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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 3rd meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex
on Wednesday, 5 December 2012, at 8:30 am

Members present:

Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Kenneth LEUNG (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Hon YIU Si-wing
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kwong, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

Members absent:

Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen

Public Officers attending:

Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1
Mr Eddie MAK Tak-wai, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (1)
Mr John LEE, PDSM, PMSM, JP	Under Secretary for Security
Mrs Erika HUI, JP	Commissioner for Narcotics, Security Bureau
Miss Mandy WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary (Narcotics)2, Security Bureau
Ms Kitty CHOI, JP	Director of Administration, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office
Miss Helen TANG, JP	Deputy Director of Administration, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office
Ms Jane LEE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty)

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Connie SZETO	Chief Council Secretary (1)4
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Andy LAU	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Hugo CHIU	Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Ms Clara LO	Legislative Assistant (1)9

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ECI(2012-13)6	Update on Overall Directorate Establishment Position
ECI(2012-13)8	Forecast of proposed creation/deletion of directorate posts in the 2012-2013 legislative session
ECI(2012-13)9	Containing the Size of Directorate Establishment

The Chairman advised that in response to Ms Emily LAU's request for discussing ECI(2012-13)6, which provided an update on the overall directorate establishment position and information on possible proposals for creation and deletion of directorate posts in the 2012-2013 legislative session, the Administration had provided supplementary information via ECI(2012-13)8 on possible submissions on the directorate staffing proposals

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planned for submission to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) and the Finance Committee (FC) in the legislative session. The Chairman also drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2012-13)9, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002. He pointed out that under the existing arrangement, the Administration would, prior to submitting a proposal for consideration by ESC, consult the relevant Panel(s).

Creation of directorate posts

2. Ms Emily LAU noted from ECI(2012-13)8 that the Administration had plan to create or extend a total of 25 directorate posts in the 2012-2013 legislative session. Given uncertainties in the global and local economy in the year ahead, she questioned the appropriateness for the Administration to create such a large number of directorate posts, including the need for the two proposed directorate posts (creation of one permanent D3 post and extension of one supernumerary D2 post) in the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau which had similar duties for strengthening the relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Ms LAU enquired whether the "one-to-one arrangement", i.e. the creation of one directorate post to be offset by the deletion of one directorate post, was still followed by the Administration. She further remarked that the Administration should consider increasing the establishment of judges and judicial officers in order to expedite processing of judicial cases.

3. Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (1) (DS(CS)) advised that while the Administration had plan to create 12 permanent directorate posts and eight supernumerary directorate posts, as well as two permanent directorate posts for judges and judicial officers in the 2012-2013 legislative session, eight existing supernumerary directorate posts were expected to lapse the details of which were set out in Enclosure 2 to ECI(2012-13)6. Thus it was forecasted there would be a net creation of 14 directorate posts in the 2012-2013 session. Regarding the "one-to-one arrangement", he understood that the Legislative Council (LegCo) had discussed the issue before and the Administration had provided a paper setting out its position. In gist, the Administration would adopt a prudent approach in scrutinizing each and every proposal on creation/extension of directorate post and would only put forward a proposal when operational needs were fully justified. Before putting forward a proposal to create/retain a directorate post, the concerned bureaux/departments had to confirm that the additional work could not be absorbed through internal re-deployment or streamlining of workflow. DS(CS) pointed out that the Administration had put in place stringent procedures for vetting staffing proposals, including assessment by the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Civil Service Bureau and the

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bureaux/departments concerned. The proposals would then be required to go through the "three-tier vetting" by LegCo, namely consultation with the relevant Panel(s), consideration by ESC and approval by FC. He added that at the commencement of each legislative session, the Administration would provide to ESC an update on the overall directorate establishment position and advance information on possible proposals for creation and deletion of directorate posts in that session. The Administration would also provide an information paper setting out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 at each ESC meeting, i.e. ECI(2012-13)9, to facilitate members in understanding the impact of the proposals considered by ESC at that meeting on the overall directorate establishment position.

4. Referring to ECI(2012-13)9, Mr Kenneth LEUNG noted that the paper only provided information on changes in the number of directorate posts since 2002 without information on the financial implications concerned. He considered that information on the financial implications of directorate posts created or deleted should be provided for members' reference to enable them to have a better grasp on the impacts of the changes.

5. Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)¹ responded that the financial implications of each staffing proposal were set out in the relevant ESC paper(s). Regarding the financial implications of changes to the directorate establishment, the Administration needed time to consider how best to compile the relevant information for members' reference.

