

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06**

**[Director of Bureau : Secretary for the Civil Service]
[Session No. : 5] [File name : S-CSB-e1.doc]**

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S-CSB02	SV02	WONG Kwok-hing	143	Human Resource Management
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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB01

Question Serial No.

SV01

Head: 143-Government Secretariat: Civil
Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question: The Administration undertook to provide information on the amount of savings achieved, in terms of the expenditure on staff costs, as a result of the reduction in civil service establishment in the past two years (i.e. since the announcement of the Administration's target of reducing civil service establishment to around 160 000 by 2006-07 in the Chief Executive's 2003 Policy Address.)

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: Personal emoluments expenditure in 2002-03 was \$50,966m. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, this was reduced to \$49,263m (actual) and \$46,773m (revised estimate) respectively. This represents a reduction of \$4,193m (about 8.2%) over two years. This amount reflects the net change in personal emoluments due to reduction in civil service establishment, civil service pay adjustments, promotion, granting of increments, adjustments in allowances, etc. We do not have figures on savings arising solely from the reduction in civil service establishment.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____ 14 April 2005

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB02

Question Serial No.

SV02

Head: 143 – Government Secretariat : Civil Subhead (No. & title):
Service Bureau

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management.

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question: The Administration was requested to provide detailed information on the payment of Special Allowances for disciplined services staff by relevant departments (Annex I – III (f) to Reply No. CSB040) in 2004-05, covering the following:

- (a) The types of Special Allowances payable to disciplined services staff such as whether payment of informer's fees were covered under the Allowances and if so, the amount of such fees payable in 2004-05;
- (b) The types and amount of expenses payable under "small out-of-pocket expenses"; and
- (c) Measures and mechanism in place for departmental management to monitor the payment of Special Allowances for disciplined services staff for proper control of the expenditure under the Allowances and to ensure that payment would only be made to eligible staff on operational needs.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) Special Allowances payable to disciplined services staff are:
 - (i) Detective Allowance payable to disciplined services staff deployed on regular and frequent detective duties as a token allowance in recognition of the impracticability for staff to make numerous reimbursement claims for small-value out-of-pocket expenses on travel, meals, refreshments and token signs of hospitality incurred in the course of discharging their duties;
 - (ii) Special Allowance for police officers in the Special Duties Unit in view of the particular demands placed on these officers arising from arduous training as well as difficult and hazardous Police operations ;
 - (iii) Remote Stations Allowance payable to disciplined services staff posted to, and living on, outlying islands or at the Cape Collinson Correctional Institution;

- (iv) Overnight on-call duty allowance for Correctional Services Department (CSD) staff;
- (v) Special Allowance payable to members of the Ambulanceman grade who are trained and required to provide designated paramedic services in Fire Services Department (FSD);
- (vi) Special Allowance for staff working under pressurised conditions in FSD; and
- (vii) Special Allowance for CSD staff who have frequent contacts with mentally-ill inmates.

These Special Allowances do not cover informer's fees.

- (b) The scope of Detective Allowance is set out under (a) above. The current monthly rate of the allowance is \$340 for inspectorate officers and \$170 for rank and file staff.
- (c) It is incumbent upon the departmental management to ensure that the payment of all job-related allowances, including Special Allowances for disciplined services staff, is at all times operationally justified and complies with the approved payment criteria. Examples of control measures adopted by the departmental management in respect of Special Allowances for disciplined services staff include scrutinising and establishing at the management level those posts that are eligible for the allowances, designating senior officers (e.g. formation commanders or division heads) to check and certify the eligibility of individual officers claiming the allowances on a regular basis, etc. At the policy level, the Civil Service Bureau will ensure that the payment of all job-related allowances payable is justified under present day circumstances, and that the departmental management concerned reviews the continued payment of individual allowances on a regular basis.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____ 13 April 2005

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB03

Question Serial No.

