

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1787/03-04

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/PS/1

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 19 April 2004 at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP

Non-Panel Member : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
attending

Members absent : Hon HUI Cheung-ching, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP

Public officers attending : Agenda Items III & IV

Mr Joseph W P WONG, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mrs Rebecca LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Agenda Item III

Mrs Jessie TING, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (2)

Agenda Item IV

Miss Jennifer MAK, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (1)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Salumi CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Ms Rosalind MA
Senior Council Secretary (1)8

Ms May LEUNG
Legislative Assistant

Action

- I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1506/03-04 — Minutes of meeting on
15 March 2004)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2004 were confirmed.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1505/03-04(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1505/03-04(02) — List of follow-up actions)

2. Members agreed that the following two items be discussed at the next regular meeting scheduled for 17 May 2004:

- (a) Civil service disciplinary mechanism and procedures; and
- (b) Civil Service Customer Service Award Scheme 2003-04.

III. Review of civil service allowances

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1505/03-04(03) — Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

3. At the Chairman's invitation, the Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (2) (DSCS2) briefed members on the progress of the Administration's comprehensive review of allowances payable to civil servants. The review covered civil service allowances related to the performance of duties (duty-related allowances) and those provided as fringe benefits. The progress of the review was summarized as follows:

(a) Duty-related allowances

As an on-going exercise to review civil service allowances to ensure that their provision was in line with present day circumstances, changes had been introduced to a number of duty-related allowances in the past few years to improve their administration, including overtime and related allowances, Special Posting Allowance for officers posted outside Hong Kong and Duty Mileage Allowance. Since the announcement of the comprehensive review in 2003, the Administration had completed two phases of the review on job-related allowances (JRAs) payable to civilian grades. Certain allowances that were considered no longer justified because of changing circumstances were ceased, and areas of improvements were identified for some others. The Administration had also consulted the staff sides and departmental management on its proposals to reduce the rates of acting allowance and to tighten up

the payment rules. The Administration would take account of the comments received and make a decision on the proposals soon. As a whole, the efforts in improving the administration of duty-related allowances had contributed to a steady decrease in the overall expenditure. An 8.8% year-on-year reduction was recorded in actual expenditure in 2002-03, compared with that in 2001-02, and the projected expenditure in 2003-04 indicated a further 21.2% reduction.

(b) Fringe benefit type of allowances

The Administration had been taking proactive steps over the years to modernize the provision of fringe benefits to civil servants. Generally speaking, the package of fringe benefits available to officers offered appointment on or after 1 June 2000 had been substantially trimmed down in step with present day circumstances. The key features of the fringe benefits package for new recruits offered appointment on or after 1 June 2000 (i.e. under New Terms) were set out in Annex A to the paper. The current review principally focused on identifying feasible ways to further rationalize the payment of various allowances to officers who were currently or potentially eligible for these allowances as fringe benefits under their terms of employment. Such a review was, in comparison, a much more complex exercise than that concerning duty-related allowances as the Administration needed to take full account of the legal, policy and other relevant considerations. The Administration would take forward the review exercise in two phases, first pursuing proposals for allowances that affected relatively fewer civil servants and those change proposals that were less complicated, then proceeding onto phase two in respect of proposals which were likely to have a more extensive impact within the civil service. The Administration would be guided by the principles of lawfulness, reasonableness and fairness in carrying out the review. As undertaken, the Administration would fully consult staff in the process and also seek the views of the advisory bodies on civil service salaries and conditions of service.

Discussion

Need to cease payment of outdated allowances

4. Noting the broad direction of possible changes to the fringe benefit type of allowances set out in Annex B to the paper, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed

grave concern about the slow progress made by the Administration in introducing changes to cease payment of the outdated allowances. As indicated in Annex B to the paper, the Administration would consider lowering the rates of the Leave Passage Allowance (LPA) and consider ceasing the provision of Sea Passage Allowance and some other allowances. As these allowances were outdated, Mr CHEUNG considered that the continued provision of the allowances was unjustified. Given that the Department of Justice (DoJ) had advised that there was some scope under the Basic Law and the employment contracts with serving officers for rationalizing the payment of fringe benefit type of allowances, Mr CHEUNG urged the Administration to take prompt actions to put forward concrete proposals to cease the provision of outdated allowances.

