

**Attendance of Principal Officials at Panel meetings
from 2004-2005 to 2006-2007(up to 31 May 2007)**

Panel	Session	(a) Total number of meetings held *	(b) Total number of discussion items #	Attendance of Principal Officials	
				(c) Number of meetings attended (%)	(d) Number of discussion items attended (%)
Administration of Justice and Legal Services	2004-2005	12	26	2 (16.67%)	2 (7.69%)
	2005-2006	14	30	3 (21.43%)	3 (10%)
	2006-2007	9	21	1 (11.11%)	1 (4.76%)
Commerce and Industry	2004-2005	10	24	3 (30%)	4 (16.67%)
	2005-2006	8	20	4 (50%)	4 (20%)
	2006-2007	7	17	2 (28.57%)	3 (17.65%)
Constitutional Affairs	2004-2005	14	27	14 (100%)	24 (88.89%)
	2005-2006	16	24	15 (93.75%)	23 (95.83%)
	2006-2007	7	14	7 (100%)	11 (78.57%)
Economic Services	2004-2005	16	32	11 (68.75%)	17 (53.13%)
	2005-2006	18	32	9 (50%)	11 (34.38%)
	2006-2007	8	17	4 (50%)	7 (41.18%)
Education	2004-2005	20	34	8 (40%)	13 (38.24%)
	2005-2006	13	25	3 (23.08%)	4 (16%)
	2006-2007	11	17	3 (27.27%)	3 (17.65%)
Environmental Affairs	2004-2005	14	28	4 (28.57%)	6 (21.43%)
	2005-2006	12	26	2 (16.67%)	2 (7.69%)
	2006-2007	11	22	3 (27.27%)	3 (13.64%)

* Includes both regular and special meetings for which attendance of the Administration is required.

Excludes the agenda items of "Confirmation of minutes", "Information papers issued since the last meeting", "Items for discussion at the next meeting" and other items for which the attendance of the Administration is not required.

Panel	Session	(a) Total number of meetings held *	(b) Total number of discussion items #	Attendance of Principal Officials	
				(c) Number of meetings attended (%)	(d) Number of discussion items attended (%)
Financial Affairs	2004-2005	12	32	10 (83.33%)	12 (37.5%)
	2005-2006	13	27	8 (61.54%)	9 (33.33%)
	2006-2007	12	20	4 (33.33%)	4 (20%)
Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	2004-2005	18	39	7 (38.89%)	8 (20.51%)
	2005-2006	25	48	3 (12%)	4 (8.33%)
	2006-2007	11	20	2 (18.18%)	2 (10%)
Health Services	2004-2005	16	37	4 (25%)	6 (16.22%)
	2005-2006	18	29	2 (11.11%)	2 (6.9%)
	2006-2007	11	25	1 (9.09%)	1 (4%)
Home Affairs	2004-2005	15	28	5 (33.33%)	6 (21.43%)
	2005-2006	12	24	4 (33.33%)	4 (16.67%)
	2006-2007	9	19	1 (11.11%)	1 (5.26%)
Housing	2004-2005	12	19	7 (58.33%)	7 (36.84%)
	2005-2006	16	26	7 (43.75%)	8 (30.77%)
	2006-2007	9	18	3 (33.33%)	3 (16.67%)
Information Technology and Broadcasting	2004-2005	12	34	4 (33.33%)	6 (17.65%)
	2005-2006	16	31	1 (6.25%)	1 (3.23%)
	2006-2007	11	24	2 (18.18%)	2 (8.33%)

