

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 2148/07-08

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Paper for the House Committee Meeting on 6 June 2008

Revised arrangements for House Committee meetings

Purpose

This paper invites Members to consider the revised arrangements for House Committee (HC) meetings.

Background

2. Members agreed at the HC meeting on 6 October 2006 that with effect from the 2006-2007 session, the meeting time of HC and Finance Committee (FC) should be swapped such that HC meetings would start at 2:30 pm and FC meetings at 3:00 pm. When a FC meeting is scheduled to be held in the same afternoon and HC cannot finish its business at 3:00 pm, the HC meeting will be suspended at 3:00 pm and resumed to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda after the FC meeting.

3. Since the implementation of this arrangement, HC and FC meetings had been scheduled on the same day on 23 occasions. Of these, HC had to suspend its meeting at 3:00 pm and resume the meeting after the FC meeting to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda on three occasions, i.e., twice in the 2006-2007 session and once in the 2007-2008 session.

4. On the one occasion in the 2007-2008 session, which was on 14 December 2007, two FC meetings each of two hours were scheduled. As HC could not finish its business at 3:00 pm, the HC meeting was suspended and resumed after the first FC meeting to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda. The second FC meeting started after the HC meeting had concluded its business. Some members considered these meeting arrangements undesirable, and requested the Secretariat to make proposals for improvement.

Decision of FC

5. After consultation with FC members and the Administration, FC decided at its meeting on 23 May 2008 that -

- (a) if a HC meeting is projected to last beyond 3:00 pm, the starting time of the FC meeting to be held in the same afternoon will be re-scheduled to a fixed time after 3:00 pm; and
- (b) advance notice should be given to the Administration two days before the date of the FC meeting of its re-scheduled starting time.

Revised meeting arrangements

6. In the light of the above decision of FC, where a HC meeting and a FC meeting are to be held in the same afternoon, an estimation of the duration of the HC meeting will be made by the Clerk to HC in consultation with the HC Chairman after the agenda has been finalized. If the HC meeting is projected to last for more than 30 minutes, the Clerk to HC will notify the Clerk to FC of the estimated duration of the HC meeting. The Clerk to FC will then give advance notice to the Administration two days before the FC meeting of its re-scheduled starting time to a fixed time after 3:00 pm. Unless such advance notice has been given to the Administration, the HC meeting will have to be suspended at 3:00 pm and resumed after the FC meeting to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda.

7. The Administration has agreed to the proposal of postponing the starting time of a FC meeting until after a HC meeting held in the same afternoon, on the understanding that HC meetings lasting more than 30 minutes are rare. Members may wish to note that since the implementation of the existing meeting arrangements in October 2006, a total of 58 HC meetings have been held up to the end of May 2008. Of these, 45 (77.6%) were concluded within 30 minutes and 13 (22.4%) above 30 minutes; a breakdown is in **Appendix I**.

Amendment to House Rules

8. Rule 20(e) of the House Rules will require amendment to reflect the changes in meeting arrangements. The proposed amendments are in **Appendix II**.

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to consider -
 - (a) the revised meeting arrangements as set out in paragraph 6 above;
and
 - (b) the proposed amendments to rule 20(e) of the House Rules in
Appendix II.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 June 2008

**Duration of House Committee meetings
held in the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 sessions**

Duration	No. of meetings		Total no. of meetings	Percentage
	2006-2007	2007-2008 (up to end of May 2008)		
<i>(a) 30 minutes and below</i>				
15 minutes or less	17	12	29	50.0 %
16 minutes to 30 minutes	7	9	16	27.6 %
Sub-total:	24	21	45	77.6 %
<i>(b) above 30 minutes</i>				
31 minutes to 45 minutes	3	1	4	6.9 %
46 minutes to 60 minutes	1	1	2	3.4 %
61 minutes to 75 minutes	3	2	5	8.7 %
76 minutes to 90 minutes	-	-	-	-
91 minutes to 105 minutes	1	-	1	1.7 %
more than 105 minutes	1	-	1	1.7 %
Sub-total:	9	4	13	22.4 %
Total:	33	25	58	100 %

**Proposed amendment to rule 20(e) of the House Rules
regarding arrangements for the House Committee meetings**

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20. House Committee

- (e) When the Council is in session, the House Committee normally meets every Friday afternoon at 2:30 pm. When a Finance Committee meeting is scheduled to be held in the same afternoon, the House Committee meeting will, if necessary, be suspended at 3:00 pm such time when the Finance Committee meeting is scheduled to begin and resumed to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda after the Finance Committee meeting ~~to deal with the unfinished business on the agenda~~. Any other committees which need to meet on a Friday afternoon should schedule their meetings after the House Committee and Finance Committee meetings. The Secretariat shall issue written notice to members stating the date, time and place at which the House Committee meeting is to be held.

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