

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1282/08-09

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 17 April 2009

Subcommittees on policy issues

Purpose

This paper provides information on the financial implications for implementing proposals concerning the study of specific policy issues by the House Committee (HC) and Panels and the appointment of related subcommittees, and seeks Members' views on the proposed new arrangements.

Background

2. At the HC meeting on 20 March 2009, the Secretariat reported to Members the findings of a review on the staffing requirements in relation to the provision of support services to subcommittees on policy issues. The Secretariat proposed that -

- (a) each Panel should have the resources to conduct at least one detailed study at any one time in addition to its role in monitoring Government policies on a regular basis; and where more than one study is considered necessary, the Panel should prioritize its work or to put the matter to HC for advice;
- (b) where a subject matter straddles a number of Panels, a subcommittee may be appointed under the HC. Unless the HC decides otherwise, no more than two such subcommittees should operate at the same time;
- (c) House Rules (HR) 20(k), 22(u) and 26(c) governing the appointment and operation of such subcommittees should be maintained –
 - (i) the terms of reference of subcommittees to be issue-specific or project-specific;
 - (ii) there should be sufficient information on the proposed terms of reference, time frame, work plan and extent of work to be

involved for the Panel(s) or HC to consider before deciding on the appointment of the subcommittees; and

- (iii) the subcommittees should complete work within 12 months and should seek the HC's agreement for an extension of the duration of their work.

3. Members noted that under the proposed arrangements, a total of 20 studies (i.e. 18 + 2), which may be taken up by the Panels themselves or by subcommittees appointed under Panels or the HC, can be undertaken at the same time. To facilitate Members' consideration, the HC requested the Secretariat to provide information on the financial implications for implementing the proposals.

Financial implications

4. To implement the above proposals, the following additional staffing requirements will be needed –

- (a) addition of three Council Secretaries (CSs), offset by the deletion of one SCS, each for Council Business Division (CBD)1 and CBD2, so that each of the 12 committee teams will be staffed by one Chief Council Secretary (CCS), one Senior Council Secretary (SCS), and one CS (instead of on a shared basis);
- (b) establishment of a new CBD, to be known as CBD4, to be headed by Assistant Secretary General (Special Duties) (ASG(SD)) who, apart from undertaking other duties, will take over two Panels, each from CBD1 and CBD2, and the related Bills Committees and subcommittees. One committee team will be established in CBD4 to provide service to these committees.

5. The total staff cost for implementing the proposals in paragraph 4 above is \$5,532,467 per annum as detailed in the **Appendix**. Apart from being able to provide support to Panels and HC in undertaking a total of 20 studies at any one time, as opposed to the current ceiling of eight, the Secretariat will also train up a team of Council Secretaries to prepare background briefs and maintain an up-to-date database on specific policy issues. The funding requirements will be incorporated in the submission to The Legislative Council Commission and the Administration in the context of the 2009 Resource Allocation Exercise. In order for the proposed new arrangement to take effect as from October 2009, it will be necessary for the new staffing structure to be put in place in September 2009.

6. To tie in with the implementation of the new arrangement, it is proposed that the temporary lifting of the quota of eight for subcommittees on policy issues and the suspension of application of HR 26(a) and (b), which expired on 31 March

2009, be extended to the end of the current legislative session. For subcommittees on policy issues which have already been appointed, the Secretariat recommends that they continue to operate until they have completed their work.

Advice sought

7. Subject to members' endorsement of the proposals in paragraphs 2 to 3 above and the acceptance of the financial implications, it is recommended that the proposals be referred to the Committee on Rules of Procedure for consideration of the necessary amendments to the HR.

Council Secretariat Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 April 2009

**Financial implications for implementing the proposals concerning the study of
specific policy issues by the House Committee and Panels
and the appointment of related subcommittees**

Rank	No. of posts		% of work in servicing Panels, Bills Committees and Subcommittees	Financial implications per annum
	addition	deletion		
<i>Council Business Division 1</i>				
SCS		1	100%	- \$954,663
CS	3			\$1,868,157
<i>Council Business Division 2</i>				
SCS		1	100%	- \$954,663
CS	3			\$1,868,157
<i>Council Business Division 4</i>				
ASG	1		20%	\$391,680
CCS	1		100%	\$1,337,511
SCS	1			\$954,663
CS	1			\$622,719
SLGA	1		20%	\$75,374
LGA	1		100%	\$240,426
CA	1		50%	\$83,106
Total:				\$5,532,467

ASG Assistant Secretary General
 CCS Chief Council Secretary
 SCS Senior Council Secretary
 CS Council Secretary
 SLGA Senior Legislative Assistant
 LGA Legislative Assistant
 CA Clerical Assistant