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Panel	Session	(a) Total number of meetings held *	(b) Total number of discussion items #	Attendance of Principal Officials	
				(c) Number of meetings attended (%)	(d) Number of discussion items attended (%)
Manpower	2004-2005	10	22	4 (40%)	6 (27.27%)
	2005-2006	12	24	1 (8.33%)	2 (8.33%)
	2006-2007	7	19	1 (14.29%)	2 (10.53%)
Planning, Lands and Works	2004-2005	16	27	8 (50%)	10 (37.04%)
	2005-2006	18	29	4 (22.22%)	6 (20.69%)
	2006-2007	13	22	8 (61.54%)	9 (40.91%)
Public Service	2004-2005	8	15	8 (100%)	13 (86.67%)
	2005-2006	11	22	10 (90.91%)	19 (86.36%)
	2006-2007	8	20	8 (100%)	18 (90%)
Security	2004-2005	15	31	7 (46.67%)	8 (25.81%)
	2005-2006	15	31	7 (46.67%)	8 (25.81%)
	2006-2007	8	19	1 (12.5%)	1 (5.26%)
Transport	2004-2005	17	39	4 (23.53%)	4 (10.26%)
	2005-2006	16	30	9 (56.25%)	9 (30%)
	2006-2007	10	24	1 (10%)	1 (4.17%)
Welfare Services	2004-2005	14	25	2 (14.29%)	2 (8%)
	2005-2006	18	27	1 (5.56%)	1 (3.7%)
	2006-2007	9	19	2 (22.22%)	2 (10.53%)
Total		693	1381	259 (37.37%)	348 (25.2%)

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Excludes the agenda items of "Confirmation of minutes", "Information papers issued since the last meeting", "Items for discussion at the next meeting" and other items for which the attendance of the Administration is not required.

Chronology of events in connection with the attendance of Principal Officials at Legislative Council (LegCo) committee meetings

Date	Event
6 June 2002	The Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) approved the creation of the Principal Official posts from 1 July 2002. The Administration pointed out in its paper submitted to ESC that one of the duties of the Directors of Bureaux was "to attend LegCo committee, subcommittee and Panel meetings where major policy issues are involved".
14 June 2002	At the Finance Committee (FC) meeting, the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs (SCA) said that, in addition to full meetings of LegCo, Principal Officials would also attend relevant committee meetings where major policy issues were involved. There would be more participation by Principal Officials in various meetings of LegCo as one of the main duties of the Principal Officials was to secure support of LegCo for Government policies/legislation, and their attendance at relevant committee meetings would be important for achieving this task.
18 October 2002	At the House Committee (HC) meeting, the Chairman of the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) expressed dissatisfaction that only the Permanent Secretaries attended the PWSC meeting on 16 October 2002. Some Members were also dissatisfied about this. A Member pointed out that when the proposed accountability system for Principal Officials was presented to the Council for consideration, the Administration had explained that the role and responsibilities of Principal Officials included, inter alia, attending meetings of the Council and its committees. The Chairman of HC said that she would relay Members' views to the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS).
25 October 2002	In reporting on her meeting with CS, the Chairman of HC informed Members that CS had indicated that the Directors of Bureaux would attend those Panel or other committee meetings with agenda items which involved controversial or complex policy issues. The guiding principle was that the Administration would field whoever had the best grasp of the issues concerned.
1 November 2002	In reporting on her meeting with CS, the Chairman of HC said that CS had reiterated that the attendance of Directors of Bureaux at Panel or other committee meetings depended on the agenda items involved. The guiding principle was that the most appropriate public officers would attend, and very often they were the Permanent Secretaries. CS had also stressed that whoever attended meetings represented the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and were fully responsible.
13 November 2002	The Chairman of PWSC issued a questionnaire to all PWSC members on 31 October 2002 and put forward the following options for members' consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) As a standard arrangement, both the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW) and the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (SHPL) should be in attendance at PWSC meetings to respond to questions on general policy issues; and (b) Permanent Secretaries from the Environment, Transport and Works

Date	Event
	<p>Bureau and the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau should be in attendance at PWSC meetings as a standard arrangement, while the respective Directors of Bureaux should attend on a need basis.</p> <p>At the PWSC meeting on 13 November 2002, members noted that most members supported option (a) and the Chairman of PWSC had conveyed the majority view of members to the two Directors of Bureaux in writing on 9 November 2002. In their replies on 12 November 2002, the two Directors of Bureaux reiterated that while Principal Officials would attend full meetings of LegCo, representation at meetings of subcommittees and Panels would depend on the subject to be discussed. Irrespective of the level of Government's representation, the Principal Officials would accept total responsibility for matters under their policy portfolios.</p> <p>After discussion, members decided that the Subcommittee should write to the two Directors of Bureaux again (15 November 2002) to elucidate the decision of PWSC and at the same time report the matter to FC.</p> <p>In their replies dated 26 and 27 November 2002 respectively, SHPL and SETW reiterated the Administration's position and commented that general policy issues fell within the purview of Panels, and discussion of policy issues at PWSC had been related to the application of existing policies rather than the formulation or revision of policies per se.</p>
6 December 2002	<p>FC discussed the attendance of officials at PWSC meetings and made the following decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Apart from the officers designated to attend PWSC meetings for individual agenda items, the relevant Permanent Secretaries in the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau and the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau should attend PWSC meetings as a standard arrangement. (b) With the concurrence of the Chairman in response to members' request, or where the Chairman considered it appropriate, SHPL and/or SETW should be invited to attend a PWSC meeting. The Clerk to PWSC would notify the Administration accordingly. (c) Notwithstanding (b), SHPL and SETW should attend meetings of PWSC on their own accord for discussion of issues which were major, controversial or unexpected in nature. (d) Where necessary and appropriate, the same principles should also apply to the attendance of public officers at ESC meetings.

