

立法會
Legislative Council

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(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 6th meeting
held in Conference Room A of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 26 May 2010, at 8:30 am

Members present:

Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Margaret NG (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yea, GBS, JP
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou

Public Officers attending:

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| Ms Alice LAU, JP | Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) |
| Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP | Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service |
| Professor Gabriel M LEUNG, JP | Under Secretary for Food and Health |
| Mr Thomas CHAN Chung-ching, JP | Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health) ² |
| Mr Bruno LUK Kar-kin | Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health) ³ |
| Dr Gloria TAM Lai-fan, JP | Deputy Director of Health |

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| Miss Susie HO, JP | Director of Administration and Development, Department of Justice |
| Mr Simon LEE | Deputy Law Officer (Civil Law), Department of Justice |
| Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing, JP | Deputy Director (Estate Management), Housing Department |
| Mr Joe WONG Chi-cho, JP | Deputy Director (Corporate Services), Housing Department |
| Mr Tony LIU King-leung | Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 2), Housing Department |
| Mr Joshua LAW, JP | Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs |
| Mr Arthur HO, JP | Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (1) |
| Mr Howard CHAN, JP | Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (2) |
| Ms Angela HO | Chief Executive Officer, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau |

Clerk in attendance:

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| Mr WONG Siu-yee | Chief Council Secretary (1)4 (Acting) |
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Staff in attendance:

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| Mr Simon CHEUNG | Council Secretary (1)7 |
| Ms Alice CHEUNG | Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1 |
| Ms Clara LO | Legislative Assistant (1)3 |

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2010-11)2 which set out the latest changes in the Government's directorate establishment approved since 2002.

EC(2010-11)5 Proposed creation of two permanent posts of one Assistant Director of Health (D2) and one Principal Medical and Health Officer (D1) in Department of Health to provide dedicated directorate support for the new Primary Care Office with effect from the third quarter of 2010

2. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Administration had consulted the Panel on Health Services on the staffing proposal on 12 April 2010. Some Panel members considered that the proposed Primary Care Office might not be able to benefit patients in a concrete way. The Administration had advised the Panel that, given that more than 80% of the primary care services were provided by private

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medical institutions, the implementation and monitoring of various initiatives to enhance primary care would involve a great deal of coordination work, which had to be undertaken by a dedicated office. A Panel member, Mr Andrew CHENG, had criticised that the Administration was generous in creating directorate posts, but tight-fisted in improving healthcare services for the benefit of the patients. He was disappointed that the Administration had refused to accede to members' repeated requests for increasing the value of the elderly healthcare voucher, providing comprehensive dental care services for the elderly and incorporating more self-financed drugs into the Hospital Authority Drug Formulary. In response to the Panel's concerns, the Administration had advised that some \$1.1 billion was set aside in the years 2009-10 to 2012-13 for enhancing primary care, including \$864 million for implementing a series of pilot projects to improve primary care in the same period, as well as \$226 million for the proposed Primary Care Office for 2010-11 to 2012-13, which would include \$100 million for implementing pilot projects based on the new primary care service delivery models with appropriate incentives. The notional annual salary cost of \$2,725,080 for the two directorate posts represented only a small amount, when compared to the overall provision for primary care. The Chairman said that the Administration had provided supplementary information on the details of the major functions of the proposed Primary Care Office and its work plans, as well as the major responsibilities of its staff in providing professional and technical support to enhance primary care.

3. The item was voted on. The Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to the Finance Committee for approval.

4. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong apologised for having missed the discussion of this item, he wished to put on record that members belonging to the Democratic Party objected to the proposed creation of two directorate posts in the Department of Health under this item. He requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant Finance Committee meeting.

EC(2010-11)6 Proposed creation of a non-civil service position of Deputy Principal Government Counsel at the equivalent rank of DL2 in the Legal Policy Division of Department of Justice for a period of three years from August 2010 to provide the necessary support for furthering the development of mediation in Hong Kong with specific reference to the recommendations of the Secretary for Justice's Working Group on Mediation

5. Dr Margaret NG, Chairman of the Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, reported that the Panel had discussed the Administration's staffing proposal on 22 February 2010 and 26 April 2010. Panel members acknowledged the need to promote the development of mediation in Hong Kong and supported the proposal in principle. As for the duties of the Deputy Principal Government Counsel, Panel members noted that the post-holder would be required to work with the mediation profession for the establishment of an accreditation system for

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mediators, and to prepare the legislation on mediation. The Administration had provided further information and a detailed timetable on the duties to be performed by the post-holder during the three-year period. Panel members also noted that the proposal had received the support of the two professional legal organisations, and considered that the Department of Justice would be the most suitable government department to take up the task of developing mediation in Hong Kong.

6. The item was voted on. The Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to the Finance Committee for approval.

EC(2010-11)7 Proposed creation of two permanent posts of one Assistant Director of Housing (D2) and one Chief Estate Surveyor (D1) in Estate Management Division of Housing Department with effect from 2 July 2010 and revision and redistribution of the duties and responsibilities among some existing directorate posts in the Division to cope with the additional workload arising from new developments and initiatives

7. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Housing had discussed the Administration's staffing proposal on 16 April 2010. The Panel supported the proposal in principle. Given that the Housing Department would continue to construct public rental housing units and formulate new policies, some Panel members were concerned that the Administration would use the same justifications to request for further directorate posts again. The Administration had assured the Panel that barring unforeseeable circumstances, the Estate Management Division would not likely create further directorate posts in the next five years. The Administration had provided further information on the manpower and workload of the Estate Management Division vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1865/09-10.