6. Mr WONG Kwok-kin agreed that LegCo should discuss issues relating to the size of civil service establishment as this involved utilization of public resources. He considered that members should consider the subject matter from a macro perspective, such as whether the Administration would accord higher priority to creating posts at the directorate level thereby affecting interests of lower rank and frontline staff. He remarked that it was only natural that the Administration had to consider strengthening manpower in the civil service in coping with increasing demand for public services and meeting rising public expectations. On the "one-to-one arrangement", Mr WONG opined that it should not be adopted across the board and agreed that proposals to create directorate posts should be considered on a case-by-case basis. DS(CS) reiterated that the Administration had been very prudent in controlling the size of directorate establishment and pointed out that as compared with the position in 2002, there had been a net deletion of five permanent and 14 supernumerary directorate posts.

Staffing proposals in the Central Policy Unit

7. Dr KWOK Ka-ki, Ms Emily LAU, and Mr Kenneth LEUNG considered that notwithstanding the Administration had consulted the Panel on Public Service (PS Panel) on the two staffing proposals in the Central Policy Unit (CPU), the Panel on Constitutional Affairs (CA Panel) should also be consulted as the proposals entailed possible changes in the role, functions and structure of CPU. Mrs Regina IP said that the two staffing proposals from CPU had aroused much public concern and considered that the Administration should not consult PS Panel but other relevant Panel(s) on the two proposals. Dr KWOK expressed strong reservation on the proposal of creating one non-civil service position at D3 equivalent in CPU. He said that the post lacked sufficient justification and its scope of work and responsibilities were unclear. He added that the Administration should only put forward the staffing proposal when there was consensus from the community. Ms LAU said that the Democratic Party was opposed to the two staffing proposals in CPU. She pointed out that despite the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) had assured LegCo Members during the discussion on the proposal to create two directorate posts at the new Policy and Project Co-ordination Unit (PPCU) at the special meeting of the House Committee held on 23 November 2012 that there would be no change in the role and functions of CPU, the public remained concerned and Members were still confused by diverse messages on the matter. As Members have expressed grave concern on the two proposals, Mr LEUNG considered that the Administration should first address Members' concerns at meetings of PS Panel and CA Panel and obtain their support before submitting the proposals for consideration by ESC.

8. DS(CS) responded that at the PS Panel meeting on 19 November 2012, CPU briefed Panel members on its staffing proposal concerning the creation of a permanent non-civil service position at D3-equivalent in CPU. He pointed out that CPU would need to consolidate the views expressed by Panel members and make responses as appropriate in the relevant paper to be submitted to ESC for consideration. DS(CS) undertook to relay members' views expressed at this meeting to both CPU and the relevant bureaux.

Forecast staffing proposals from the Housing Department and Labour Department

9. Mrs Regina IP referred to the proposed creation of four permanent directorate posts (D1) in the Housing Department (HD) to implement the new Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) and enquired whether the four posts were previously deleted with the cessation of HOS flats in 2003.

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10. DS(CS) advised that in a paper submitted to ESC earlier this year, HD had informed members that a number of directorate posts had been deleted with the cessation of HOS flats. The current staffing proposal was related to the implementation of the new HOS. He undertook to relay member's request to HD to provide the relevant information in the paper for consultation with the Panel on Housing on the proposal and the subsequent paper to be submitted to ESC.

11. Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Ms Emily LAU expressed support for the proposed creation of a supernumerary directorate post of Chief Labour Officer (D1) in the Labour Department (LD) to oversee work relating to formulation of the Standard Working Hours (SWH) policy. Mr KWOK considered that the post should be made permanent as work on SWH policy would take a long time to complete and involve lots of complicated tasks.

12. DS(CS) undertook to relay Mr KWOK Wai-keung's views to LD. He advised that the proposed three-year duration for the post was to tie in with the initial research and follow up work of the Special Committee on Standard Working Hours. LD would examine the need of the post upon expiry of the duration and submit relevant staffing proposal if necessary.

13. Ms Emily LAU considered that relevant post(s) should be created to handle work relating to introduction of an universal retirement protection system (URPS) and enquired whether the Administration had plans to create such post(s) in the 2012-2013 legislative session.

14. DS(CS) responded that the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) would consult the Panel on Manpower on the staffing proposal in LD for work relating to formulation of SWH policy on 18 December 2012 and members were welcome to express their views on related issues including URPS at that meeting. He also undertook to relay Ms Emily LAU's view to LWB. Ms Emily LAU remarked that issues relating to URPS should not be tackled by LWB only and that creation of dedicated post(s) for taking forward the work would demonstrate the Administration's determination to tackle matter relating to universal retirement protection.

