

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Finance Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held at the Legislative Council Chamber**  
**on Friday, 27 May 2011, at 3:00 pm**

**Members present:**

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Margaret NG  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yeet, GBS, JP  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, 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, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, 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, JP  
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  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Tanya CHAN  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon WONG Yuk-man

**Members absent:**

Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-ching, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou  
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

**Public officers attending:**

Professor K C CHAN, SBS, JP	Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Mr Stanley YING, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Alice LAU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1
Ms Elsie YUEN	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP	Under Secretary for Education
Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Education (6)
Ms Nancy SO	Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency
Ms Teresa CHEUNG	Deputy Controller (2), Student Financial Assistance Agency
Ms Carrie LEE	Deputy Controller (1), Student Financial Assistance Agency
Ms Cora HO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Education Infrastructure)
Ms Irene YOUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Mrs Polly CHAN	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4
Mr FUNG Pak-yan, JP	Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)
Mr NG Wai-kuen	Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 1, Social Welfare Department
Ms S K CHUNG, Judy	Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) 1
Mr SIU Wai-ching	Assistant Director of Lands (Survey and Mapping)
Mr TONG Kwan-yuen	Senior Land Surveyor (Photogrammetry), Lands Department

**Clerk in attendance:**

Mrs Constance LI

Assistant Secretary General 1

**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Annette LAM

Chief Council Secretary (1)7

Mr Daniel SIN

Senior Council Secretary (1)7

Mr Frankie WOO

Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3

Ms Christy YAU

Legislative Assistant (1)8

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**Item No. 1 - FCR(2011-12)15**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT  
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 4 MAY 2011**

The Chairman advised that the Committee's approval was sought for the staffing proposals in FCR(2011-12)15 which were recommended by the Establishment Subcommittee on 4 May 2011.

2. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

**Item No. 2 -FCR(2011-12)16**

**HEAD 173 – STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGENCY**

**Subhead 228 Student financial assistance**

**LOAN FUND**

**HEAD 254 – LOANS TO STUDENTS**

**Subhead 101 Students of the universities, the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education and Hong Kong Design Institute of the Vocational Training Council, Prince Philip Dental Hospital, Hong Kong Institute of Education and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts**

**Subhead 103 Means-tested loan for post-secondary students**

3. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a supplementary provision of \$537 million to implement measures to enhance financial support for needy students.

4. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan welcomed the enhancement measures which had been long awaited. He however expressed concern that the Administration had

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not taken into account the changes in household income brought about by the implementation of statutory minimum wage (SMW) when adjusting the income limits for student financial assistance. He considered the monthly family income limit of \$12,000 for a three-member family for receiving full level of student financial assistance too low, that the monthly income limit of a two-person family to be eligible for the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme had been raised to \$13,000, and the monthly family income of a three-member family where both parents were earning SMW would already exceed the proposed equivalent ceiling of \$12,000 in the revised means test for receiving full level of assistance. Mr LEE urged the Administration to adjust as soon as possible the income limits for assessing the eligibility for student financial assistance to take account of the impact of SMW on the median monthly household income levels. It would be reasonable to exclude the contribution to Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) in assessing the applicant's family income as that part of income was not disposable.

5. Under Secretary for Education (US(Ed)) advised that the applicant's and his/her family members' mandatory contribution to MPF would be excluded when assessing the applicant's family income from the 2011/12 application cycle. He said that the Administration had taken into account a host of relevant considerations, including the estimated impact of SMW on the monthly family income, when drawing up proposals on relaxing the income thresholds for full level of assistance. After the proposed income thresholds had come into effect, the Administration would closely monitor the changes in the median monthly household income levels in the light of the implementation of SMW. He assured Members that the Administration was open-minded and would consider the need for any further changes having regard to the needs of the low-income families for various types of student financial assistance as well as the financial implications on public resources. In response to Mr LEE's query on "one-person family", US(Ed) explained that applicants pursuing a post-secondary programme without any family support might be considered as an individual entity under "one-person family" category.

