

For information on
16 November 2006

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Results of the review on temporary jobs in the public sector

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's proposal to extend and regularise¹ some of the temporary jobs in the public sector to meet operational needs.

Background

2. In the past few years, the Government created a number of temporary jobs in the public sector to meet operational needs and provide employment opportunities. At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower in January 2006, Members noted that 11 608 of these jobs would be extended in 2006-07. We also undertook to review the future of these temporary jobs and report the outcome to the Panel in November 2006.

Proposal

3. As at end-September 2006, about 10 000 workers were in post. Having carefully considered the operational requirements of departments concerned and the Hospital Authority, the Administration now proposes to regularise some **7 800** temporary jobs with proven long-term operational needs. Recurrent resources will be provided to fund these positions. In addition, we will extend about **1 700** temporary jobs for one year in 2007-08 (see Annex). Collectively, this means that 82% (or about 9 500) of the 11 608 temporary jobs in the current financial year will be retained in 2007-08 and some 67% would be regularised. The some 2 100 temporary jobs not recommended for regularisation or extension have no demonstrable long-term operational needs. Indeed, a sizeable number of them are not filled. We see little ground in providing recurrent funding for these jobs.

¹ To regularise in this context means providing recurrent funding for the jobs to meet long-term operational needs. The concerned departments would consider how the services should be best delivered in the long run and whether alternative means of service delivery is feasible.

4. Details of the above proposal are set out below. The number, duration and type of jobs to be retained may be fine-tuned during implementation to reflect changing operational requirements, turnover rate and lead time for recruitment.

(I) *Hospital Authority (HA)*

5. HA proposes to regularise **all** the existing **2 286** jobs. Of these, 1 786 positions are care assistants and general workers providing support to clinicians, nurses and other health professionals in mundane duties so that the latter can concentrate on patient care and other infection control/health measures. These care workers also perform general cleansing, portering and other housekeeping and domestic services in wards and general areas. They contribute to maintaining the hygiene standard of hospitals and clinics. Another 500 jobs are for construction workers and related supervisory staff outsourced to the private sector. They are engaged in carrying out minor repair and improvement work in hospitals and clinics to maintain and improve their physical environment.

(II) *Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)*

6. AFCD proposes to regularise **232** (72%) positions out of the 322 temporary jobs on non-civil service contract (NCSC) terms to provide cleansing and maintenance services (such as grass-cutting) in various country parks as well as to maintain hygiene standards and assist in taking care of animals in animal management centres. It should be noted that as at end-September 2006, there were 251 serving staff out of the 322 positions. As such, even though in numerical terms 90 positions will not be retained, the actual number of staff affected will only be 19. These 19 workers are currently engaged in minor repair work of wholesale markets and temporary task related to crop farming experiments. As the jobs will be completed by March 2007, these positions will not be extended.

(III) *Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)*

7. Of the 2 644 temporary jobs provided through private contractors, FEHD proposes to provide recurrent funding for **2 128** (80%) jobs in order to provide cleansing and cleansing-related services (such as pest control work) in streets and at public places and venues. As for the 647 positions employed on NCSC terms, **584** (90%) will be regularised. For the jobs not to be regularised, their service will no longer be required operationally.

(IV) Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

8. Of the 1 399 temporary positions comprising 800 temporary jobs provided through private contractors and 599 youth training places, LCSD proposes to keep **1 200** positions (86%). For the 599 youth training places, 400 will be retained on a long-term basis to provide training opportunities for the youth. It is noteworthy that with the continued revival of the economy and improvement in the labour market, the take-up rate of the youth training places offered by the Department has been falling. The 800 outsourced jobs provide cleansing service for some 1 400 public leisure venues. LCSD proposes to regularise all of them by including them as part of the ongoing requirements of its cleansing contracts.

(V) Social Welfare Department (SWD)

9. Of the 3 836 temporary jobs, SWD proposes to retain **3 073** positions (80%). Of these, 1 383 posts will be regularised while 1 690 positions will be extended in 2007-08. Regularisation comprises 1 100 programme assistants for assisting in organising activities for the disabled, elderly, family and youth, and 283 care assistants for enhancing the personal care services for frail elders. Included in the 1 690 positions to be extended for one year are 100 community work organisers for reinforcing the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, 150 peer counsellors for helping Form 3 school leavers, and 1 440 youth ambassadors for assisting in promotional activities on personal/environmental hygiene among the elderly and other community members. Of the 763 positions not to be extended as there is no operational need, 585 are youth training places which are currently unfilled. The remainder comprises 178 unfilled positions of programme assistants. Of the 3 073 jobs to be retained, 104 are contract staff positions under SWD and 2 969 are positions outsourced to NGOs, comprising 2 006 youth training places as well as 963 programme assistants and care assistants. As at end-September 2006, there were 2 854 serving staff, including 1 372 youth trainees.

