

**立法會**  
*Legislative Council*

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**Finance Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 29th meeting  
held at the Legislative Council Chamber  
on Friday, 11 June 2010, at 3:30 pm**

**Members present:**

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Chairman)  
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Margaret NG  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yea, GBS, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP  
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Hon LEE Wing-tat  
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP

Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Hon CHIM Pui-chung  
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king  
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan  
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon WONG Sing-chi  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS  
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH  
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun  
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Tanya CHAN  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon WONG Yuk-man

**Members absent:**

Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP

**Public officers attending:**

Professor K C CHAN, SBS, JP

Mr Stanley YING, JP

Ms Alice LAU, JP

Secretary for Financial Services and  
the Treasury

Permanent Secretary for Financial  
Services and the Treasury (Treasury)

Deputy Secretary for Financial  
Services and the Treasury (Treasury)<sup>1</sup>

Ms Elsie YUEN	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Ms Sandra LEE Suk-ye, JP	Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (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 Cindy LAI Kit-lim, JP	Acting Deputy Director of Health
Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP	Under Secretary for Education
Ms Mable CHAN, JP	Deputy Secretary for Education (2)
Dr Catherine CHAN Ka-ki	Deputy Secretary for Education (5)
Ms IP Ling-bik	Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Commission and Planning), Education Bureau
Mrs Alice CHEUNG CHIU Hoi-yue	Principal Assistant Secretary (Education Infrastructure), Education Bureau
Mr LAI Tung-kwok, SBS, IDSM, JP	Under Secretary for Security
Mr Paul CHENG Ching-wan	Principal Assistant Secretary (Security) (B)
Mr WONG Sai-chuen, FSMSM	Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters), Fire Services Department
Mr LI Leung-ming	Divisional Commander (Air), Fire Services Department
Mrs Cherry TSE LING Kit-ching, JP	Commissioner for Labour
Mr Charles HUI	Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Employment Services)
Mr Kath CHAN Kwok-keung,	Senior Labour Officer (Youth Employment), Labour Department

**Clerk in attendance:**

Mrs Constance LI	Assistant Secretary General 1
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**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Anita SIT	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
Miss Joanne FONG	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)1

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**Item No. 1 - FCR(2010-11)21**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
MADE ON 26 MAY 2010**

The Chairman advised that this item invited the Finance Committee (FC) to approve the four proposals considered and endorsed by the Establishment Subcommittee at its meeting on 26 May 2010. Members of the Establishment Subcommittee had requested that the proposal under EC(2010-11)5 be discussed and voted on separately at this FC meeting. The Chairman then put the proposals other than EC(2010-11)5 to vote. The Committee approved these proposals.

**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 said that under EC(2010-11)5, FC was invited to consider and approve the Administration's proposal to create, in the third quarter of 2010, two permanent directorate posts, namely one Assistant Director of Health (D2) and one Principal Medical and Health Officer (D1), in the Department of Health (DH) to staff a new Primary Care Office (PCO) to be set up in DH to support the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and the Working Group on Primary Care (WGPC) in the strategic planning, implementation and overall co-ordination of the long-term development of primary care in Hong Kong. She also said that the submissions from the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) and the Association of Licentiates of Medical Council of Hong Kong (ALMCHK) had been issued to members vide LC Papers FC119 and 121/09-10 on 10 June 2010.

3. Mr Andrew CHENG said that while Members belonging to the Democratic Party (DP) supported the overall policy of enhancing primary care, these Members considered that funding resources should be for the direct benefits of patients in the primary care settings instead of for creation of additional directorate posts. He said that the submissions just received from HKMA and ALMCHK had not been discussed by the Panel on Health Services (HS Panel), and he noted that serious reservations were expressed by the two associations on the proposed establishment of PCO and the staffing proposal. He opined that there should be more indepth discussion on issues relating to the development of primary care at the HS Panel before the staffing proposal was considered by FC. As such, he requested the Administration to withdraw the proposal. He said that at this stage, DP Members objected to the proposal.

4. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that the League of Social Democrats was against the staffing proposal. He queried how the proposed PCO, which would focus

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primarily on the development of conceptual models and clinical protocols as well as the establishment of the Primary Care Directory, would truly benefit patients in the primary care settings. He criticized the Administration for being generous towards the creation of directorate posts, but tight-fisted in improving healthcare services for the direct benefit of patients. Citing the service to the elderly as an example, he expressed disappointment that the Administration had not done anything to address Members' repeated requests that the value of the Elderly Healthcare Vouchers be increased, that comprehensive dental care services for the elderly be introduced, that more standard drugs be included in the Hospital Authority (HA) Drug Formulary, and that the automated telephone appointment system of general out-patient clinics be revamped.

5. Sharing Mr WONG Yuk-man's view, Mr Albert CHAN opined that the proposed creation of two directorate posts in DH was just another example of the top-heavy structure of the Government. Mr CHAN urged the Administration to give concrete examples on how PCO could benefit patients in the primary care settings.

6. In response, the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health) (PS(H)) said that of the \$864 million earmarked by the Government for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13 for implementation of various initiatives to enhance primary care, roughly \$719 million would be used to implement a series of pilot projects to enhance support for chronic disease patients in the primary care settings as part of the healthcare service reform. Some of these pilot projects would involve public-private partnership. Starting from 2009-10, the Government had launched a series of pilot projects through HA to strengthen the support for chronic disease patients through enhanced primary care services. These included promoting the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases in both the public and private sectors in local communities; conducting health risk assessments and drawing up management plans for high-risk groups; and helping chronic disease patients improve their self-care skills through enhanced education, etc. The Government has also earmarked funding for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13 for setting up community health centres or networks under different service models to provide more comprehensive primary care services in the community and enhancing primary dental services and oral health promotion programmes, particularly those for the elderly in need, in collaboration with the dental profession. Funding was also further earmarked for the proposed PCO for the period 2010-11 to 2012-13 for implementing specific tasks relating to primary care development, including conducting research projects on primary care, improving training and capacity building related to primary care in collaboration with healthcare professionals, etc. She highlighted that patients would benefit from the development of primary care conceptual models and clinical protocols for chronic diseases and age-specific/sex-specific health problems, as these models and protocols would not only provide benchmarks for comprehensive primary care services but also form the basis for the provision of enhanced primary care services, including the management of common chronic diseases. On the other hand, the Primary Care Directory would support the provision of comprehensive primary care by primary care professionals in the community through establishing collaborative networks and enhancing their

professional training. The Primary Care Directory would also help the public choose their primary care providers in the community and facilitate the co-ordination among different primary care providers functioning as multi-disciplinary teams. She added that the proposed creation of two directorate posts would incur an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$2,725,080. This only accounted for a very small portion of the total sum of about \$1.1 billion earmarked by the Government for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13 to enhance primary care services.

7. Dr Margaret NG said that the Civic Party supported the staffing proposal and would continue to monitor the work of PCO to ensure that patients would benefit from the initiatives. She urged the Administration to put in place measures to ensure that the services could truly benefit patients. PS(H) assured members that the Administration would report the progress of various initiatives to the Panel on Health Services as and when necessary.

8. Mr WONG Yuk-man questioned the need for setting up PCO and the two proposed directorate posts as the formulation of strategy and guidelines should have already been undertaken by HA and DH. Mr Albert CHAN sought explanation as to why the liaison work could not be undertaken by HA. While expressing support for the policy direction of enhancing primary care in Hong Kong, Mr IP Kwok-him enquired why the future co-ordination work could not be undertaken by HA, which was responsible for managing most public out-patient clinics in Hong Kong. He was also concerned whether PCO could effectively co-ordinate the primary care service providers in both the public and private sectors. Mr Albert HO also questioned the need for additional manpower to undertake the co-ordination and liaison work in respect of primary care services.

