assistant (AA). Her concern was shared by Mr MAK Kwok-fung and Mr Bernard CHAN. SHA referred to his previous experience as an AA, and explained that the work of an AA was more related to the

policy aspects of the portfolios of principal officials. An AA served as secretaries to committees and assisted in the management of the respective policy portfolios, but not in the day-to-day dealing with the media and the provision of PR support which was provided by the Press Secretary. Depending on the nature and duration of the overseas duty visit, AAs were sometimes required to accompany principal officials on their visits. However, unlike Press Secretaries, AAs were not required to answer media enquiries or to promote policies although they would provide assistance when needed.

9. Mr Eric LI queried whether it was really necessary to have both an AA and a Press Secretary to accompany principal officials on their overseas duty visits. He considered that some flexibility should be exercised in the delineation of responsibilities during overseas visits such that either one could be able to double up the duties of the other. SHA said that back in the old days, principal officials seldom paid overseas visits and even if they did, publicity was usually limited. Nowadays, principal officials conducted overseas visits for promoting Hong Kong. These visits usually attracted wide media attention. To maximize the effect of these promotional events, there was a need for effective media and PR support, both locally and overseas. As regards the difference in the qualifications and requirements for the two posts, SHA said that although both AAs and Press Secretaries were established at AOSGC D2 level, different qualities were required for appointment. While AAs were in charge of all internal matters within the respective portfolios of principal officials, Press Secretaries took charge of external relations and were responsible for gauging and assessing media reaction, community demands and public opinions. Press Secretaries were expected to have the required communication skills as well as the relevant experience for the job.

10. Miss Emily LAU questioned if it was appropriate for the Press Secretary to assume a co-ordinating role amongst policy bureaux. SHA advised that in devising PR strategies and publicity programmes to ensure more effective and focused communication to the public on major policies and initiatives, Press Secretaries should maintain close interactions with policy bureaux. They were required to sit through policy discussions and tender advice on possible public reaction as well as how a policy initiative should be presented. In view of the heavy workload of the current Press Secretary, there was a need to provide each of the two principal officers with their own Press Secretary.

Ranking of the Press Secretary post

11. Mr NG Leung-sing said that he would not in principle object to the provision of Press Secretaries to assist the two principal officials in their dealings with the media. He sought clarification on the difference between the duties of a Chief Information Officer (CIO) and a Press Secretary at D2 level. In response, SHA advised that the creation of a D2 post to serve as Press Secretary to CS and FS was approved in 1994. The need for an additional Press Secretary arose from the increasing demands for media and PR support for the two principal officials. The current make shift arrangement of redeploying information officers for ad hoc services was not desirable and did not provide consistency in terms of service quality and effective support for

comprehensive PR strategy or publicity programmes. SHA further advised that CIOs normally provided assistance to bureau secretaries by arranging press briefings and liaising with the media. They did not have the experience of formulating and promoting policies and initiatives. Therefore, it was considered necessary to establish the proposed post at AOSGC D2 level, which was in line with the ranking of the post when it was first created in 1994.

12. In response to Miss Emily LAU's query on the ranking of the post, SHA explained that while CS covered a total of 10 policy areas and FS dealt with five, there was a need for the Press Secretary to ensure a co-ordinated approach on the PR front on issues cutting across a number of policy bureaux. The demanding nature of the Press Secretary job called for strategic foresight, effective communication skills, sound judgement and analytic skills. In this regard, it was considered appropriate and necessary to pitch the Press Secretary post at D2 level.

13. Mr Henry WU said that he attended the Panel meeting on 12 June 2001. While he did not object to the proposed creation of an additional post of Press Secretary, he had reservations about pitching the post at D2 level and had requested supplementary information to justify the post and its ranking. He was disappointed that the information paper submitted before ESC contained no further information. He enquired whether alternative options had been considered and whether the incumbent would be able to operate without any support having regard to their heavy workload. SHA said that other options including the assignment of a CIO to the post had been considered but was found unacceptable on account of the complexity of the post. The Administration considered it justified for the post to be ranked at D2 level.