5. In response, the Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS) pointed out that while many of the allowances set out in Annex B to the paper were no longer available to civil servants appointed under the New Terms, change proposals concerning the payment of fringe benefit type of allowances to currently or potentially eligible civil servants should be made in consultation with the staff sides. He also stressed that the review of fringe benefit type of allowances involved complicated issues relating to the terms of employment of civil servants, and that the Administration needed to take full account of the legal, policy and other relevant considerations. SCS assured members that the Administration would take forward the review in a prudent manner, making decisions on the change proposals after staff consultation. SCS thanked Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong for his views and looked forward to his support for the upcoming change proposals for the fringe benefit type of allowances. DSCS2 added that the allowances set out in Annex B to the paper were subject to certain payment rules and were not payable to all civil servants. For example, only officers who were directed to move from one government quarter to another quarter would be eligible for Removal Allowance. She said that the Administration would put forward detailed change proposals in respect of the allowances set out in Annex B for staff consultation in a month's time, with a view to implementing the change measures as early as possible.

6. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan shared Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's view and queried why the Administration did not cease the payment of the outdated allowances, such as LPA. He considered it most unreasonable that payment of Hardship Allowance to lower rank staff had been tightened or ceased after review while civil servants of higher ranks were still entitled to LPA, though at a lower rate.

7. DSCS2 explained that Hardship Allowance was payable in relation to the performance of duties by the staff concerned and was covered in the review of JRAs for civilian grades. The Administration had consulted departmental

management and staff on the change proposals before implementation. As regards LPA, it was payable to all directorate officers and officers on overseas terms as a fringe benefit. The LPA rates ranged from \$11,515 to \$43,720, depending on the officer's appointment terms and his substantive pay point. DSCS2 pointed out that the broad direction for the upcoming review on LPA would be to lower the LPA rates and to cease the provision of LPA for family members of officers appointed/promoted to the directorate level from a prospective date. The detailed change proposals would be worked out in about a month's time and then put forward to the staff for consultation. SCS also pointed out that for those eligible officers appointed under the New Terms, their family members were not eligible for LPA.

8. Noting that the Administration had proposed to lower the LPA rates instead of ceasing the payment of the allowance, Miss CHAN Yuen-han doubted whether the Administration had encountered any strong objections from the directorate officers and officers on overseas terms against cessation of the payment of LPA. She was concerned whether the Administration could, despite pressures from the staff sides, successfully implement necessary changes to this outdated allowance.

9. SCS reiterated that the review of fringe benefit type of allowances, including LPA, involved complicated issues relating to the terms of employment of civil servants, and that the Administration needed to take full account of the legal, policy and other relevant considerations. In general, civil servants were concerned whether any proposed changes were lawful, reasonable and fair. The Administration would consult the staff sides on any proposed changes to the terms of provision of such allowances. In the event that a consensus could not be reached during staff consultation, the Administration would make a decision in the light of the legal advice received and in the overall interest of the civil service and the community. He said that although there was a general variation clause in the employment contracts with serving officers which empowered the Government to vary the terms and conditions of service unilaterally, the Administration had to exercise care in examining the legal and other relevant implications of any change proposal so as to minimize the possibility of legal challenges. For instance, the Administration had sought to implement the decisions on civil service pay reductions in 2002, 2004 and 2005 by legislation rather than by means of the power provided under the variation clause of the employment contracts.

10. Responding to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's further enquiry, SCS advised that apart from consulting the staff sides of the four central consultative councils, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) would also consult those civil servants who would be affected by the change proposals. In the interest of a transparent review process,

SCS said that he had written to all civil servants recently to inform them of the updated progress of the review of civil service allowances, including the approach for the review of fringe benefit type of allowances.

11. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan sought information on the procedures required for implementing changes to fringe benefit type of allowances, for example, whether it was necessary to obtain written consent from the officers concerned in implementing the changes. DSCS2 said that while DoJ had advised that there was some scope in general for rationalizing the payment of fringe benefit type of allowances, the lawfulness of any proposed changes and the means of implementation had to be further examined after concrete proposals had been worked out. Ms LI Fung-ying stressed that any changes to the fringe benefit type of allowances should comply with the relevant provisions of the employment contracts between the Government and its employees.

