

**Note for
LegCo Subcommittee to Study the Proposed Accountability System
for Principal Officials and Related Issues**

Extended Checking of Principal Officials

Purpose

Under the Accountability System, candidates for appointment to the posts of Principal Officials will be subject to extended checking. The checking will be modeled on the existing extended checking arrangement for very senior civil service posts or posts requiring a particularly high degree of trust and integrity. This paper briefs members on the extended checking system for the prospective Principal Officials.

Background

2. Integrity checking is part of the appointment process to the Civil Service. The system provides for three levels of checks, namely appointment checking, normal checking and extended checking. Extended checking is the highest level of checking applicable to very senior posts or posts requiring a high degree of trust and integrity.

3. The integrity checking system enables the appointment authority to determine whether prospective appointees or serving officers possess good characters and integrity for delivery of the duties of relevant posts. The system serves to contribute to public confidence in the civil service.

Extended Checking for Prospective Principal Officials

4. The Administration has decided that as a matter of policy, prospective candidates for nomination to become Principal Officials under the Accountability System will have to undergo extended checking based on the arrangements for the civil service. The only difference will be in relation to the initiating authority. Given that these candidates are for positions outside

the civil service and they will be directly answerable to CE, it is considered appropriate for their checking to be initiated by the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, whereas that for Chief Secretary for Administration will be initiated by the Chief Executive's Office.

5. The same extended checking questionnaire as currently used in the civil service will be issued to the person who is to be nominated as Principal Official. The form seeks information relating to the personal particulars of the individual, his/her education background, social activities, employment history, family members, and requests for nomination of two referees. The Police will continue as the agent responsible for the checking and the input of ICAC will be sought as necessary. The checking will comprise interviews with the subject, his/her referees and supervisors as well as record checks.

6. Upon completion of the checking, a report covering all details as disclosed and collected will be submitted to the Chief Executive for consideration. Based on the report and information submitted, CE will decide whether he is satisfied that the candidate's integrity and character are suitable for nomination as a Principal Official, given the responsibilities and trust expected of the office.

7. The processing time will vary case by case, depending on the priority accorded to the case by all parties concerned as well as the extent and scope of the candidates' activities. While it is not appropriate to place a time limit on the processing time, we would ensure that the checking is completed in a thorough and accurate manner.

8. Effectiveness of the integrity checking system relies on the trust and co-operation of all the parties involved and data of the checking is kept strictly confidential. It is therefore essential to uphold strict confidentiality of all the relevant data and procedures of the checking.