Duties of the Press Secretary

14. While remaining unconvinced of the need to pitch the ranking of the post at D2 level, Miss Emily LAU further enquired whether there was a performance pledge for the Press Secretaries and whether they were entrusted with the drafting of speeches for the principal officials. SHA said the performance of Press Secretaries was acknowledged on account of their effective and prompt response to media enquiries. Press Secretaries participated in the preparation of keynote speeches although they might not actually be the writers of the speeches. They also assisted in the preparation of other speeches and messages for principal officials. In response to Miss LAU, the Administration agreed to provide a flow chart showing the line of duties of the post.

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15. Mr James TIEN accepted that the dedicated service of a Press Secretary was vital in promoting new policy initiatives. Referring to the duty of the Press Secretary to act as spokesman for FS, he queried if a D2 post would be qualified for the job, given the importance of the role of FS. SHA said that it was not intended that the Press Secretary would speak on behalf of FS. The duty as a spokesman meant that the Press Secretary would provide answers to media enquiries on behalf of FS and make clarifications on policy issues when necessary. As regards the choice of candidate for the post of Press Secretary, SHA advised that as the Press Secretary would be established at AOSGC D2 level, the post would be filled by an

Administrative Officer and preference would be given to one who had relevant experience for the post. The rank would need to be pitched at D2 level because it was considered that officers at this level would have the necessary competence and qualities for the post which would often require quick response and sound judgement on complex issues.

Review of the directorate of the Information Services Department

16. Mr NG Leung-sing referred to the need for the Director of Information Services (DIS) to provide guidance and supervision to the Press Secretary to FS in the same way as he did to the Press Secretary to CS and FS. He enquired whether the Press Secretary to FS would still be reporting to DIS. SHA said that as the post was created under ISD, the Press Secretary would be reporting to DIS. He indicated that such double reporting system was not uncommon in the civil service. Since the Press Secretary was providing dedicated services to FS, his performance would be appraised by FS. Where necessary, DIS would provide additional comments on the appraisal report. Mr NG Leung-sing opined that under such an arrangement, it was unlikely that DIS would be able to provide guidance and supervision to the Press Secretaries. He further enquired whether the proposed provision of Press Secretaries to principal officials would result in a need to restructure the organization of ISD. SHA said that the role of DIS was to co-ordinate media and PR plans and strategies and to oversee the work of ISD. His role was not to provide individual PR service to principal officials. The double reporting system had worked well so far and had not given rise to any management problems.

17. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out with the provision of the Information Co-ordinator at D8 level for the Chief Executive and Press Secretaries at D2 level for CS and FS, the role of DIS as co-ordinator of information services had diminished. In this connection, he considered it necessary to rationalize the ranking of DIS post, which was currently pitched at D6 level, to reflect the diminished responsibility. As an alternative measure, he asked whether the Administration was prepared to accept the Democratic Party's proposal of assigning a CIO to assist the incumbent Press Secretary in his service to CS and FS, given that a CIO was serving the Secretary for Justice in a similar manner as the Press Secretary to CS and FS. In this way, the CIO could double-up the duties of the Press Secretary when the latter was accompanying CS or FS on their overseas visits.

18. In response, SHA advised that there had not been any significant increase in the number of directorate posts within the establishment of ISD since 1994. This was the first time since 1994 that an AOSGC D2 post was proposed to be created. It was inappropriate to make a direct comparison of the PR needs of the Secretary for Justice who was in charge of the Department of Justice with that of CS and FS who were in charge of different policy areas. The work of the Press Secretary for CS and FS was far more complex than the work of the CIO for Secretary for Justice. The Administration considered that the proposed creation of the post at D2 level was justified.