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EC(2012-13)11 Proposed retention of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau of Government Secretariat for two years from 17 February 2013 to 16 February 2015 to continue with the work on combating drug abuse problem

15. The Chairman advised that the Administration's proposal was to retain one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau of Government Secretariat, i.e. the Principal Assistant Secretary (Narcotics) 2 (PAS(N)2), for two years from 17 February 2013 to 16 February 2015 to continue with the work on combating drug abuse problem, in particular the work relating to treatment and rehabilitation (T&R) services, as well as drug testing policies and programmes.

16. The Chairman advised that the Panel on Security had been consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 6 November 2012. Some Panel members considered that the Administration should enhance work on early identification of hidden drug abusers and assess the effectiveness of Healthy School Programme with a drug testing component (HSP(DT)) and other anti-drug initiatives which were under the portfolio of PAS(N)2. Panel members in general supported the Administration submitting the staffing proposal for consideration by ESC.

Effectiveness of Healthy School Programme with a drug testing component

17. Referring to paragraph 29 of EC(2012-13)11, Ms Emily LAU enquired about the Administration's assessment on the effectiveness of HSP(DT) and sought information on schools' participation in the programme, including the percentage of schools participating in and declining to join the programme and the reasons given by schools for not participating in the programme.

18. Commissioner for Narcotics (C for N) advised that the number of schools participating in HSP(DT) had increased from 43 in the 2011/12 school year to 53 in the 2012/13 school year. During discussions with schools, some of them indicated that they were not yet ready to join the programme because of heavy commitments in various new reform initiatives. Some expressed concern about possible labeling effect on the schools. The Administration would continue to encourage schools to join HSP(DT) by sharing the successful experiences of the participating schools. Regarding the effectiveness of HSP(DT), C for N said that taking into account the positive results of the Trial Scheme of School Drug Testing in Tai Po conducted in the

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2009/10 and 2010/11 school years (the Trial Scheme), the Administration decided to launch HSP(DT) to step up efforts in fostering anti-drug culture in schools. Evaluation of the operational arrangements of HSP(DT) in the 2011/12 school year was underway. The Administration had collected feedback from participating schools and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and was in the process of analyzing the returns, which would offer ideas on how to smoothen and improve the implementation in future. The findings would be submitted to the Action Committee Against Narcotics for consideration in due course. C for N added that according to an evaluation research commissioned by the Narcotics Division, the Trial Scheme had proven to be effective in combating the drug abuse problem and helping to build an anti-drug culture at schools.

19. Ms Emily LAU considered that the Administration should understand the reasons for schools not joining HSP(DT) and address their concerns. She requested the Administration to provide information on the assessment on the effectiveness of HSP(DT) in the 2011/12 school year before the staffing proposal was submitted for FC's consideration.

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20. C for N reiterated that the Administration would continue to liaise with schools to address their concerns about joining HSP(DT), and identify areas where operational aspects could be improved, taking into account feedback from schools and NGOs. She said that the Administration had provided the results of the evaluation study on the Trial Scheme to the Panel on Security in February 2012. As the Administration was still in the process of analyzing the reports from schools and NGOs on the implementation of HSP(DT) in the 2011/12 school year, it might not be able to provide the requested information in full before submitting the staffing proposal to FC. The Administration would also consider conducting an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of HSP(DT) after its implementation for a couple years more, and would inform the Panel on Security as appropriate. Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to provide information on the assessment on the effectiveness of the Trial Scheme and HSP(DT) to members. The Chairman invited the Administration to provide the requested information after the meeting.

The need for a permanent directorate post to tackle drug abuse problem

21. Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan pointed out that combating drug abuse was an on-going task and enquired the reasons for not making the supernumerary D2 post permanent. Considering that the major duties of PAS(N)2 including T&R services and HSP(DT) were on-going tasks, Mr KWOK Wai-keung concurred that the post should be made permanent. He noted from paragraph 32 of EC(2012-13)11 that the Administration had reviewed the current level of

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work of another D2 post in the Narcotics Division, i.e. PAS(N)1, and found that it would not absorb the proposed duties of PAS(N)2. He remarked that making PAS(N)2 post permanent would help demonstrate the Administration's determination in combating the drug abuse problem.

