

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(3)207/04-05

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Paper for the House Committee Meeting on 10 December 2004

Change of oral questions to written ones

Purpose

This paper sets out the system for allocation of slots for oral questions and the arrangements for oral questions scheduled for a Council meeting but not asked by the Members concerned.

Background

2. At the House Committee meeting held on 26 November 2004, Hon Martin LEE said that Hon LAU Wong-fat's original oral question on the review of the functions and composition of District Councils, to be asked at the Council meeting on 1 December 2004, was an important subject, and Members belonging to the Democratic Party intended to raise supplementary questions. However, they would not be able to do so now as Mr LAU had changed his oral question to a written one. It was also not possible to allocate the slot to another Member for raising a new oral question in place of Mr LAU's question. Mr LEE suggested that the House Committee should discuss the arrangement for raising oral questions at Council meetings. The Chairman of the House Committee then instructed the Secretariat to provide a paper on the current arrangements for allocating oral questions and the change of oral questions to written questions, for members' information.

Allocation of question slots

3. Part E of the Rules of Procedure and Rules 5 to 12 of the House Rules contain the rules on the asking of questions at Legislative Council meetings. Members are invited to note the following:

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in the Rules of Procedure, not more than 6 oral questions may be asked at any one Council meeting.

- (b) Each Member is limited to asking a maximum of one oral question at any one Council meeting.
- (c) When a question is passed to the Secretariat for registration, the draft wording provided should be sufficiently clear to identify the subject matter and the scope of the question.

4. A system for registration and allocation of oral question slots is in place to ensure that all Members have equal opportunities to ask questions at Council meetings:

- (a) Each Member may register with the Secretariat one oral question by midnight on the Friday of each week. After the cut-off time for registration of questions for each meeting, the Secretariat works out the relative priorities of Members to be allocated with question slots, based on the number of questions the Members concerned have raised since the beginning of the session and the time sequence in which the questions were submitted.
- (b) Question slots are then allocated to the Members concerned in accordance with their priorities.
- (c) The remaining slots, if any, will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis to other Members who submit questions after the expiry of the cut-off time for registration of questions, until all slots have been taken up or the expiry of the deadline for giving notice of questions for the meeting, whichever is the earlier.

Oral question scheduled for a Council meeting but not asked by the Member concerned

Member may have his oral question asked by another Member on his behalf

5. A Member who is not present to ask his oral question may, under Rule 26(6) of the Rules of Procedure, give advance consent for the question to be asked by another Member.

Change of an oral question to a written question

6. Neither the Rules of Procedure nor the House Rules prohibits a Member who has given notice to ask an oral question at a Council meeting from changing it to a written one before it is asked.

Withdrawal of questions

7. A Member who has given notice of a question may, under Rule 26(8) of the Rules of Procedure, withdraw the question by giving notice to the Clerk at least one and a half hours before the meeting at which the question is to be asked.

Counting of oral questions for the purpose of the allocation system

8. If a Member who has given notice of an oral question takes any one course of actions set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 above, he will be regarded as having asked an oral question for the purpose of the allocation system for questions.

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to note the information in this paper.

Council Business Division 3
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4 December 2004