19. The item was put to vote. Seven members voted for the item, five voted against the item and one abstained.

For:

Mr James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Mr Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Mr NG Leung-sing
Mr Bernard CHAN
Mr Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Mr LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Dr LO Wing-lok
(7 members)

Against:

Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong
Miss Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Mr SZETO Wah
Ms LI Fung-ying, JP
Mr Michael MAK Kwok-fung
(5 members)

Abstention:

Mr Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
(1 member)

20. The item was endorsed by the Subcommittee.

21. Miss Emily LAU requested that this item be voted on separately from other items at the relevant FC meeting.

EC(2001-02)15

Proposed creation of three supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Chief Engineer (D1) in the new Industry Review Division, and one Deputy Principal Government Counsel (DL2) in the existing Legal Advisory Division of the Works Bureau of Government Secretariat for three years; and increase in establishment ceiling of the Planning and Lands Bureau and Works Bureau of Government Secretariat in 2001-02 from \$101,415,000 by \$5,290,320 to \$106,705,320 for creation of nine non-directorate posts to take forward the comprehensive package of improvement measures recommended by the Construction Industry Review Committee

22. Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works at its meeting on 11 June 2001.

23. Noting that the Works Bureau would only be involved in the implementation of 65 improvement measures, i.e. 60% of the 109 measures recommended by the Construction Industry Review Committee (CIRC), Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong enquired whether similar requests for creation of directorate posts had been submitted by the respective departments involved in implementing the remaining 44 measures. The Deputy Secretary for Works (DS(W)) said that following the release of the report of CIRC, the Administration had consulted the relevant bureaux and departments on the recommendations of the report. Other than the Works Bureau (WB), there were no other bureaux or departments which had made a request for creation of directorate posts to implement the recommended measures.

24. Mr CHEUNG further queried the need for WB to create a team of 12 officers including three at directorate level. DS(W) explained that WB would be the lead agency to work with the five bureaux and 14 departments on all construction-related matters, and to co-ordinate the implementation of CIRC's recommendations. One of the main recommendations of CIRC was the setting up of a new co-ordination framework to implement the change programme. The Administration agreed in principle to establish an industry co-ordinating body (ICB), and pending its formation, to set up a provisional ICB. ICB would be a statutory industry organization with a broad membership involving all industry stakeholders and independent members. Given the wide scope of the intended functions of ICB, WB needed to further consult the industry stakeholders and relevant bureaux and departments in order to work out the details of structure, powers and membership and to spearhead its early formation. As the lead agency, WB would consider how best to set up ICB and what development path it should take to become a permanent and statutory body. It would assume an overview of the work of relevant bureaux, departments and industry stakeholders in taking forward the CIRC's recommendations, and take stock of the progress of implementation in three years' time.

25. While appreciating the need for staff increases in coping with the additional workload in co-ordinating and taking forward the CIRC recommendations, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that the proposed number of new posts excessive, particularly when no such request was made by other relevant bureaux and departments involved in implementing the recommendations. DS(W) said that relevant bureaux and departments would not require to have additional staff resource to take forward the change programme because the main co-ordination work would be undertaken by WB. Where there was a need for additional staff resource in implementing major improvement measures, the relevant bureaux and departments would state their respective requests in their annual resource allocation exercise. As the lead agency in spearheading the change programme, there was a pressing need for WB to create the proposed posts.

26. Mr Henry WU enquired about the timetable for taking forward the CIRC's recommendations. DS(W) said that in its report, CIRC had provided the time schedule for implementing each of its recommendations, most of which would have to be implemented within three years' time. Therefore, the proposed posts, if created, would be reviewed in three years.

27. Responding to Mr WU's further enquiry on the need for creation of the Deputy Principal Government Counsel (DPGC) (DL2) post in the Legal Advisory Division (LAD) of WB, the Legal Advisor, Works Bureau advised that with the implementation of CIRC recommendations, considerable legal input would be required in assessing the merits of enacting security of payment legislation, in establishing ICB and in implementing the mandatory registration scheme for construction workers. Given the critical role placed on public sector clients in driving the construction industry to improve its operations, LAD would also be actively involved in the process of reviewing and developing dispute resolution mechanisms, quality-oriented procurement strategies, milestone payments and sanctioning mechanisms in the procurement of public works and the consideration of a new form of contract with a partnering approach. LAD, which was headed by the Legal Advisor (Works) and underpinned by two DPGC (DL2), was already fully engaged in providing legal services to the seven works departments, as well as advising departments such as the Environmental Protection Department, Transport Department and Buildings Department on their construction projects and related matters. It would therefore require a new DPGC (DL2) post to take forward the CIRC's recommendations.

