

**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

**Controlling Officer: Secretary General, Legislative Council Secretariat
Session No. : 4**

Reply Serial No.*	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
LC001	1165	WONG Yuk-man	112	General and Secretariat Services
LC002	1166	WONG Yuk-man	112	General and Secretariat Services
LC003	2704	LEUNG Mei-fun	112	Redress System

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LC001

Question Serial No.

1165

Head : 112 Legislative Council Commission Subhead : 000 Operational expenses

Programme : (2) General and Secretariat Services

Controlling Officer : Secretary General, Legislative Council Secretariat

Director of Bureau : N/A

Question : It takes four months for the Official Record of Proceedings of the Meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) to be accessible by the public via the LegCo website, and the floor version of the record of proceedings takes one and a half months to produce. How much additional resources are required if the respective production timeframes of the above two records of proceedings are to be reduced by half?

Asked by : Hon WONG Yuk-man

Reply : The Official Record of Proceedings of Council meetings, commonly known as the Hong Kong Hansard (the Hansard), is produced in three versions, namely the Draft and Confirmed "floor" (i.e. verbatim) versions and the Translated version. At present, for a 10-hour regular Council meeting, the Draft version will be released within one calendar week from the date of the relevant meeting. A consultation period of one calendar week is provided for Members and the Administration to comment on the Draft version, after which the Confirmed version will be prepared and released within one calendar month after the relevant meeting. Upon the release of the Confirmed version, the preparation of the Translated version will start, and the Translated version of the Hansard for a 10-hour Council meeting (yielding about 143 000 words) will be completed within about three calendar months (or 66 working days) from the date of the relevant meeting.

Following a review of Hansard production services by The Legislative Council Commission (LCC) in February 2009, the Secretariat has critically reviewed and streamlined the working processes of Hansard production so as to expedite the preparation and release of the three versions of the Hansard. Through streamlining of workflow and keeping the period of consultation for the Draft version under tight control, the Secretariat has already been able to shorten the timeframe for the release of the Confirmed version from one calendar month to three calendar weeks, without the need for additional manpower resources. As for the Translated version, the Secretariat has so far been able to meet the target

of completing the Translated version for typical 10-hour Council meetings within three calendar months in the current session, through streamlining the work processes and briefing out overspilled work generated from extended Council meetings to freelance translators when necessary.

As the LCC considers that the Confirmed and Translated versions of the Hansard should be made accessible by Members and the public within the shortest practicable time, the Secretariat is striving to explore ways to shorten the overall production of the Hansard for the LCC's consideration. The target is to release the Confirmed and Translated versions of the Hansard for a 10-hour Council meeting within nine calendar days (or seven working days) and one calendar month (or 22 working days) respectively after the date of the relevant meeting. Total staff cost to achieve this target is \$5,914,389 per annum which will be put to the LCC for support and be included in the bid for additional resources under the 2009 RAE.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PAULINE NG

Post Title Secretary General

Date 12 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-2010
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LC002

Head : 112 Legislative Council
Commission

Subhead : 000 Operational
expenses

Question Serial No.

1166

Programme : (2) General and Secretariat Services

Controlling Officer : Secretary General, Legislative Council Secretariat

Director of Bureau : N/A

Question : Papers for various committees and Panels of the Legislative Council fail to reach Members two working days before the meeting for their perusal. How much additional resources are needed to achieve the above target?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yuk-man

Reply : The Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat provides support to various committees including Finance Committee (FC) and its two subcommittees, House Committee (HC) and its subcommittees, 18 Panels and their subcommittees, Bills Committees, subcommittees formed to study policy issues and subsidiary legislation, the Public Accounts Committee, Committee on Members' Interests and the Committee on Rules of Procedure. Papers issued for meetings of these committees are mostly discussion papers provided by the Administration, while the LegCo Secretariat also provides background briefs and information papers for members' reference.

For the 18 Panels, it has been the arrangement with the Administration that it should provide papers at least five clear days before the relevant meeting for items with three weeks' notice; or at least two clear days before the meeting for items involving time-critical proposals. For items with less than three weeks' notice, the Administration is required to provide the papers as soon as practicable. The papers are issued to Panel members on the same day or the day following their receipt from the Administration. For meetings of Bills Committees and subcommittees, there is no pledge for the provision of papers by the Administration as these committees do not have regular meeting schedules and some may be held with only a few days' notice.

The LegCo Secretariat liaises with the Administration for papers to be provided for discussion by the various Panels and committees. In the 2008-2009 session (as at 28 February 2009), about 80% of Panel papers provided by the Administration for items with three weeks' notice could meet the deadline. For the remaining 20%, the

Administration was either late in their provision or only short notice was given for discussion of the relevant agenda items, thus resulting in some papers having been issued to members less than two clear days before the meetings. The LegCo Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation and report to Members if necessary.

As regards papers for the FC, Establishment Subcommittee and Public Works Subcommittee, they are issued to members five clear days before the relevant meetings, with the exception of a few meetings/briefings which were convened at short notice.

To facilitate members in their discussion of various items at committee meetings, background briefs and information papers are prepared by the LegCo Secretariat. About 77% of these are issued to members at least two clear days before the meetings. Slightly longer time has been taken in issuing the remaining 23% on account mainly of the need to await the availability of both the Chinese and the English versions of the papers, and at times the short notice for inclusion of the relevant agenda items or the workload of staff. These do not include papers for meetings of the HC, the papers for which can only be issued on Wednesdays at the earliest for its Friday meetings, nor background briefs for the first meetings of Bills Committees which can only be issued one clear day before the meetings after finalization of the membership.

The above shows that the issuance of papers to members less than two clear days before committee meetings is unusual, and in this respect staff resources is not a predominant factor. Nevertheless, the LegCo Secretariat will explore ways to expedite the issue of papers to committee members to facilitate their deliberations at meetings.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Pauline NG

Post Title _____ Secretary General

Date _____ 12 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LC003

Question Serial No.

2704

Head : 112 Legislative Council Commission Subhead : 000 Operational expenses

Programme : (4) Redress System

Controlling Officer : Secretary General, Legislative Council Secretariat

Director of Bureau : N/A

Question : The estimate for 2009-10 is 7.2% higher than the revised estimate for 2008-09 (13.9% higher than the original estimate for 2008-09). Vacant posts in what areas will the increased provision mainly be used to fill, and how will the efficiency of services be enhanced in this regard?

Asked by : Hon LEUNG Mei-fun

Reply : The estimate of expenditure for the redress system for 2009-2010 is \$16.4 million, which is 7.2% higher than the revised estimate. This is because the posts of the head of Complaints Division (Principal Council Secretary (Complaints)) and a Senior Council Secretary (Complaints) had been vacant for three and a half months in 2008-2009, and the filling of the posts with doubling-up or acting arrangements for the whole period had resulted in a decrease in expenditure. The lower original estimate for 2008-2009 was attributable to the fact that the amount of pay adjustment for the year had not been included when the said estimate was prepared.

The Legislative Council Secretariat will review the operation of the Complaints Division from time to time to enhance the efficiency and standard of services. The Secretariat is currently considering the installation of a telephone recording system in the Complaints Division to record the conversations between the staff and clients, so as to enhance the quality of services.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PAULINE NG

Post Title Secretary General

Date 12 March 2009