9. PS(H) replied that the development and planning of primary care in Hong Kong involved a host of stakeholders (including the public and private healthcare sectors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, and patient groups) and would be a large scale on-going initiative demanding continuous strong leadership and co-ordination. PCO would provide support to FHB on policy formulation and strategy development on primary care, and also co-ordinate DH, HA, private healthcare providers and other relevant stakeholders on the implementation of policies and initiatives to enhance primary care. To ensure effective co-ordination, PCO would comprise staff with relevant expertise from FHB, DH and HA. It would be necessary to have dedicated directorate staff to oversee the implementation of various initiatives relating to primary care. PCO was proposed to be set up under DH, because DH was the health authority of Hong Kong and one of the key public primary care providers in Hong Kong. This arrangement was in line with one of the recommendations in the first stage public consultation on healthcare reform that the role of DH should be strengthened in setting appropriate standards and quality requirements for various primary care services. As the development and planning of primary care services was a huge task in terms of scale and complexity, and various primary care initiatives were taken forward on a territory-wide basis, the existing staffing level in DH was unable to cope with the heavy added workload. It was also

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not operationally feasible to redeploy other existing directorate officers in DH to take up the additional work without compromising the quality of their existing work, as all of them were fully engaged in their respective duties and pressing priorities of work.

10. Dr PAN Pey-chyou said that he supported in principle the staffing proposal and considered that the initiatives would help foster the development of primary care in Hong Kong. Referring to the reservation of HKMA and ALMCHK over the setting up of community health centres or networks and the possible expansion of primary care services by HA to non-HA patients, he was concerned that the lack of support from the two major associations representing the medical profession would seriously impede the implementation of the initiatives. He called on the Administration to address the concerns expressed by the two bodies, to help the medical profession understand the need to establish the proposed PCO, and to actively engage the profession in the promotion of comprehensive and holistic primary care.

11. Sharing a similar view, Mr Albert HO urged the Administration to step up its communication with the private healthcare sector to enlist their support, which was essential for the successful implementation of the initiatives in promoting primary care in Hong Kong.

12. PS(H) noted members' concerns and suggestions. She highlighted that efforts had been and would continue be made to maintain close communication with relevant professional bodies, private healthcare sector and various stakeholders. Citing the Public-Private Chronic Disease Management Shared Care Programme for diabetes mellitus and hypertension patients as an example, she said that discussions had been held with healthcare professionals at the district level to solicit their views and mobilize their support for the primary care pilot project. The Administration would be happy to discuss with the stakeholders concerned and further explain various primary care initiatives to them. As regards HKMA's concern about the setting up of community health centres or networks, PS(H) said that the initiative would involve launching pilot projects in various districts to set up community health centres or networks under different models of participation and partnership between the public and private healthcare sectors and/or NGOs. The aim of the initiative was to provide more comprehensive one-stop primary care services to the public according to the new primary care conceptual models and clinical protocols. This initiative, together with other initiatives (such as developing and promoting clinical protocols for managing individual chronic diseases and health problems, and developing and promoting a Primary Care Directory), was recommended by WGPC chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health and the three Task Forces under it. WGPC comprised representatives from medical professional bodies, the public and private healthcare sectors, NGOs, academia, and patient groups.

13. Dr LEUNG Kar-lau said that the proposal to set up PCO had only been discussed by the HS Panel in April 2010. The medical profession, including himself, did not have a thorough understanding of the need for PCO. He questioned the rationale for the Government's involvement in the work currently undertaken by HA.

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He remarked that the directorate staff heading PCO might not be experienced in the private healthcare sector, and the medical profession was gravely concerned about the possible interference by the Government with their service provision.

14. Dr Joseph LEE, the Chairman of the HS Panel, said that the HS Panel had discussed issues relating to enhancing primary care in Hong Kong a number of times over the past few years. He supported the direction of the primary care reform being pursued by the Government which aimed to promote comprehensive and holistic primary care including preventive care and wellness promotion. He also supported the proposed creation of the two directorate posts to take forward the initiatives.

15. Mr Andrew CHENG said that as the concerns raised by HKMA and ALMCHK had not been discussed by the HS Panel, and given that the Government would only publish in the second half of 2010 a strategy document on primary care with specific implementation measures to engage the professions and the public, the Administration should withdraw the staffing proposal pending a comprehensive review and deliberations on the primary care system by the HS Panel in consultation with the industry.