S07

Head: 143 Government Secretariat:
Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resources Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As indicated in Annex I of reply no. CSB 004, in 2005-06, some 780 police constables are expected to be recruited by the Police Force and 167 firemen are expected to be recruited by the Fire Services Department, representing a significant increase [from 205 and 26 new recruits for these two posts in last year respectively]. Does it mean that there is a manpower shortage in the Police Force and the Fire Services Department? Is there any similar situation in other departments? Will the problem of succession gap arise in government departments?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

As a general principle, departments/grades should first critically examine their mode of service delivery and the scope for streamlining before they consider whether recruitment exercises should be conducted. If, after the review, Heads of Department/Grade still consider that there are strong operational needs to recruit civil servants, they may seek exemption from the civil service recruitment freeze from the Panel co-chaired by the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary and with the Secretary for the Civil Service as member (the Panel).

The number of vacancies that have to be filled in a department may vary from year to year depending on the operational needs, the planned creation/deletion of posts and the wastage in the grade concerned. It is therefore not unusual that the numbers of new recruits in the Hong Kong Police Force and the Fire Services Department in 2004-05 and 2005-06 are different. In seeking exemption from the recruitment freeze, both departments mentioned manpower shortage as one of the justifications for their applications. The Panel has also approved applications from some other departments/grades and in approving some of these applications, manpower shortage was one of the factors taken into account. We will monitor the impact, if any, of the recruitment freeze on departments'/grades' succession planning. Meanwhile, where a department/grade foresees succession problems that can only be addressed by open recruitment, they may submit an application for exemption from the recruitment freeze to the Panel for consideration.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Post Title Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date 15 April 2005

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB04

Question Serial No.

S08

Head: 143 Government Secretariat:
Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resources Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As indicated in reply no. CSB 003, non-civil service contract clerical grade staff are employed to meet service needs that are short-term, part-time or under review. How long does "short term" mean? How long does it take to complete the review on "service needs"? Will the Administration renew contracts with these non-civil service contract staff? If yes, what are the criteria for granting contract renewal with these staff? Will these staff continue to perform the same duty within the same department while still being employed under short-term contracts?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The Non-civil Service Contract (NCSC) Staff scheme is a standing scheme introduced in 1999 to enable Heads of Department (HoDs) to employ staff on fixed-term contracts outside the civil service establishment to meet service needs which are short-term, part-time or under review. "Short-term" service needs refer to service needs which do not require keeping staff on a long-term basis and the duration of which may range from a few months, e.g. temporary staff employed for the 2004 voter registration drive, general clerks employed by the Census and Statistics Department for ad hoc surveys, to a few years, e.g. temporary staff employed by the Building Department for clearing backlog cases relating to unauthorized building works. As regards the time for completion of a review on service needs, it would depend on the circumstances of each case.

The employment of an NCSC staff ends upon the expiry of his contract. The offer of any further contract beyond the current one is solely at the discretion of the HoD concerned. In deciding whether to offer a new contract, HoDs will consider various factors including the continued operational need for the work concerned, availability and suitability of other means of service delivery, staff redeployment plan of the department, availability of surplus staff from the civil service, and the past performance of the NCSC staff.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs. Rebecca LAI _____

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service _____

Date _____ 15 April 2005 _____

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB05

Question Serial No.

S09

Head: 46 General Expenses of the Civil
Service

Subhead (No. & title): 001 Salaries

Programme: General Expenses of the Civil Service

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As indicated in reply no. CSB 023, upon the lapse of the "central reserves posts", the Administration "will redeploy the staff concerned to take up other duties suitable for clerical and secretarial staff, having regard to the prevailing manpower requirement of bureaux and departments". If the new duties involved are different in certain aspects, will the staff be consulted beforehand? If the staff concerned disagrees with the posting arrangement, how will the Administration handle the case? Also, if the new posting involves duties different from former duties, will the Administration provide training to the staff concerned?

