

立法會
Legislative Council

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

**Minutes of the 6th meeting
held at the Legislative Council Chamber
on Wednesday, 15 May 2002, 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
Hon Margaret NG
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 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

Members absent:

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Hon SZETO Wah
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Non-Subcommittee Member attending:

Hon SIN Chung-kai

Public Officers attending:

Mr Stanley YING, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mrs Jessie TING, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service
Mr K K LAM	Principal Executive Officer (General), Finance Bureau
Mrs Carrie YAU, JP	Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting
Miss Annie TAM, JP	Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting
Mr M T WONG	Chief Engineer, Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau

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

EC(2002-03)1

Proposed retention of two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Chief Engineer (D1) in the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau of Government Secretariat for a period of 18 months to enable the secondment of two suitable officers from the Government to a management team set up under a private company owned by Financial Secretary Incorporated to spearhead the Cyberport development

Members noted that the item was discussed by the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (ITB Panel) on 8 April 2002.

2. Mr James TIEN recapped that in view of the repeated concerns raised by Members of the Legislative Council about the need to contain the size of directorate establishment of the civil service, the Legislative Council's Cross Party Coalition had reached an agreement in principle that proposals for the creation of directorate posts would unlikely be supported if such proposals involved any net increase in the overall directorate establishment of the civil service. Notwithstanding, for staffing proposals involving existing supernumerary directorate posts, the Cross Party Coalition's general view was that they would be considered case by case on their own merits. As such, he would be prepared to consider the present proposal for the retention of two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Chief Engineer (D1) in the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) for a period of 18 months to enable the secondment of two suitable officers from the Government to a management team set up under a private company owned by Financial Secretary Incorporated (FSI) to spearhead the Cyberport development.

3. Mr James TIEN stated that the Liberal Party (LP) had all along supported the Cyberport project in view of its potential benefits for Hong Kong's future development. However, he pointed out that notwithstanding the arrangement for the Government to recover from the FSI-owned company the full staff costs of the two secondees, the source of funding of the FSI-owned company was in fact public money. Hence, the proposed extension of the two proposed supernumerary posts should be critically examined in the light of their functional needs. He was concerned whether the two posts in question were to be extended for 18 months beyond their original three-year tenure to deal with unforeseeable circumstances or delay in respect of the Cyberport Portion. Mr TIEN sought assurance from the Administration that these posts would lapse once the Cyberport Portion was up and running.

4. In response, the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (SITB) clarified that the proposed extension was not necessitated by any delay in the project. In fact, when the Cyberport project was implemented, it was announced that the Cyberport Portion was scheduled for completion in three phases between 2002 and 2004. While the Phase I (CI) building had been completed and the office premises being let, the second and third phases of the Cyberport Portion were still underway and due for completion within the next two years. As such, the Administration considered that the secondment of two directorate officers to the FSI management team was essential in order to provide the necessary continuity to Government's monitoring and management of the Cyberport project. SITB assured members that the proposed duration of 18 months for the two posts in question was considered appropriate to tie in with the full completion of the Cyberport Portion by 2004. By then, the Administration believed that the outstanding work undertaken by the two seconded officers, such as monitoring the construction of the Cyberport Portion, would diminish. With careful succession planning, their remaining duties could be taken up by the other staff in the FSI management team.

5. In this regard, Mr James TIEN asked whether the Administration had at the outset underestimated the required duration of the two posts when it submitted the previous staffing proposal in 1999. SITB advised that this was not the case as given the mammoth scale of the Cyberport project, the Administration had all along envisaged that the requirement of the two posts in question would extend beyond three years. However, to exercise stringent control over the creation of posts, the normal practice was to create supernumerary directorate posts for not more than three years initially, subject to further review of their continued need. The Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (DS(ITB)) further confirmed that in the last staffing proposal, the Administration had proposed to create the two directorate posts in question on a supernumerary basis for a period of three years in the first instance. It would review the continued requirement for the two posts in 2001. Having reviewed the need for the posts, the Administration had come to the view that they should be extended for 18 months for the justifications set out in the discussion paper.

6. On the duration of the existing supernumerary directorate posts, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury advised that generally speaking, for proposals involving supernumerary directorate posts, the Administration would often propose a duration of no more than three years. However, this was not an invariable rule as there had been cases in which a longer tenure had been proposed on account of their functional needs.

7. Responding to Mr James TIEN, SITB confirmed that the Administration would not seek to further extend the two posts in question beyond their 18-month duration. Mr TIEN said that on this basis, Members of the LP would support the present proposal.

8. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that as the Member of the Legislative Council representing the Information Technology Functional Constituency, he supported the present proposal. He also stated that Members of the Democratic Party had no objection to the proposal.

9. Responding to Mr James TIEN's enquiry about the tenancy position for the CI Building of the Cyberport Portion, SITB informed members that since last reporting to ITB Panel on 8 April 2002, two more companies had confirmed their tenancy in the CI Building. There were thus a total of five companies taking up about 60% of the total lettable floor area of the CI Building. Subject to the progress and outcome of on-going negotiation with interested companies, she was hopeful that the uptake could reach 80% in the coming few months.

10. Mr Howard YOUNG remarked that in case the general level of market rental for commercial premises fell, the financial position of the FSI-owned company might be adversely affected by the reduction in rental income. Under such circumstances, he asked whether it might be possible that the staff costs of the two secondees would be met by public funds. In reply, DS(ITB) advised that a total of some 150 000 m² lettable floor area of office and retail space would be provided under the three phases of the Cyberport Portion. Hence, notwithstanding the fluctuations in market rental, the FSI-owned company should be able to meet its staff costs, including those of the two secondees. In this connection, SITB pointed out that the rental at Cyberport would be pitched at market levels and that the attraction of the Cyberport was its state-of-the-art facilities and support infrastructure and not low rental.

11. The item was voted on and endorsed.

12. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 11:00 am.