28. While expressing support for the early implementation of CIRC's recommendations, Miss Emily LAU said that she failed to see how the proposed posts would help in achieving a cultural change within the construction industry. She also considered it necessary to have an annual review of the situation. DS(W) said that the need for fostering a quality culture was highlighted in many of the CIRC's recommendations. CIRC concluded that a change of mindset among all industry participants was required in order to uplift the construction quality. It had also recommended that clients should be more involved during project implementation, and appealed for more integrated input from different disciplines at the outset of the project. As part of the implementation effort, WB would promote wider use of value management techniques in local construction and develop more structured site supervision system, which specified the supervision requirements for various stages of construction for different types of works. There would be regular reviews on the progress of implementation of CIRC's recommendations. Responding further to Miss LAU on the administrative and legislative changes brought about by the CIRC's recommendation, DS(W) advised that legislation would be introduced for the implementation of the mandatory registration scheme for construction workers and the establishment of ICB. Consideration would also be given to setting up statutory control on the system of subcontracting, the merits of enacting security of payment legislation, reviewing the work and structure of the Construction Industry Training Association and amending the Buildings Ordinance with a view to streamlining the procedure of works.

29. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2001-02)16

Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2) in the Department of Health for 18 months to co-ordinate necessary preparatory and planning work related to the Health Care Reform

30. Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Health Services at its meeting on 11 June 2001.

31. Miss Emily LAU enquired whether the staff affected by the proposed transfer of the general out-patient clinic services to the Hospital Authority (HA) had agreed to the staffing arrangement proposed. The Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare (DS(HW)) said that while the proposal to introduce family medicine practice in general out-patient clinic services (GOPCs) contained in the Health Care Reform was well supported by the public, there were concerns about the transitional arrangements for staff affected by the organizational changes and the quality and delivery of service. One of the tasks of the proposed post of Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2) was to consult the stakeholders on the proposed transfer of GOPCs and work out suitable arrangements that would ensure a smooth transition, with minimal disruption of service to the public.

32. Noting that the paper submitted to members had made no mention of the Health Protection Accounts (HPA), Mr MAK Kwok-fung enquired whether the proposed post would also be responsible for the financing arrangements for HPA. DS(HW) advised that the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB) had noted the different views expressed on the HPA and therefore needed to consider the subject very carefully before taking it any further. This work would be taken forward by HWB. Meanwhile the proposed post would be created within the Department of Health (DH) to co-ordinate the planning and preparatory work for other issues related to the DH in the reform proposals.

33. As regards the patient complaint mechanism, DS(HW) said that the subject had been discussed under various forums and a Subcommittee was set up under the Panel on Health Services to study the improvements to the medical complaints mechanism. The proposed post would examine the existing mechanism, consult the relevant parties and review the related Ordinances. The effective performance of duties of the post would call for an officer with extensive administrative experience, strong leadership and vision. Although the post would be created under DH, it should not be taken to assume that the Complaint Office would be set up within DH. The Administration would adopt an open mind and take into account all relevant opinion on the setting up of the Complaint Office.

34. Dr LO Wing-lok referred members to the paper which indicated that members of the Panel on Health Services had no objection to the proposal when it was submitted for discussion at the Panel meeting on 11 June 2001. He clarified that in fact no member of the Panel had indicated support and some of them had expressed reservations over the proposed post. He said that he could not accept how the post could help in strengthening preventive care. As some of the reform proposals

including the proposed transfer of the general out-patient clinic services to HA had yet to be agreed, he questioned the need to create the post at this stage for the purpose of undergoing planning and the preparatory work related to the Health Care Reform, which could be undertaken by existing directorate staff of DH. The proposed creation of post would be more justified if the reform proposals had been agreed upon and were to be taken forward. He therefore indicated that he would not support the proposed creation of post.