(VI) Home Affairs Department (HAD)

10. Having critically reviewed its operational requirements, HAD does not see the need to retain any of the 280 temporary jobs. These jobs are mostly for meeting manpower shortage arising from short-term initiatives or projects, e.g. Community Services Assistants to perform duties related to the Village Representative Election in early 2007. There is no long-term need for these jobs. Moreover, more than 60% of the temporary jobs are on a part-time basis. As at end-September 2006, there were 217 serving staff.

(VII) Tourism Commission (TC)

11. Having critically evaluated the operational needs at the land boundary control points and the training opportunities provided to young people, TC does not see the need to extend the 194 youth training places and supervisor positions under the Tourism Development Assistant Project. In fact, the project has been experiencing under-recruitment. As at end-September 2006, there were 99 serving staff, 89 of whom are youth trainees. Since the youth training places are time-limited, participants will complete the training by the end of March 2007. Therefore, only 10 supervisor places will be affected.

Way Forward

12. We will make the necessary arrangements in regularising some 7 800 and extending about 1 700 temporary jobs in 2007-08.

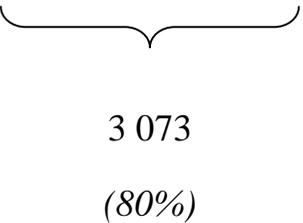
13. In concert with departments concerned, the Labour Department (LD) will do its best to assist those affected to find jobs in the open market. LD runs a range of programmes to provide employment assistance to people of different age groups. The host departments will also provide information on job search, as appropriate. As the economy and labour market continue to improve, there will be more job opportunities in the private sector for these workers.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Home Affairs Department
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Social Welfare Department
Labour Department

November 2006

Summary of regularisation and extension of temporary jobs in 2007-08

Departments/ agency	Type of jobs	Number of jobs in 2006-07	Number of workers as at end-Sep 2006	Number of jobs in 2007-08 <i>(Proportion of jobs in 2006-07)</i>	
				<i>Regularisation</i>	<i>Extension</i>
Hospital Authority (HA)	Care assistants and general workers to provide support to clinicians, nurses and other health professionals; construction workers and other staff to carry out minor repair and maintenance works in hospitals and clinics	2 286	2 286	2 286 (100%)	0
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)	Workers to provide cleansing and maintenance services in country parks as well as to maintain hygiene standards and to assist in taking care of animals in animal management centres	322	251	232 (72%)	0
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)	Workers mainly engaged through private contractors to provide cleansing and cleansing-related services to streets and public venues/places	3 291	3 257	2 712 (82%)	0

Departments/ agency	Type of jobs	Number of jobs in 2006-07	Number of workers as at end-Sep 2006	Number of jobs in 2007-08 <i>(Proportion of jobs in 2006-07)</i>	
				<i>Regularisation</i>	<i>Extension</i>
Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)	Cleansing workers engaged through private contractors to provide cleansing services for public leisure venues; training opportunities for youth in gaining work skills and experience in public libraries and sports venues	1 399	1 040 ¹	1 200 (86%)	0
Social Welfare Department (SWD)	Community work organisers to reinforce the Support for Self-reliance Scheme; youth ambassadors to assist in the organisation of promotional activities on personal/environmental hygiene among the elderly and other community members; peer counsellors to help social workers in providing assistance to Form 3 school leavers; programme assistants to help social workers in the organisation of activities for the disabled, elderly, family and youth; care assistants to enhance the personal care services for frail elders	3 836	2 854	1 383	1 690
				 3 073 (80%)	

¹ 240 out of 1 040 were time-limited youth training places.

Departments/ agency	Type of jobs	Number of jobs in 2006-07	Number of workers as at end-Sep 2006	Number of jobs in 2007-08 <i>(Proportion of jobs in 2006-07)</i>	
				Regularisation	Extension
Home Affairs Department (HAD)	Jobs for village representative election and environmental improvement	280	217 ²	0	0
Tourism Commission (TC)	Tourism Development Assistants to help ease passenger flow at the immigration counters by assisting visitors to use the Expedious Immigration Clearance System, and distribute tourism-related information leaflets to visitors	194	99 ³	0	0
	<i>Total</i>	11 608	10 004	7 813  1 690 9 503 (82%)	

² 135 out of 217 were part-timers.

³ 89 out of 99 were time-limited youth training places.