6. Ms Tanya CHAN said that Members belonging to the Civic Party supported the funding proposal. She asked under what circumstances the Administration would review and adjust the income limits for student financial assistance. Deputy Secretary for Education (6) (DS(6)) explained that the standard income test adopted for the means-tested student financial assistance schemes operated on an Adjusted Family Income (AFI) formula which was based on annual family income and family size. The AFI thresholds would be adjusted annually according to the annual movement of the Consumer Price Index (A). She highlighted that after the relaxation of the family income limits, families with income around or below the respective median monthly household incomes would be eligible for student financial assistance, and between 50%

and 60% of families earning less than the median household income were expected to receive full level of assistance. As it would take some time for any impact on the median household income to emerge following the implementation of SMW, the Administration would keep in view the changes and review the income limits for assistance as appropriate.

7. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan commented that in assessing the financial needs of low-income families, the Administration should not rely solely on median monthly household income but should also take into account the actual income and expenditure pattern of these families.

8. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that he had expressed concern about the impact of SMW on the eligibility for student financial assistance at the meeting of the Panel on Education in May 2011. He had pointed out that the increase in household income of some families following the implementation of SMW might render them ineligible for full assistance. He urged the Administration to take concrete steps to adjust the income thresholds. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared similar views and urged the Education Bureau and the Government as a whole to carefully assess how SMW would impact on the eligibility of low-income families for student financial assistance and all other government assistance schemes.

9. Referring to the supplementary information note provided to the Panel on Education on 20 May 2011, US(Ed) reiterated that the Administration had, among other factors, taken into consideration the estimated impact of SMW on the monthly family income in drawing up proposals on relaxing the family income thresholds. He highlighted that the monthly income limits for full level of assistance had been notably increased for families of all sizes, in particular for three-member and four-member families. With the proposed relaxation of income thresholds for full level of assistance, it was expected that the percentage of students receiving full level of assistance would be substantially increased to around 60% of all beneficiaries in the 2011/2012 academic year.

10. Ms Starry LEE expressed support for the Administration's proposal. She urged the Administration to review the income ceilings of the means-tested student financial assistance schemes taking into account the number of beneficiaries and the level of median household income, say, one year after the implementation of SMW and report to the Panel on Education. She opined that a survey to gather data on changes in monthly median household income and the percentage of students receiving assistance would help to ascertain whether the rise in monthly median household income would lead to a substantial decrease in the number of students receiving full level of assistance.

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11. US(Ed) reiterated that the Administration would monitor the changes in the median monthly household income levels following the implementation of SMW. He said that as the SMW had been in operation for just one month, more time was needed to gather sufficient data to assess its full impact on family incomes and eligibility for student financial assistance. The Administration would review the income ceilings of the means-tested student financial assistance schemes at an appropriate time.

12. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

**Item No. 3 - FCR(2011-12)17**

**HEAD 173 – STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGENCY**

**Subhead 228 Student financial assistance**

13. The Chairman advised that the Committee was invited to approve changes and improvements to the Examination Fee Remission Scheme with effect from the 2011/2012 academic year.

14. Ms Starry LEE reported that the Panel on Education had discussed and supported the proposal on 11 April 2011. Panel members had raised concern about the monitoring of the fee levels set by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, the remission of fees to needy students for rechecking of examination results and the recognition of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education locally and overseas. Panel members had also requested the Administration to review the eligibility criteria for various financial assistance schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistant Agency in the light of the implementation of the statutory minimum wage. The Administration had provided relevant supplementary information to the Panel on Education in May 2011.

15. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

**Item No. 4 - FCR(2011-12)18**

**HEAD 170 – SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

**Subhead 179 Comprehensive social security assistance scheme**

16. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a supplementary provision of \$514 million under Head 170 Social Welfare Department Subhead 179 Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA)

Scheme to implement a package of measures to enhance the support for elders, persons with disabilities and persons in ill-health under CSSA Scheme.

17. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che reported that the proposal was discussed at the Panel on Welfare Services on 9 May 2011. Panel members supported the proposal, and urged the Administration to implement the new rates as early as possible. Some Panel members considered the proposed monthly rate of the Community Living Supplement (CLS) at \$250 too low and urged the Administration to consider further increasing the monthly rate.

18. Mr WONG Sing-chi questioned the basis for determining the proposed amount of CLS. He said that despite the increase of the monthly CLS to \$250, the sum was meagre and could hardly cover travelling or medical expenses. He also called on the Administration to actively consider introducing a monthly carer allowance of \$1,000 to relieve the burden of family carers in taking care of disabled or ill-health family members.

19. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DSLW(W)2) responded that CLS was only one of the many measures to support disabled and elderly CSSA recipients. She explained that the purpose of CLS was to provide additional assistance for CSSA recipients who were either elders, persons with disabilities or in ill health, and who were not living in institutions. CLS was intended to help the recipients to meet special expenses, such as the costs for procuring care and health goods, so as to better support their stay in the community. She further advised that apart from CLS, the CSSA Scheme provided higher standard rates for elderly persons and persons with disabilities together with a range of supplements and special grants to meet their specific needs. These included, for example, "Grant to cover fees for Home Help Service/Integrated Home Care Service", "Grant to cover cost of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services" and "Grant to cover costs of Community-based Support Projects for People with Disabilities and Their Families". She added that the level of CLS was determined having regard to the range of various community care services available, and the special needs of disabled and elderly CSSA recipients. It was more than double the existing rate of \$120. The current proposal to raise CLS to \$250 was considered appropriate.

20. Mr WONG Sing-chi maintained the view that the proposed CLS of \$250 would not be sufficient to meet the needs of the disabled or elderly CSSA recipients.

21. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

**Item No. 5 - FCR(2011-12) 19**  
**CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND**  
**HEAD 708 – CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR**  
**SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT**

**Lands Department**

**New Subhead "Replacement of Aerial Camera System"**

22. The Chairman advised that the Committee was invited to approve a new commitment of \$41,580,000 to replace the film-based aerial camera system by one set of large format digit aerial camera system. The Panel on Development was consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 29 March 2011 and raised no objection. The Chairman said that the Administration had provided, at her request, supplementary information on training and modification work on the aircrafts.

23. Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed support for the funding proposal. He said the digital aerial photographs were useful to show the extent of illegal dumping in the New Territories, although he observed that the quality of some of the photographs did not provide the degree of sharpness expected. He asked about the frequency of taking aerial photographs, and also the resolution and the magnification scale of the proposed digital camera system.

24. Assistant Director (Survey and Mapping) (AD(SM)) advised that aerial photographs were taken at least once a year covering the whole territory. The images captured by the proposed digital camera system were of high quality, and its sharpness and scale would depend on the altitude at which the aerial photographs were taken and the size of the land features captured. He added that aerial photographs were normally taken from a height of 6 000 feet and the images could be accurate within one-tenth of a metre. The quality of the photographs produced by proposed digital camera system would generally be better than that of the Google maps.

25. Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed concern about the possible intrusion of privacy if the proposed digital camera system was capable of capturing very high resolution images, which might also capture an individual's images and activities on the site. He considered that there should be sufficient safeguards against the release of aerial photographs beyond the intended uses, and that the images should be erased after use.

26. AD(SM) said that digital aerial photographs were generally used in mapping, land administration and development, environmental monitoring etc. While the proposed digital camera system was technically capable of recording high resolution images, individuals and their private activities were not normally the subjects of the Lands Department's aerial photography

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assignments. Moreover, aerial photographs were taken from a fixed-wing aircraft, the flying altitude of which was strictly regulated by the Civil Aviation Department. The photographs taken from the permitted altitude could unlikely be able to resolve individual's images or their activities.

27. The Chairman sought clarification on whether digital aerial photographs taken with the aerial camera system would be used by private bodies or individuals.

28. AD(SM) replied that digital aerial photographs featuring physical terrains could be shared with government departments or made available for sale to the public such as developers, public organizations, professional bodies or individuals. Other photographs taken on special assignments, such as those recording of the scenes of an aviation crash accident or landslide or other natural disaster, were for internal reference only.

29. The Chairman asked if the Lands Department would use the proposed camera system to monitor the proliferation of unauthorized building works (UBWs) in buildings. AD(SM) responded that the Lands Department had not yet received any such requests. Even so, photographs of buildings could be taken from oblique angles using other set of camera mounted on a helicopter.

30. Mr WONG Sing-chi and the Chairman enquired whether the fixed-wing aircraft mounted with the proposed digital camera system would be available for hire by a private company, and if so, what conditions or restrictions would be imposed on the use. AD(SM) replied that the fixed-wing aircrafts mounted with the digital camera system were not for hire. The Lands Department would only provide aerial photography and survey services on the "user pays" principle. So far, there was only one case where aerial photography service was provided for the CLP Power Hong Kong Limited for mapping purposes.

31. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

32. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.