16. PS(H) responded that the first stage public consultation on healthcare reform conducted between March and June 2008 revealed broad support for the proposals to enhance primary care. On the basis of the proposals set out in the consultation document and taking into the account the views collected during the public consultation, WGPC and its three Task Forces had formulated a set of initial recommendations in 2009 to enhance primary care services in Hong Kong. Representatives from medical professional bodies, the public and private healthcare sectors, NGOs, academia and patient groups had been involved in formulating the recommendations. The HS Panel was also consulted on 12 April 2010 on the proposal to set up PCO.

17. Mrs Sophie LEUNG supported the establishment of PCO to foster the development of primary care in Hong Kong. She remarked that any revision to primary care service delivery model would unavoidably affect the existing private healthcare service providers. While close monitoring of the implementation of the various initiatives was necessary to ensure proper use of public money, the medical profession might, however, resent Government control.

18. In reply to enquiries of Mr Albert HO and the Chairman on how the Administration would allay the worries of HKMA and ALMCHK as reflected in their submissions, PS(H) said that the proposed Government initiatives aimed to enhance primary care services through public-private partnership. They would not compete with the private healthcare sector for patients and business. In fact, the Public-Private Chronic Disease Management Shared Care Programme would help expand the service and business of the private healthcare sector as the programme allowed eligible chronic disease patients currently under the care of the public healthcare system to choose to receive primary care services in the private sector.

Voting

19. The Chairman put the proposal to vote. As requested by Mr Andrew CHENG, the Chairman ordered a division. 29 members voted for the proposal and 13 members voted against it. Voting results of individual members were as follows -

*For:*

Dr Raymond HO  
Mr CHAN Kam-lam  
Mr WONG Yung-kan  
Ms Miriam LAU  
Mr Abraham SHEK  
Mr Tommy CHEUNG  
Mr WONG Kwok-hing  
Mr Jeffrey LAM  
Mr Ronny TONG  
Ms Cyd HO  
Mr CHAN Kin-por  
Mr WONG Kwok-kin  
Mr IP Kwok-him  
Dr Samson TAM  
Miss Tanya CHAN  
(29 members)

Dr Margaret NG  
Mrs Sophie LEUNG  
Mr LAU Kong-wah  
Mr TAM Yiu-chung  
Ms LI Fung-ying  
Mr Frederick FUNG  
Dr Joseph LEE  
Mr CHENG Hok-ming  
Prof Patrick LAU  
Ms Starry LEE  
Dr Priscilla LEUNG  
Mr IP Wai-ming  
Dr PAN Pey-chyou  
Mr Alan LEONG

*Against:*

Mr Albert HO  
Mr Fred LI  
Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Mr LEE Wing-tat  
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Mr WONG Yuk-man  
(13 members)

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan  
Mr James TO  
Mr Andrew CHENG  
Mr Kam Nai-wai  
Mr WONG Sing-chi  
Mr Albert CHAN

The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the proposal.

**Item No. 2 - FCR(2010-11)22**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE  
MADE ON 19 MAY 2010**

20. The Chairman advised that the Committee was invited to approve the proposal considered and endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee at its meeting on 19 May 2010. She put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

**Item No. 3 - FCR(2010-11)23**

**HEAD 156 - GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT: EDUCATION BUREAU**

**Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**

**New Item "Grant to the Language Fund"**

21. The Chairman advised that the Committee was invited to approve the creation of a new commitment of \$500 million for injection into the Language Fund to sustain its efforts in supporting projects and initiatives to improve Hong Kong people's proficiency in Chinese (including Putonghua) and English.

22. Ms Cyd HO, Chairman of the Panel on Education, reported that the Panel on Education had discussed the proposal at its meeting on 13 May 2010. Panel members supported the proposal in principle. As the budgetary ceiling for schools using Chinese as the medium of instruction (CMI schools) would be reduced from \$3 million to \$1 million under the Refined English Enhancement Scheme (EES), some members were concerned whether the reduced ceiling would meet the needs of CMI schools, whose English language environment was inadequate in facilitating language learning for students. Members were also concerned whether the initiatives under EES had been effective in enhancing English proficiency of students in Hong Kong. At members' request, the Administration had provided the Panel with supplementary information concerning the language proficiency of students in Hong Kong.