12. Miss CHAN Yuen-han suggested the Panel to seek advice from the Legal Service Division (LSD) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat on whether the Administration had the authority to make changes to the duty-related allowances when there was a change in circumstances and to make changes to the fringe benefit type of allowances which were part of the terms of employment of the civil servants concerned. The Chairman directed the Clerk to seek the advice of LSD accordingly.

(Post-meeting note: The request of Miss CHAN Yuen-han was referred to LSD for necessary actions.)

13. Responding to members' views that the provision of air-conditioning allowance was not in line with present day circumstances, SCS said that the Administration would consider ceasing the allowance in the first phase of the review on fringe benefit type of allowances. He informed members that at present, only about 1 000 officers were eligible for the allowance and the annual expenditure on the allowance amounted to some \$200,000.

14. Mr SIN Chung-kai considered that the Administration had not demonstrated adequate determination to cease the payment of outdated allowances, such as air-conditioning allowance, in its review. While the amount of expenditure on air-conditioning allowance was relatively small, Mr SIN considered that the Administration should simplify the structure of civil service allowances by ceasing the payment of outdated allowances as early as possible.

15. At the request of members, DSCS2 undertook to provide a paper setting out the outcome of the review exercises in the past few years on different types of

civil service allowances, including those related to the performance of duties and those provided as fringe benefits, and listing the allowances that had been ceased, retained or introduced after the respective review exercises and the justifications for the cessation, retention or introduction.

(Post-meeting note: The information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1788/03-04(01) on 11 May 2004.)

Fairness in implementing changes to civil service allowances

16. Mr Albert CHAN commented that the review of civil service allowances was undertaken in an unfair manner. He pointed out that while changes were made to allowances payable to lower rank staff (such as Hardship Allowance) at the earlier stage of the review, changes had not been made to those allowances payable to higher rank staff until the present stage. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr SIN Chung-kai and Ms CHAN Yuen-han held similar views.

17. SCS explained that while the recent review of duty-related allowances might have a greater impact on lower rank or frontline civil servants, the upcoming phase one review of allowances provided as fringe benefits would cover allowances available mainly to higher rank civil servants. He pointed out that in the second phase of the review of fringe benefit type of allowances, allowances such as education allowances and housing allowances would be reviewed and the change proposals would have impact on civil servants of a wide range of ranks and grades. He stressed that in taking forward the review of civil service allowances, the Administration was guided by the principles of lawfulness, reasonableness and fairness. The change proposals would not target at selected grades or ranks.

Impact of the change proposals on staff concerned

18. Ms LI Fung-ying pointed out that as the various change proposals for civil service allowances involved reduction in the rates of allowances payable or tightening of payment criteria, the affected civil servants would suffer a reduction in their overall remuneration. In some cases, the extent of reduction was even greater than that brought about by the civil service pay reductions. Apart from ceasing payment of the outdated allowances, Ms LI considered that the Administration should provide new categories of allowances to encourage civil servants to pursue further studies or development.

19. In response, SCS said that given the Administration's target to reduce its operating expenditure, bureaux and departments were facing the pressure of

cutting expenditure and would have little or no resources for the provision of new categories of allowances. He also pointed out that the Administration had all along attached importance to staff training and the promotion of a continuous learning culture in the civil service. In this connection, CSB briefed the Panel regularly on its work on civil service training.

20. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong sought information on the possible change proposals being considered by the Administration which were likely to have a more extensive impact within the civil service, such as change proposals concerning education allowances and housing allowances. Mr CHEUNG was particularly concerned about the impact of the change proposals on the existing recipients.

21. In response, SCS explained that as the review of fringe benefit type of allowances would be conducted in two phases, concrete proposals for different allowances would be developed phase by phase having full regard to the legal, policy and other considerations. While the general direction of the review aimed at rationalizing the payment of civil service allowances to keep them in line with present day circumstances and to control public expenditure in this respect, the Administration would take account of the impact on the affected civil servants in developing the change proposals. Referring to Overseas Education Allowance (OEA), SCS said that in developing the detailed change proposals, the Administration would take full account of their possible impact on existing claimants who had sent their dependent children overseas for education.

