

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

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

**Minutes of the 2nd meeting  
held at the Legislative Council Chamber  
on Wednesday, 24 October 2001, at 10:45 am**

**Members present:**

Hon CHAN Kwok-keung (Chairman)  
Hon NG Leung-sing, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP  
Hon Margaret NG  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon HUI Cheung-ching, JP  
Hon Bernard CHAN  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP  
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS  
Hon CHOY So-yuk  
Hon SZETO Wah  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP  
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS  
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung  
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP  
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok  
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

**Non-Subcommittee Members attending:**

Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

**Public Officers attending:**

Mr Stanley YING, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mr K K LAM	Principal Executive Officer (General), Finance Bureau
Mrs Jessie TING, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service
Mr Angus MIU	Acting Secretary General, Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service
Mr LEE Lap-sun, JP	Secretary General, Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service
Mr Stephen FISHER, JP	Deputy Secretary for Planning and Lands
Ms Olivia NIP	Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
Mr A K PATON, JP	Assistant Director of Lands
Mr Anthony KWAN	Assistant Director of Planning

**Clerk in attendance:**

Miss Polly YEUNG	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3
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**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Alice AU	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

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**EC(2001-02)20**

**Proposed changes in establishment under Heads 174 and 175 for the establishment of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service; and increase in establishment ceiling of Head 174 in 2001-02 from \$8,258,000 by \$1,548,340 to \$9,806,340 with effect from 1 December 2001**

Members noted that the Panel on Public Service had been briefed on the proposal at its meeting on 21 May 2001 and an information paper setting out the staffing proposal for the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Joint Secretariat) and the proposed merging of the two Heads of Expenditure of 174 and 175 was circulated to the Panel on 11 October 2001.

2. While expressing support for the establishment of the Joint Secretariat to streamline the support services provided to the four advisory bodies on civil service and judicial salaries and conditions of service, Mr James TIEN highlighted the need for an overall review on the civil service pay scale system, in particular the mechanism for civil service pay adjustments, and asked whether the present proposal had already taken into account the additional workload involved in undertaking such a review. Concurring with the need for an early review on civil service pay scale system, Mr Howard YOUNG said that the matter should be more thoroughly pursued at the Public Service Panel. He cautioned that if the present proposal was approved, the Administration should not use the reduced level of staffing support for the Joint Secretariat as an excuse for deferring or shelving the review.

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3. In response, the Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (DS(CS)) advised that the proposed staffing of the Joint Secretariat was considered adequate to service the existing four advisory bodies, i.e. the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (Standing Commission), the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS), the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service and the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Directorate and Judicial Standing Committees), in their normal course of work. Under the existing arrangement, an annual pay trend survey would be conducted by the Pay Trend Survey Committee under the Standing Commission to produce the pay trend indicators of private sector companies for the preceding year. Separately, each of the four advisory bodies would look into the benchmarking for the remuneration of each grade and rank of posts under its purview. She stressed that the present proposal would allow the Joint Secretariat greater flexibility in resource deployment to cope with ad hoc assignments. In case the advisory bodies were required to carry out any additional assignment, the Administration would consider how best to provide the necessary staffing support having regard to the nature, urgency and scope of such work.

4. Miss Margaret NG pointed out that there were fundamental differences between the principles for remunerating judicial officers and the general civil service, and that the existing arrangement of providing dedicated secretariat support to different advisory bodies was conducive to maintaining their independence. Expressing grave concern about the situation after the proposed merger, Miss NG sought explanation from the Administration as to how the independence of the work of individual advisory bodies could be preserved in actual practice if the secretariat staff no longer provided dedicated support to an advisory body but were required to service more than one advisory body.

5. Mr Bernard CHAN declared his interest as a member of SCDS. He opined that with the amalgamation, staffing support would no longer be committee-based but could be pooled together and put to more flexible and efficient use. However, he pointed out that given the different purviews of the four advisory bodies, it would be most important for the Joint Secretariat to maintain a clear stance in its operation and ensure that the work done for one advisory body would not interfere with that for other advisory bodies, especially when preparing papers, reports and other relevant documents for the advisory bodies.