Chronology of events in connection with the agreed deadlines for the provision of papers by the Administration for Legislative Council Panel meetings

Date	Event
18 January 2002	<p>The Committee on Rules of Procedure (CRoP) submitted to the House Committee (HC) a paper entitled "Follow-up on measures to improve the mechanism for the scrutiny of legislative and financial proposals". Members endorsed the following recommendations by CRoP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration is required to provide papers at least five clear days before the relevant Panel meeting for items with at least 3 weeks' notice; (b) the Administration is required to provide papers at least two clear days before the relevant Panel meeting for items involving time critical proposals, e.g. urgent financial proposals, or where the need to consult Panels does not arise until a very late stage; (c) the Administration is required to provide papers as soon as practicable for items with less than 3 weeks' notice, certain policy initiatives requiring the approval of the Executive Council, and matters involving commercially sensitive information; (d) Panel Chairmen will decide whether or not the relevant item should be deleted from the agenda if the papers are not received by the deadline; (e) the above arrangements should be implemented with effect from 1 March 2002; and (f) if the deadline falls on a day before a public holiday, the Administration should provide the papers by 11:00 am so that the papers could be dispatched to Members on the same day. <p>The Chairman of HC subsequently wrote to the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) to inform him of the decisions of HC.</p>
7 February 2002	<p>CS undertook in his reply to the Chairman of HC that the Administration would endeavour to adhere to the agreed deadlines for the provision of papers for Panel meetings.</p>
5 November 2004	<p>HC discussed the subject raised by Hon WONG Kwok-hing on the provision of discussion papers by the Administration for committee meetings. The Chairman of HC said that she would ask CS to remind the bureaux that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) they should adhere to the agreed deadlines; (b) they should adhere to the deadlines when providing both the English and Chinese versions of the papers; and (c) organizations attending committee meetings should provide papers as early as possible before the meetings, if their attendance was coordinated by the Administration.

Date	Event
19 November 2004	<p>LegCo Secretariat provided to HC the statistics on the occasions on which the Administration had not adhered to the agreed deadlines for the provision of papers for Panel meetings in the 2003-2004 session. For agenda items with three weeks' notice, about two-thirds of the papers (i.e. 66% of the English version and 68% of the Chinese version) were not provided in accordance with the agreed deadline. Regarding agenda items involving time critical proposals, about two-thirds (i.e. 64%) of English version and four-fifths (i.e. 79%) of the Chinese version of the papers were not provided in accordance with the agreed deadline.</p> <p>The Chairman of HC said that she would provide the statistics to CS and strongly request the Administration to adhere to the agreed deadlines when providing papers for Panel meetings.</p>
26 November 2004	<p>The Chairman of HC informed Members that CS had said that some bureaux had pointed out that sometimes the agreed deadlines were not adhered to because they wished to include the very latest development of an issue in the paper. He had emphasised to his colleagues that it was important to adhere to the deadlines, and the very latest development of an issue could be reported verbally at the meeting. CS had further said that the Administration would try its best to adhere to the deadlines in future.</p> <p>HC agreed after voting that if the Administration failed to observe the agreed deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) if the Chairman wanted to remove the item from the agenda, he should consult the Panel; and(b) if the Chairman decided to leave the item on the agenda, he should consult the Panel at the meeting whether the item should be discussed or removed, and allow time for a short discussion on the matter. <p>The Chairman of HC had subsequently informed CS of the decision. CS undertook to remind the bureaux to adhere to the agreed deadlines for the provision of papers.</p>