

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. AS 250/01-02

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Paper for the House Committee Meeting on 31 May 2002

Fifth Report of the Subcommittee on Members' Remuneration and Operating Expenses Reimbursement

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' advice on the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Members' Remuneration and Operating Expenses Reimbursement for enlarged Members' offices (from 40 m² to 50m²) in the Central Government Offices (West Wing) (CGO(WW)) and Citibank Tower (CBT).

Background

2. Each Member may be provided with an office within the Council's premises on the third, fourth or fifth floor of CGO(WW) or the sixth floor of CBT. Members' offices are either in the form of individual office, or combined offices that can be shared by two or more Members. The existing standard provision, agreed between the Administration and LegCo in 1996, for each Member's office in CGO(WW)/CBT is 40m² which is to accommodate a Member, two personal assistants/secretaries and office equipment (such as computers, printers etc) and filing cabinets/bookshelves.

3. Given the increased Council-related work and the inadequate provision of the accountable office operating expenses reimbursement (OOER) for Members, the Independent Commission on Remuneration for the Members of the Executive Council and the Legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Independent Commission) recommended that the OOER be increased by \$25,000 per month, which should go towards meeting the operational needs of the majority of LegCo Members, enabling them to employ additional and better qualified staff. The Independent Commission's recommendation was approved with effect from 1 October 2001. The need for enlarged central offices in CGO(WW)/CBT as a result of the greater number of assistants employed by Members with the higher level of OOER was raised at The Legislative Council Commission meeting on 19 February 2002. The Commission referred the issue to the Subcommittee for consideration.

Deliberations and Recommendations

4. In March 2002 the Subcommittee conducted a survey seeking Members' views on the space requirements of their central offices in CGO(WW)/CBT. Fifty-three Members have responded; 33 of them consider the present provision of 40m² inadequate. Of the 53 responding Members, 44 have stationed staff in the CGO(WW)/CBT offices (27 Members have 1 - 2 while 17 Members have 3 - 8 full-time/part-time staff in these offices). It indicates that 17 Members have accommodated more staff in their CGO(WW)/CBT offices than the standard provision of office accommodation agreed with the Administration in 1996. After the increase of the OOER, 24 Members have each employed 1 - 3 additional staff. A total of 35 additional staff has been employed by the 24 Members. Twelve of these 35 additional staff are stationed in 11 Members' offices in CGO(WW)/CBT. Thirteen Members indicate that they have not employed additional staff due to the inadequacy of office space. The summary of responses to the questionnaire was circulated to all Members vide LC Paper No. AS 194/01-02 on 8 April 2002.

5. The Subcommittee held a meeting on 11 April 2002 to discuss the results of the survey. It is obvious that the present Members' offices in CGO(WW)/CBT are congested. The additional staff employed and stationed in these offices by Members with the increased OOER has aggravated the situation. The Subcommittee notes that the need of a larger office is even more acute for Members with no political affiliation as they cannot share their offices with their colleagues as in the case of Members with party affiliation. Based on the findings of the survey, the Subcommittee recommends that a larger central office of 50m² should be provided for Members in CGO(WW)/CBT as an interim measure to cope with the congested office accommodation in Members' central offices, pending the availability of the new Legislative Council Building by the end of 2007. The proposed additional 10m² is to accommodate two additional personal assistants. (The government space standard for staff at Executive Officer and Clerical Officer level is 5.8m² and 4.4m² respectively.)

6. The Subcommittee notes that in February 2002 The Legislative Council Commission has forwarded a proposal to the Administration requesting additional office space of 450m² to meet the short-term accommodation needs of the Council between now and the availability of the new Legislative Council Building. In the circumstances, the Subcommittee further recommends that its proposal in paragraph 5 should be considered in conjunction with the Commission's earlier proposal. Details of the reallocation of Members' central offices will also be decided by the Commission upon provision of additional space.

Advice Sought

7. Members' support is sought on the following recommendations of the Subcommittee:

- (a) the area of each Member's office in CGO(WW)/CBT be increased from 40m² to 50m²; and
- (b) The Legislative Council Commission to request the Administration to consider the above proposal in conjunction with the Commission's earlier proposal for additional office space.

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Legislative Council Secretariat
21 May 2002