35. DS(HW) said that DH had all along been promoting and strengthening preventive care. The department planned to centralize its health promotion functions under the steer of a committee and would require a dedicated directorate officer to assume overall responsibility for the organizational and operational changes. The incumbent would be expected to work out the logistics of the transfer of the general out-patient clinic services to HA as well as to assess the human resource management implications. He would also examine how the various proposals and options on quality assurance could be taken forward, taking into account the views of the concerned parties. As a lot of preparatory and planning work was required before the actual implementation of the reform proposals, therefore it was considered necessary that the post should be created in time.

36. The item was put to vote. Two members voted for the item, five voted against the item and three abstained.

For:

Miss Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Mr Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
(2 members)

Against:

Mr Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Mr NG Leung-sing, JP
Mr Bernard CHAN
Mr Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Dr LO Wing-lok
(5 members)

Abstained:

Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong
Mr SZETO Wah
Mr LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
(3 members)

37. The item was negated by the Subcommittee.

EC(2001-02)19

Proposed merger of the Amenities Officer and Recreation and Sport Officer grades to form a new Leisure Services Manager grade; and retention of the personal pay scale by serving Amenities Officers II upon regrading to the new grade whilst they are in the Assistant Leisure Services Manager II rank

38. With the approval from members, discussion of the subject had been advanced at the request of the Administration.

39. Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Home Affairs and the Panel on Public Service at a joint meeting on 8 May 2001.

40. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2001-02)17

Proposed creation of one permanent post of Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2) in the Education and Manpower Bureau of Government Secretariat with effect from 15 August 2001 and increase in the establishment ceiling in 2001-02 from \$40,690,000 by \$2,170,980 to \$42,860,980 to enable the creation of four non-directorate posts in the Bureau to cope with the workload on basic education and early childhood education

41. Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Education at its meeting on 18 June 2001.

42. Referring to the responsibilities of the proposed post which included the programme management of education related capital works, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was of the view that these management duties should more appropriately be undertaken by the Education Department (ED) rather than the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB). He also noted that one of the duties of the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower² (PAS(EM)²) was to oversee the housekeeping matters for ED which again should more appropriately be dealt with by ED itself.

43. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower explained that the School Improvement Programme (SIP) which began in the mid nineties intended to provide improvement works to schools under a works programme comprising over 800 projects. The proposed post would not only be responsible for the programme management of SIP works but would also be required to co-ordinate other education related capital works, including the overseeing of the construction of new schools and conversion of existing schools which were considered beyond the scope of SIP due to site constraint etc. In addition, the incumbent would have to identify suitable sites for schools in consultation with the Planning and Works Bureau and to work out the priorities for meeting various needs. The PAS(EM)² added that in the overseeing of

housekeeping matters of ED, EMB would have to ensure proper resource management by prioritizing resource allocation. It would also advise ED on establishment matters in order that adequate support was provided in implementing policy initiatives.

44. While indicating support for the proposed creation of post, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was concerned that with the duplicating efforts of EMB, ED would be facing a lot of constraints in the discharge of its responsibilities. He thus saw it necessary to have a clear delineation of responsibilities between the policy bureau and its executive department so that unnecessary conflict would not arise.

45. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2001-02)18

Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Chief Engineer (D1) in the Transport Department for five years to head a new Pedestrian Facilities Division under the Urban Regional Office

46. Miss Emily LAU indicated support for the proposal, adding that the development of comprehensive pedestrian facilities should be expedited as far as possible.

47. Mr Henry WU said that as a member of the Hong Kong Physically Handicapped and Able-Bodied Association, he requested special consideration be given to pedestrian facilities and design which would meet the needs of the physically handicapped and the elderly. He also pointed out that the needs of women with trolleys and baby carts should also be addressed in the pedestrian design. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport thanked members for their support. He assured members that the Administration undertook to look into the special needs of pedestrians and continue its efforts in the promotion of pedestrian facilities for the convenience of the public.

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48. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that the Democratic Party would support the proposal. He also conveyed the message from Mr LAW Chi-kwong, spokesman on environmental affairs for the Democratic Party, that the development of pedestrian facilities was worthy of support and that more pedestrian schemes should be provided.

49. The item was voted on and endorsed.

50. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 1:00 pm.