23. Mr Abraham SHEK enquired about the allocation of funding for supporting non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in Chinese language learning. He asked whether the support measures had been effective in helping NCS students in learning the Chinese language, and whether additional resources would be dedicated to developing text books and teaching materials for NCS students.

24. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into the community, the Administration should step up support measures for ethnic minorities in their Chinese language learning, including learning Cantonese.

25. In response, the Under Secretary for Education (US(Ed)) said that \$77 million was earmarked for enhancing the support measures for NCS students. Apart from support measures in designated schools with a critical mass of NCS students, a project on after-class support for NCS students would be implemented in non-designated schools. Schools admitting 15 or more NCS students might apply for funding to provide after-school Chinese extended learning services for their NCS students as well as NCS students from nearby schools. The amount of funding for each applicant school ranged from \$50,000 to \$300,000, depending on the number of NCS students. The proposed project would complement the after-school support service of the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres currently operated by the University of Hong Kong. To help enhance Chinese language learning and teaching of NCS students, the Education Bureau had distributed teaching reference materials

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and learning materials in the form of textbook to schools and NCS students in addition to the issuance of Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS students. He said that language learning was a continuing process that took time to achieve results. The support measures were well received, and feedback from schools, NGOs and NCS students had been positive.

26. Referring to the album of lexical lists developed by the Education Bureau for NCS students to look for the meaning of Chinese characters and words, Ms Cyd HO suggested teaching NCS students to learn Chinese using the Pinyin system. US(Ed) said that NCS students found the album of lexical lists including the phonetic symbols provided useful in learning the Chinese language. Continued efforts would be made in this regard.

27. Ms Cyd HO noted that large-scale publicity campaigns would be launched to enhance the workforce's awareness of the importance of raising English and Putonghua proficiency. She opined that the resources should be more gainfully deployed to provide the public with practical information on the availability of learning resources, such as funding subsidies and learning platforms available, as well as the relevant application procedures. Sharing a similar view, Ms Starry LEE called on the Administration to divert some resources earmarked for publicity to develop open e-learning platforms, such as producing episodes on English and Putonghua courses on the Internet, TV and radio, to provide users (including those not in employment) with easy access to learning opportunities and to enable them to learn at their own pace and in their own time.

28. Ms Starry LEE enquired about the initiatives to create a facilitating language learning environment for students for which \$50 million had been earmarked. She suggested that schools should be encouraged to organize language learning activities for all students, particularly those from low-income families, during the summer vacation.

29. The Deputy Secretary for Education (5) said that initiatives would be implemented to create a richer language environment for primary and secondary students and to provide more opportunities for students to learn and use English and Putonghua outside the classroom. These included encouraging inter-school activities between local and international schools, providing students with opportunities to use English and Putonghua in a real life setting through student exchange programmes such as the Mainland exchange programmes, conducting after-school co-curricular activities in English or Putonghua, and assisting schools and collaborating with the mass media, NGOs, educationalists and the business community in organizing activities to promote reading and writing.

30. Mrs Sophie LEUNG urged the Administration to develop more initiatives to facilitate self-learning and raise the language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce, in order to meet the challenges of globalization and enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness. More efforts should be made to create a rich language learning

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environment and to motivate students and the workforce to take the initiative to improve their language proficiency.

31. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that the most effective way of language learning was through engaging in interesting activities. He opined that subtitles should be provided for TV programmes, including the programmes of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) broadcast on TV channels, to help viewers enhance their language proficiency while watching TV. He called on the Administration to widely promote Internet learning and to make the language courses more interesting. Sharing a similar view, Mr James TO said that new media should be more widely used to promote language learning. Interesting language programmes such as RTHK's Learn English programme should be widely publicized and put on the Internet for easy access.

32. US(Ed) said that recent research studies and benchmarking assessments based on internationally recognized programmes showed a notable progress of local students and graduates in language proficiency. He undertook to convey Members' suggestions to the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research for consideration.

33. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

**Item No. 4 FCR(2010-11)24**  
**HEAD 45 - FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Subhead 603 Plant, vehicles and equipment**

34. The Chairman advised that this item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$17,400,000 for procuring a replacement Crash Fire Tender (CFT).

35. Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of the Panel on Security, reported that the Panel on Security had discussed at its meeting on 4 May 2010 the proposal to procure a new CFT to replace the existing CFT R42 in the Airport Fire Contingent of the Fire Services Department (FSD). Panel members had not raised objection to the proposal. In response to members' concerns, the Administration had undertaken to adjust the procurement procedures to expedite the procurement of the replacement vehicle. The Administration would specify in the tender documents that the replacement CFT should be equipped with environmentally friendly engines compliant with Euro-III or better emission standards.

36. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked when the replacement CFT would come into service, and whether the supplier/manufacturer would be responsible for the future repair and maintenance of the new CFT.

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37. On the procurement timetable, the Under Secretary for Security (US(S)) said that the preparation of tender documents had been completed. Subject to FC's approval, the Administration would invite tenders in July 2010. Allowing time for suppliers to submit tender bids and two months for tender evaluation, the Administration aimed to award the procurement contract in November 2010. The supplier would be given 12 months to construct and deliver the vehicle in November 2011. Following testing and training, the new vehicle would commence operation in December 2011.

38. The Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters), Fire Services Department (CFO(H)) said that FSD would ensure that the new CFT would comply with the tender specifications and contractual requirements. FSD in conjunction with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) would closely monitor and liaise with the overseas supplier and conduct thorough factory acceptance tests before the new vehicle was delivered to Hong Kong. The supplier/manufacturer would be responsible for any repair and maintenance and related expenses during the warranty period which was normally one year.

39. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed concern that the existing four CFTs were of different models. He said that from the staff training and operational angles, and for the compatibility of spare parts in repair and maintenance, it was neither desirable nor economical to maintain vehicles of different models. For cost effectiveness and operational efficiency especially during emergencies, consideration should be given to procuring vehicles of the same model or from the same manufacturer as far as practicable.

40. CFO(H) explained that in view of the requirements of the Government Procurement Agreement under the World Trade Organization, the tender requirements could not specify any particular model or supplier. As the functions of the existing CFTs and those of the replacement vehicle would be largely the same, there would not be significant problems in training staff to operate the vehicles, though of different models. Additional spare parts would be stocked for future use.

41. In response to Ms Miriam LAU's enquiries, US(S) said that according to EMSD, the life expectancy of the model, as in the case of the existing CFT R42, was about eight years. With proper maintenance, the service life could be prolonged. The existing CFT R42, which had been in service for over 10 years, was expected to maintain satisfactory availability rate in the coming two years. After the arrival of the new vehicle, the existing CFT R42 would be used as reserve. The new replacement vehicle and CFT R42 would have largely the same functions compliant with the prevailing international standards. Both have a powerful foam jet with an effective range of over 90 metres capable of handling fire-fighting duties involving large aircraft, including the new Airbus A380. CFO(H) said that the existing reserve CFT would be disposed of in accordance with the Government Stores and Procurement Regulations, auction being one of the options.

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42. Ms Cyd HO suggested that a Chinese version of the operation manual should be prepared to facilitate staff training. US(S) advised that the requirement for a Chinese version of the operation manual had been included in the tender specifications under preparation.

43. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

**Item No. 5 FCR (2010-11)25**

**HEAD 90 - LABOUR DEPARTMENT**

**Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**

**New items "Pilot Employment Navigator Programme" and "Special Employment Project for Vulnerable Youths"**

**Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

44. The Chairman advised that under this item, the Committee was invited to approve -

- (a) a new commitment of \$124.5 million for the introduction of a Pilot Employment Navigator Programme (ENP);
- (b) a new commitment of \$33 million for the introduction of a special employment project for vulnerable youths; and
- (c) an increase in the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of non-directorate posts in the permanent establishment of the Labour Department in 2010-2011 from \$703,182,000 by \$7,756,020 to \$710,938,020 to create 19 non-directorate civil service posts for two years for administering the Pilot Employment Navigator Programme at (a) above.