22. Mr Howard YOUNG expressed concern about the increase in expenditure on OEA and enquired about the measures to control the expenditure, such as freezing the rates of OEA payable to eligible officers in cash terms. In response, DSCS2 advised that despite the freeze of OEA rates since 1998, there had been an increase in the expenditure on OEA because of an increase in the number of eligible civil servants claiming the allowance and the appreciation of the sterling pound. She said that the Administration was exploring ways to control expenditure on OEA and would put forward proposals for staff consultation under the second phase of the review. Responding to the Chairman and Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, DSCS2 explained that while the rates of OEA were set in sterling pound, the payment of OEA to eligible officers was made in Hong Kong dollars. Hence, the appreciation of the sterling pound had resulted in an increase in the expenditure on OEA in the past few years.

IV. Employment of non-civil service contract staff

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1505/03-04(04) — Paper provided by the Administration)

23. The Chairman informed members that Agenda Item IV was proposed by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan. Having studied the paper provided by the Administration, Mr LEE requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the statistics of full-time non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff employed by government departments with a breakdown by posts and by duration of employment. Mr LEE's letter and the supplementary information provided by the Administration were tabled at the meeting for members' information.

(Post-meeting note: Mr LEE's letter and the supplementary information provided by the Administration were circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1568/03-04 on 20 April 2004.)

Briefing by the Administration

24. At the Chairman's invitation, the Deputy Secretary for Civil Service (1) (DSCS1) took members through the paper. She briefly explained the policy and the current position on the employment of NCSC staff, highlighting the following points in the paper for members' reference:

- (a) The NCSC Staff Scheme was introduced in 1999 with the objective of providing Heads of Department (HoDs) with greater flexibility to deploy their resources and to better enable them to meeting their changing service and operational needs. The scheme supplemented the civil service appointment system but did not replace the making of civil service appointments. CSB had issued detailed guidelines on the scope, terms of employment, remuneration package, etc. for HoDs to follow in the employment of NCSC staff.
- (b) NCSC staff were employed on fixed-term contracts to meet service needs which were short-term, part-time or under review. The offer of any further contract beyond the current one was solely at the discretion of the HoD concerned. In deciding whether to offer a new contract, HoDs would consider various factors including the continued operational need for the work concerned, staff deployment plan of the department, the performance of the NCSC staff, etc.

- (c) For the purpose of overall monitoring of the implementation of the NCSC Scheme, CSB collected half-yearly statistics from departments as at end June and end December each year. The number of full-time NCSC staff employed by departments as at 31 December 2003 was 16 147, 4 132 of whom were employed under various job creation initiatives. The breakdown of the number of NCSC staff employed by departments, by salary range and contract duration were provided in Annexes A and B to the paper.
- (d) CSB conducted two ad-hoc surveys in September 2002 and 2003 respectively to see whether departments in practice had adjusted or intended to adjust the pay of their NCSC staff. The survey results in 2002 showed that only five out of the 74 departments surveyed in 2002 offered pay reduction to some of their full-time NCSC staff during the contract period. The rate of pay reduction was the same as that for civil service pay adjustment in 2002. For the second survey in 2003, 49 out of the 70 departments surveyed indicated that they had reduced or planned to reduce the pay of their full-time NCSC staff. The reduction rate in the majority of the cases did not exceed 6%.

Discussion

Objectives of the NCSC Staff Scheme

25. Pointing out that about 7 000 of the 16 147 full-time NCSC staff had been in continuous service for two years or more, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan queried whether the objective of the NCSC Staff Scheme was really for meeting service needs which were short-term, part-time or under review as claimed by the Administration. He urged the Administration to assess the real operational need for the posts occupied by NCSC staff by examining the duration of each post and to convert those with long-term operational needs to civil service posts.

26. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong shared Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's view that NCSC posts with long-term operational needs should be converted to civil service posts. He suggested that such conversion could first be made in departments which had employed larger number of NCSC staff. Mr Andrew WONG also considered that NCSC staff who had been serving in the civil service for a long period should be appointed as civil servants. Mr CHEUNG further pointed out that the NCSC Staff Scheme had an adverse impact on staff morale given the differences in pay

levels offered to civil servants and NCSC staff in comparable ranks. He therefore urged the Administration to review the NCSC Staff Scheme.

27. SCS explained that the NCSC Staff Scheme provided HoDs with greater flexibility to deploy their resources in meeting service and operational needs while at the same time better enabled them to cope with the demands for reducing public expenditure and containing the size of the civil service. He explained that given the target of reducing the civil service establishment to 160 000 by 2006-07 and the priority accorded to exploring additional measures for meeting the target, the review of NCSC Staff Scheme could only be dealt with at a later stage. Members' views would be taken into consideration during the review.

Admin

28. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan requested the Administration to provide information on how long the posts being occupied by NCSC staff had been occupied by such staff, and if some of the posts had been occupied by NCSC staff for several years, to provide justifications for filling the posts by NCSC staff instead of civil servants. SCS and DSCS1 pointed out that under the NCSC Staff Scheme, HoDs might employ NCSC staff to meet service needs which were short-term, part-time or under review. As such, posts occupied by NCSC staff might include those under review and/or under consideration for alternative mode of delivery, for example, through private participation arrangements. At the request of Mr LEE, SCS undertook to provide the information mentioned above.

Admin

29. In response to Mr CHAN Kwok-keung's enquiry, DSCS1 advised that if a simple comparison was made between the statistics as at 31 December 2003 and those as at 31 December 2002, there had been an increase in the total number of full-time NCSC staff. However, after discounting the number of NCSC staff employed under the job creation initiatives in 2003, the total number of NCSC staff would be comparable to that in December 2002. At the request of Mr CHAN, DSCS1 undertook to examine whether any NCSC staff was employed to take up the duties of civil service posts and if there was, to provide details of the posts concerned with a breakdown by departments.

30. Noting that 3 009 of the 14 603 full-time NCSC staff employed in the 26 identified departments as at 31 December 2003 belonged to the category of general support staff, i.e., clerks and office assistants, Ms LI Fung-ying queried the Administration's justifications for including the clerical grade under the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme and whether the Administration was replacing the civil service posts with NCSC posts.

31. SCS explained that in preparing for the deletion of civil service posts under re-engineering, re-organization or change in mode of service delivery, HoDs

might need to employ NCSC staff to take up duties during the transitional periods, such as the gap between the date of departure of the post holders and date of deletion of the posts. Moreover, among the 4 132 NCSC staff employed under various job creation initiatives, there might be some undertaking general support and clerical duties. At the request of Ms LI, DSCS1 undertook to provide information on the employment of part-time NCSC staff, including the number of staff employed, terms and conditions of employment, the pay offered (e.g. the hourly rate offered) and the departments they worked for.

32. Miss CHAN Yuen-han was concerned that the NCSC Staff Scheme was not only used by some departments as a tool to replace civil servants on permanent terms but also to replace civil servants on contract terms. Quoting the example of a recent case in which some Land Executives appointed on civil service contract terms were not offered further appointment upon expiry of their contracts in end March 2004, Miss CHAN pointed out that these officers had joined the service in 1995-96 with the expectation of conversion to employment on permanent and pensionable civil service terms in due course. However, the Lands Department was only offering them further employment under NCSC terms. She considered such an arrangement unfair to these civil service contract staff because they were offered NCSC terms with lower pay and less fringe benefits.

33. In response, SCS clarified that staff appointed on civil service contract terms were employed to take up special tasks to be implemented within set time frames. There was no guarantee and/or obligation for the Government as the employer to renew the contracts upon their expiry. Nevertheless, there had not been any policy to replace civil service contract staff with NCSC staff. SCS pointed out that the reduction in manpower and the staff savings in bureaux/departments were achieved through continuous efforts of bureaux/departments in re-engineering, re-organizing and identifying alternative mode of service delivery.

34. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that the case of some Land Executives mentioned earlier was being handled by the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat. She urged CSB to look into details of the case. The Chairman directed the Clerk to obtain relevant information on the case from the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat for circulation to Panel members after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The case report prepared by the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat on the employment matters of Land Executives on civil servants contract terms was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1612/03-04 on 26 April 2004.)

Employment arrangements for NCSC staff

35. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered that the Government was exploiting NCSC staff by requiring them to perform duties comparable to those performed by civil servants while offering them lower pay. Ms LI Fung-ying shared Mr LEE's view and said that the Government was mean to NCSC staff.

36. In response, SCS clarified that the Government had not exploited NCSC staff. He pointed out that in determining the pay level of NCSC staff, HoDs would observe the guiding principle that the pay so offered would not exceed the mid-point salaries of comparable civil service ranks or ranks of comparable level of responsibilities. They would also ensure that the terms and conditions for NCSC staff should be no less favourable than those provided for under the Employment Ordinance (EO) (Cap. 57). SCS further pointed out the fact that the large number of applications received during the recruitment of NCSC staff had demonstrated that the pay offered by the departments concerned was considered acceptable by the applicants.

37. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was not convinced by SCS's reply and opined that observing the obligations under EO were only the basic responsibilities of employers. Mr LEE was concerned that arrangements for employing NCSC staff for meeting service needs under review might be abused by departments to turn civil service posts into NCSC posts. He urged CSB to issue more detailed guidelines governing the employment arrangements for NCSC staff, including the extent of pay reductions, payment of sick leave allowance, entitlement to public holidays, etc.

38. SCS said that the provision of greater flexibility in deployment of resources by HoDs through the employment of NCSC staff was considered reasonable given the present day circumstances for meeting increasing public expectation while at the same time achieving savings in Government's operating expenditure. He pointed out that imposing too many restrictions on employment would be undesirable and a proper balance should be maintained between the interests of NCSC staff and the flexibility allowed for HoDs in the employment of NCSC staff. SCS reiterated that the NCSC Staff Scheme was to supplement and not to replace the civil service appointment system.

39. Mr Andrew WONG expressed concern about the fringe benefits, such as medical benefits, provided to NCSC staff. In reply, DSCS1 said that NCSC staff would not be provided with the same medical benefits as those provided to civil servants. HoDs having special needs might, after consulting CSB, offer medical

benefits to NCSC staff through medical insurance schemes. Responding to Mr WONG's further enquiry, SCS and DSCS1 said that to the best of their knowledge, the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) was adopting a set of employment arrangements that was different from those of the civil service for the employment of artists. SCS undertook to provide details on the employment arrangements for artists employed by RTHK after the meeting. As to Mr WONG's concern about the fringe benefits available to the Director of Bureaux (DoB), SCS advised that the terms and conditions of service for DoBs were specified in the remuneration packages provided during the implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials. At the request of Mr WONG, SCS undertook to confirm whether medical benefits were available to non-civil service officers in the Chief Executive's Office.

(Post-meeting note: The required information under paragraphs 31 and 39 was provided by the Administration and circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1813/03-04(01) on 13 May 2004.)

40. Mr Andrew WONG pointed out that he had raised objection to the NCSC Staff Scheme since its introduction in 1999. He commented that the arrangements for employing NCSC staff were unnecessary and undesirable. He considered that instead of employing NCSC staff to take up duties that were short-term or part-time, the Administration should create supernumerary posts for these purposes and employ temporary staff to fill the posts. Other service needs which had a specific time line or under review should be met by employing civil servants on contract terms.

Others

41. Referring to Annex A to the paper, Mr Howard YOUNG asked whether the Administration would consider corporatization of public services that had been delivered through the increasing engagement of NCSC staff, such as the services provided by the Post Office. SCS responded that the Post Office operated on a self-financing basis through the Post Office Trading Fund. He advised that it was for the respective policy bureau, instead of CSB, to consider the need and propriety of corporatization of the Post Office. DSCS1 added that the NCSC Staff Scheme provided the Post Office with the flexibility to adjust its manpower arrangements to better meet service demands and the need to operate on a self-financing basis.

V. Any other business

42. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:20 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 May 2004