6. In response, DS(CS) stressed that the present proposal was primarily concerned with the amalgamation of the four existing Secretariats. The independence of the advisory bodies would not be affected by the restructuring proposal as each advisory body would continue to deal with and decide on matters relating to pay and conditions of service within their respective purview. Referring to Enclosure 6 to the discussion paper, she pointed out that the Judicial Standing Committee would continue to have the dedicated support of Assistant Secretary General (Joint Secretariat) 2 (ranked at Administrative Officer Staff Grade C). She further reported that the Administration had consulted the Standing Commission, SCDS, the Directorate and Judicial Standing Committees and they had all supported the proposed Joint Secretariat.

7. Miss NG however considered that the Administration had not answered her question. She was not convinced that the independence of individual advisory bodies could remain unaffected when they were all supported by the same Secretariat. She referred to the case of the Legislative Council Secretariat which was independent from the civil service and hence, able to provide dedicated and independent support service to Members. Miss NG requested to put on record that as the Administration had failed to address her concerns, she would not support the present proposal.

8. Mr HUI Cheung-ching asked whether the general support team for the Joint Secretariat could be further streamlined. DS(CS) responded that after the amalgamation of the existing Secretariats, the number of non-directorate posts in the general support team would be reduced from 30 to 23. While mindful of the need to enhance productivity, the Administration considered that the proposed level of non-directorate support was required to service four important advisory bodies

and to enable the Secretary General, Joint Secretariat, to effectively discharge his responsibilities as a Head of Department and a Controlling Officer for the concerned head of expenditure.

9. The item was voted on and endorsed.

10. Miss Margaret NG requested that her opposition to this item be recorded and that this item be voted on separately from other Establishment Subcommittee items at the relevant Finance Committee meeting.

**EC(2001-02)21**

**Proposed creation of four permanent posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Planning and Lands Bureau of Government Secretariat, one Chief Estate Surveyor (D1) in the Lands Department, and one Government Town Planner (D2) and one Chief Town Planner (D1) in the Planning Department to provide directorate support to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the 20-year urban renewal programme**

11. Members noted that an information paper on the proposal was circulated to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 20 September 2001.

12. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that while Members of the Democratic Party were in support of urban renewal, they were gravely concerned about the slow progress of work of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) since its establishment on 1 May 2001. Mr CHEUNG considered it highly unsatisfactory that nearly six months had elapsed but URA had yet to formulate its first five-year Corporate Plan (first CP). Such a delay had caused much dissatisfaction and anxiety among affected owners and residents. As he was of the view that the proposed posts could only be justified by the substantial work to be undertaken by URA in implementing urban renewal projects, he enquired about the timing for URA's first CP and the implementation of the 25 uncompleted projects carried over from the Land Development Corporation (LDC).

13. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Planning and Lands (DS(PL)) explained that since its establishment in May 2001, URA had been working vigorously in preparing its first CP. One of its key tasks was to decide on the priority of urban renewal projects, taking into account the latest situation of the property market and the views of local residents. In addition, other complex issues such as URA's land acquisition policy and the financial arrangements for implementing URA projects would have to be formulated carefully. DS(PL) said that while progress might not have been as good as expected, he understood that the draft first CP would be presented to the URA Managing Board for consideration at its meeting in November 2001. Subject to the Managing Board's endorsement, the

25 uncompleted LDC projects would be given priority and would be taken forward as soon as possible. In order to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the 20-year urban renewal programme, there was a need for continued directorate support in the Planning and Lands Bureau (PLB), the Planning Department (Plan D) and Lands Department (Lands D).

14. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was not fully convinced that the creation of four permanent directorate posts was justified at this stage, pending a concrete plan for URA's future work. While urging URA to finalize its first CP as early as possible, he asked whether the Administration would consider retaining the existing supernumerary posts for one year subject to further review, instead of creating them on a permanent basis in the first instance.