8. Mr WONG Sing-chi enquired whether the Housing Department would be able to improve the management of public rental housing estates after the creation of the two directorate posts in the Estate Management Division. He noticed that with the outsourcing of public rental housing management services to private contractors, the management standard of these estates had deteriorated. For Tenants Purchase Scheme estates, Housing Department staff tended to adopt a passive attitude and refrain from giving advice and support on housing management issues to avoid conflicts with residents or owners' corporations.

9. Deputy Director (Estate Management) advised that with the additional posts, the Housing Department would set up a dedicated team to render advice and support to the owners' corporations in Tenants Purchase Scheme estates to enhance estate management. As for public rental housing estates managed by contractors, while the Housing Department would rely on the contractors to provide daily estate management services according to prescribed guidelines, it was still necessary for the Housing Department to map out the overall strategies for meeting the ever-changing management and maintenance needs of these estates. With the

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strengthening of the Housing Department's management team through the creation of the new posts, he was confident that the Housing Department could implement well thought-out plans and policies to satisfy the rising aspirations of the tenants.

10. The item was voted on. The Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to the Finance Committee for approval.

EC(2010-11)8 Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Government Secretariat: Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau for a period of three years from July 2010 to June 2013 to strengthen directorate support in taking forward various new cooperation initiatives with the Mainland and Taiwan

11. The Chairman informed members that the Administration had briefed the Panel on Commerce and Industry on the staffing proposal on 20 April 2010. While Panel members supported the proposal in principle, they raised concerns over various aspects including the duties and responsibilities of the proposed posts and the selection of candidates for these posts. The Administration had advised the Panel that the post-holders would be expected to provide strategic guidance on the implementation of the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation (Framework Agreement). The posts would be filled through internal recruitment within the civil service. The Administration had provided the major duties and responsibilities of the posts in the present discussion paper.

12. Mrs Regina IP considered that given the increased workload of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB), additional posts would have to be created. Nonetheless, she was worried that the current approach of stepping up collaborations between Hong Kong and the Mainland might not be in the best interest of Hong Kong. It was quite likely that the efforts might end up with Mainland provinces/cities competing with Hong Kong in various areas such as financial services and higher education. This would adversely affect Hong Kong's economy and employment opportunities, including those at the basic level. While acknowledging that Hong Kong should contribute towards the prosperity of the country, she urged the Administration to take note of the impacts of cooperation initiatives with the Mainland and Taiwan on Hong Kong's industrial structures and employment. She also enquired which bureau would be responsible for the various cooperation initiatives. Mr IP Wai-ming expressed similar views and requested the Administration to uphold Hong Kong's own interests in its dealings with the Mainland and Taiwan authorities, and take proactive measures to address the adverse impacts on Hong Kong's industrial structures and employment situation.

13. Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (PSCMA) advised that while CMAB assumed the overall responsibility for coordinating liaison between the Administration and the Mainland and Taiwan authorities, individual

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bureaux would be responsible for formulating and implementing measures under their respective policy areas. In fostering collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Administration would endeavour to achieve a win-win situation. For instance, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau had been working on matters related to financial services under the Framework Agreement. Cooperation with Guangdong Province in the area of financial services would consolidate Hong Kong's position as the leading financial centre in the region. Enhanced collaborations with the Mainland would help expand the market for Hong Kong goods, services and talents in the Mainland. There would be detailed discussions with the sectors concerned before the Administration entered into any agreement with the Mainland and Taiwan authorities. To take forward cooperation initiatives with the Mainland, the Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference was established in 1998, with the Chief Secretary for Administration taking the lead in coordinating the efforts of the Hong Kong side. As for Taiwan, the Financial Secretary was the government official responsible for the Hong Kong-Taiwan Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Promotion Council established to steer multi-faceted exchanges with Taiwan.

14. Noting the growing importance for Hong Kong to collaborate with the Mainland and Taiwan and the long-term nature of the Administration's work in this regard, Mr IP Wai-ming, Dr PAN Pey-chyou, Ir Dr Raymond HO and Mr WONG Ting-kwong considered that the two proposed posts should be created on a permanent basis instead. They commented that the Administration should be forward-looking and formulate long-term manpower plans for strengthening collaborative efforts of the three places.

15. PSCMA explained that although the workload of CMAB had increased substantially in recent years, the Administration had decided to act prudently by creating the two posts on a supernumerary basis in the first instance, given that projects such as the World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China and post-quake reconstruction support work in Sichuan would be completed within the next three years. The Administration would review its staffing position in due course to ascertain the need for keeping the two posts on a permanent basis.

16. With the setting up of the Hong Kong-Taiwan Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Promotion Council, Ir Dr Raymond HO said that he could foresee that CMAB would be heavily engaged in a wide spectrum of liaison work with the Taiwan authorities. As such, the Administration should plan ahead and formulate more long-term measures in terms of manpower and other arrangements. In view of the latest development in cross-Strait relations, Mr WONG Ting-kwong considered it necessary for the Administration to step up its work in fostering closer collaborations with Taiwan. The Administration took note of these views.

17. The item was voted on. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that as members belonging to the Democratic Party needed more time to consider the Administration's proposal, he abstained from voting. The Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to the Finance Committee for approval.

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18. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 June 2010