45. Ms LI Fung-ying, Chairman of the Panel on Manpower, reported that the Panel on Manpower had discussed at its meeting on 26 April 2010 the funding proposal for the introduction of a two-year Pilot ENP to provide job-seekers with intensive employment counselling and cash incentives, and a special employment project to help vulnerable youths with acute employment difficulties. Panel members did not raise any objection to the proposed projects.

Pilot Employment Navigator Programme

46. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the rationale for setting the monthly income ceiling of a participant at \$6,500 or less as one of the eligibility criteria for receiving cash incentive under the ENP. The Commissioner for Labour (C for L) explained that ENP was mainly targeted at unskilled job-seekers who did not have any previous relevant working experience. The threshold of \$6,500 was set

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having regard to the median monthly salary offered for vacancies that did not require previous relevant working experience posted at the Labour Department (LD) in the first quarter of 2010.

47. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted that about one-fourth of the households in Yat Tung Estate, Tung Chung were recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, and yet there was no job centre in Tung Chung. He said that it would be costly for residents of remote districts such as Tung Chung to travel all the way to job centres for employment services. He urged LD to proactively reach out to publicize the new projects and provide job placement and employment services to job-seekers in remote districts that were most hard hit by unemployment.

48. In reply, C for L and the Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Employment Services) (AC for L(ES)) said that other than attending a job centre in person, job-seekers could receive employment services through telephone, or access job vacancy information online or through the vacancy search terminals (VSTs). LD would pilot the loan of VSTs to NGOs, starting with those providing employment services in remote districts. LD would also liaise closely and collaborate with NGOs and the District Councils to disseminate information on job vacancies and recruitment activities to job-seekers living in remote districts.

49. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested placing a VST in the library of Yat Tung Estate. Mr James TO questioned why a small office or a mobile job centre could not be set up in Yat Tung Estate and VSTs were not placed in the shopping mall of the Estate.

50. C for L said that there was no Government complex in Yat Tung Estate and it was difficult to find a suitable location for setting up a job centre in the estate. Apart from the housing blocks, there were three car parks, two schools and a small shopping mall in Yat Tung Estate. At present, two job VSTs had been placed in the housing estate office and the social security office of Yat Tung Estate. LD had discussed with the management of the shopping mall the possibility of installing a terminal there but to no avail. A job VST had once been placed in the Yat Tung library but was subsequently removed to the social security office of Yat Tung Estate. She undertook to follow up with the NGO taking over the library to explore the possibility of installing a terminal there. With an additional terminal to be loaned to the NGO, there would be at least three terminals in Yat Tung Estate. AC for L(ES) supplemented that in addition to job fairs, LD had since last year organized Job Info Day in Tung Chung for the residents.

*(Post-meeting note : The Administration has advised after the meeting that a VST has subsequently been installed in the Yat Tung library again.)*

51. Ms Starry LEE expressed concern that employers would lower the salary to the ENP participants in view of the cash incentive of up to \$5,000 offered to each eligible ENP participant. C for L said that the cash incentive was given direct to the

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eligible ENP participant to encourage him/her to land on and stay in a job for at least three months to alleviate the retention problem during the initial months of employment when the turnover rate was usually high. The cash incentive should not affect the salary receivable from the employer.

Special employment project for vulnerable youths

52. In response to Ms Starry LEE's enquiries, C for L said that the special employment project for vulnerable youths aimed to provide on-the-job training and 12-month internship to young people aged 15 to 24 with low educational attainment, emotional/behavioral problems, learning difficulties or other employment barriers. Under the project they would be given job placements in NGOs so as to prepare them to eventually take up employment in the open market. Host NGOs providing on-the-job training to these young people with acute employment difficulties would be responsible for the day-to-day supervision, counselling and training. The participating NGOs would be provided with funding to cover the remuneration, statutory benefits and employer's contributions to the Mandatory Provident Fund. To further enhance their skills, trainees would be encouraged to attend off-the-job training courses, and might apply for reimbursement of course and examination fees of up to \$4,000 from LD.

53. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

54. The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 pm.