15. In reply, DS(PL) emphasized the long-term need for the proposed posts to render adequate support and assistance for the implementation of the 20-year urban renewal programme. However, in view of the concerns raised, the Administration would have no objection to revising the present proposal as suggested by Mr CHEUNG. However, he cautioned that the work of URA and the morale of the staff might be affected by the uncertainty arising from the short-term nature of the posts. While stating that his suggestion was not intended to affect staff morale, Mr CHEUNG considered that members would unlikely object to converting the posts in question into permanent ones if future circumstances could justify their long-term functional needs.

16. Given that the posts were currently funded by URA to facilitate its initial operation, Mr Henry WU enquired about the financial implication of retaining the four supernumerary posts for one year instead of converting them into permanent ones. DS(PL) responded that the funding arrangement would be the same as that outlined in paragraph 23 of the discussion paper, i.e. funding for the three posts in PLB and Plan D would be met by the Government starting from 1 April 2002. As for the Chief Estate Surveyor post in Lands D, URA would continue to meet the full staff costs involved as the post would mainly deal with land resumption matters to facilitate URA projects.

17. Miss LI Fung-ying asked whether there might be duplication in the work of the Urban Renewal Unit (UR Unit) in PLB and the Urban Renewal Division (UR Division) in Plan D. In reply, DS(PL) explained that the UR Unit headed by the Principal Assistant Secretary (Urban Renewal) (PAS(UR)) would be responsible for formulating policies and strategies on urban renewal, while the UR Division in Plan D would be heavily involved in planning work on URA projects and in providing the necessary technical support and planning input to PLB and URA.

18. Addressing Mr James TIEN's query that the existing work procedures might have been unnecessarily complicated as a result of the involvement of government departments, DS(PL) stressed that PLB, Plan D and Lands D were working in

collaboration to assist and facilitate URA's work in urban renewal, notably in land acquisition and planning matters. In reply to Mr TIEN's further enquiry, DS(PL) confirmed that the four posts in question were created before the dissolution of the LDC and the present proposal did not involve any net creation or deletion of posts.

19. Noting that one of the major duties of PAS(UR) was to oversee the operation of URA, Miss LI Fung-ying asked whether such oversight would include staff matters. In response, DS(PL) advised that in overseeing the operation of URA, PLB would scrutinize the draft five-year corporate plans and draft annual business plans submitted by URA annually for the approval of the Financial Secretary. In addition, PLB would also co-ordinate with other relevant policy bureaux and government departments on various policy and planning matters so that necessary assistance could be provided to URA to ensure the successful and smooth implementation of its urban renewal projects. However, as URA was an independent statutory body, the Government would not take part in its day-to-day administration. DS(PL) confirmed that with the exception of the Managing Director and two Executive Directors of URA who were required by law to be appointed by the Chief Executive, URA assumed full responsibility for its own staff matters including the terms and conditions of employment.

20. Mr James TIEN sought clarification about the Administration's consultation with the Planning, Lands and Works Panel on this staffing proposal. In response, DS(PL) reported that an information paper had been circulated to the Panel on 20 September 2001 and no specific questions were raised by members. At the Panel's special meeting held on 3 October 2001, members had discussed various issues arising out of the Consultation Paper on Urban Renewal Strategy, including the co-ordination between government departments and URA in taking forward the urban renewal programme.

21. On Mr LEUNG Fu-wah's enquiry about the voting procedure for amendments to a proposed item, the Assistant Secretary General 1 advised that amendments to an ESC item could only be introduced by the Administration. Subject to the Administration's decision, members could vote on an item as amended by the Administration.

22. The Chairman sought members' comments on Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's earlier suggestion that the existing supernumerary posts be retained for one year instead of being converted to permanent ones as currently proposed. Members did not raise any objection to the suggestion. In reply to the Chairman, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (DS(Tsy)) said that in view of members' concern, the Administration would amend the item as follows: "Proposed creation of four supernumerary posts for one year of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Planning and Lands Bureau of Government Secretariat, one Chief Estate Surveyor (D1) in the Lands Department, and one Government Town Planner (D2) and one Chief Town Planner (D1) in the Planning Department to provide directorate support to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the 20-year

urban renewal programme".

23. The item, as amended by DS(Tsy), was voted on and endorsed.

24. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 11:35 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

7 November 2001