Asked by: Hon. KWONG Chi-kin

Reply:

Being a multi-skilled support workforce, clerical and secretarial grades staff are deployed to take up a wide range of duties including: general administration, personnel, finance & accounts, public enquiry, license application, statistics, reception and other departmental support duties. The job being undertaken by central reserves staff now and their future assignments on completion of their time-limited projects both fall within the above normal range of duties. In accordance with established practice, we generally do not conduct staff consultation in arranging their future postings. However, if the staff concerned disagrees to the posting arrangement, we will consider each case on individual merits, having regard to the reasons put forward. Should we need to deploy staff to take up non-conventional duties, we will consult them and depending on operational requirement, grade management and departmental management will provide them with suitable training.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____ 15 April 2005

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2005-06

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

S-CSB06

Question Serial No.

S10

Head: 143 Government Secretariat : Civil
Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): 700 General
non-recurrent

Programme: (4) Civil Service Training and Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

As indicated in reply no. CSB001, the objective of Item 420 on “Work-life Balance Programme” is to “enhance civil servants’ awareness of the importance of striking a healthy balance between work and personal life, with a view to maintaining a healthy and productive work force.” Yet the Administration has been, in a high-handed manner, cutting allowances payable to staff such as hardship allowance. Meanwhile, the staff are facing a lot of uncertainties such as change of posting and salary adjustment, etc., which are exerting pressure on them. Under the circumstances, even if a series of activities are launched under the “Work-life Balance Programme”, how can the civil service become a “healthy and productive work force”? Are the financial provisions and programme activities nothing more than “cosmetic” gestures?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

In today’s rapidly changing world, civil servants, like the rest of the workforce in Hong Kong, must come to terms with ever rising expectations from the clients they serve, increasing work pressure; and demands for better value for money.

To keep the uncertainties facing staff to the minimum, the current Administration has made a policy pledge of no forced redundancy.

On top of that, a range of support measures and initiatives which complement each other have been rolled out in recent years to help civil servants manage and adapt to change in a positive manner. The Work-life Balance Programme is one of them.

Other examples include: (a) the provision of extra training places since 2001-02 to help staff adapt to changes brought about by the voluntary retirement schemes; (b) the provision by CSTDI of added consultancy services to departments in support of team-building and other efforts aimed at bringing about the mind-set changes that ease the migration to more efficient modes of service delivery; (c) making our commendation system more robust in giving due recognition to deserving civil servants for their exemplary service and meritorious

performance, by adding a new tier of awards; (d) an enhanced hotline counselling service on stress management, open to all staff in departments which do not already have such a service in house; and (e) show-casing the world-class service provided by our civil servants through the publication of a booklet in 2004.

How best to maintain a motivated and efficient workforce in the civil service is one of the key challenges on Civil Service Bureau's agenda. We will keep the efficacy of our measures in this respect under review and introduce new initiatives where appropriate.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Date _____ 15 April 2005

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

S-CSB07

Question Serial No.

S11

Head: 143 Government Secretariat:
Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Human Resources Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

In the written reply no. CSB003, the Administration has stated that if a government department wants to recruit civil servants, it may apply to a "Panel co-chaired by the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary and with the Secretary for the Civil Service as member". What is the proper name of the Panel? Are there any Panel members other than the 3 officials mentioned above? Is there any monitoring mechanism? At what intervals does the Panel hold its meetings? Are the meeting held in private or in public? Could members of the public be allowed to have access to relevant papers?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The Panel co-chaired by the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary and with the Secretary for the Civil Service as member to consider applications for exemption from the civil service recruitment freeze has no other official name or any other members. Departments/grades may submit applications for exemption from recruitment freeze any time they see a need to conduct open recruitment to meet their operational needs. Applications will be processed by Civil Service Bureau and submitted to the Panel for consideration. Depending on the circumstances and complexity of individual applications, the Panel will convene meetings to consider the applications or consider the applications by circulation. Where necessary, the Panel will invite the Heads of the relevant departments/grades to attend the meetings. The Panel meetings are not open to the public and the documents considered by the Panel will not be disclosed. As the Panel is a high level internal forum for decisions on exceptional cases of recruitment having regard to the operational needs of the departments/grades concerned, we do not consider it necessary to put in place any formal monitoring mechanism.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs. Rebecca LAI

Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

18 April 2005