22. Under Secretary for Security explained that the Administration had to be prudent in resource allocation. In working the proposal to retain the supernumerary PAS(N)2 post for two years, the Administration had reviewed the existing and anticipated workload of both PAS(N)1 and PAS(N)2 in the next two years. Currently, PAS(N)1 was heavily involved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) regarding the establishment, by statute, of a system for detecting the physical cross-boundary transportation of currency and bearer negotiable instruments and the anti-money laundering regulation of designated non-financial businesses and professions in order to better align Hong Kong's regime with the relevant requirements. These two tasks were time-critical since the next round of mutual election on Hong Kong by FATF was expected to take place in 2015. The duties of PAS(N)2, on the other hand, covered three major aspects, namely enhancement in T&R services, launching a public consultation on the Community-based Drug Testing (CDT) Scheme, and promoting HSP(DT). As the Administration expected that the future direction of whether to implement CDT, and if so, how, would become clearer after the consultation exercise, it would be more prudent and appropriate to assess the way forward of the supernumerary D2 post taking into account the workload of both PAS(N)1 and PAS(N)2 towards the expiry of the proposed two-year period. C for N supplemented that one of the major tasks relating to T&R services was to assist the existing drug treatment and rehabilitation centres to meet the licensing requirements under the Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Ordinance (Cap. 566). The target was to identify a viable solution to address the varying land issues and/or inherent technical difficulties of each treatment and rehabilitation centre during the two years. There might be room then for evaluating whether duties for execution of the solutions could be absorbed by PAS(N)1. It would thus be more appropriate to assess the future need of PAS(N)2 post toward the expiry of the proposed two-year period. The Administration would continue to monitor the level of work of the two D2 posts in the Narcotics Division. C for N also remarked that, over the last few years, there had been an increase in resources for combating the youth drug abuse problem on various fronts, including strengthening preventive anti-drug work at schools, enhancing parental awareness of the drug problem and increasing resources for frontline social work service.

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Efforts in combating drug abuse problem

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23. In response to Ms Starry LEE's enquiry about the work on controlling emerging drugs, C for N advised that PAS(N)1 worked with law enforcement agencies and the Department of Health under an established cross-bureaux mechanism to monitor emerging drugs and formulate the necessary response. The Administration adopted a zero-tolerance approach towards emerging drugs and would add them to the relevant Schedules to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134) through introducing legislative amendments. C for N undertook to provide a list of drugs which were added to the Schedules to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance in the past two years after the meeting. The Chairman remarked that consideration might be given to arranging visits to anti-drug exhibitions for members of the Panel on Security to enhance their understanding on the Administration's work on combating drug abuse problem.

24. Ms Starry LEE enquired whether certain districts had more serious drug abuse problem and whether there was a trend in decrease in age of young drug abusers. C for N advised that the youth drug abuse problem was relatively more serious in certain districts such as Yuen Long and the North District, and the Administration had stepped up efforts in collaborating with the local communities and relevant parties such as District Fight Crime Committees to tackle the problem having regard to district characteristics. Regarding the age of young drug abusers, C for N advised that both the total number of reported drug abusers and the number of newly reported drug abusers registered a decrease of around 20% from 2009 to 2011 while the number of reported drug abusers aged under 21 registered a significant decrease of around 40%.

25. In response to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry about assistance for anti-drug services provided by Christian Zheng Sheng College (CZSC), C for N advised that CZSC currently operated treatment and rehabilitation services for young drug abusers at a number of locations, including the centre at Ha Keng of Lantau Island which was also licensed by the Education Bureau to provide education programmes under the New Academic Structure. During a visit of LegCo Members to the Ha Keng facilities in April 2011, it was agreed that the Administration would assist CZSC in undertaking in-situ improvements to the facilities as an interim relief measure, and the Narcotics Division was currently coordinating efforts within the Administration to give help to CZSC. As regards the ultimate goal of helping CZSC identify a suitable site or premise for resolving the need for reprovisioning, the matter would be followed up by the Panel on Education.

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26. The item was voted on. Members agreed that the Subcommittee should recommend the item to FC for approval.

EC(2012-13)12 Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) as Head and Deputy Head of the Policy and Project Co-ordination Unit respectively to be set up under the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2017

27. The Chairman advised that the Administration's proposal was to create two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) as Head and Deputy Head of PPCU respectively to be set up under the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (CSO) from 1 April 2013 to 30 June 2017.

28. The Chairman advised that the House Committee was consulted on the proposal at its meeting on 23 November 2012. Members supported the establishment of PPCU to assist CS in formulating and implementing cross-bureaux and cross-departmental policies, particularly on poverty alleviation and population policy of which members of the public had expressed grave concerns. Members made enquiries on issues, including the scope and relevant research work of projects to be handled by PPCU, the scope of work of the Commission on Poverty (CoP) relating to retirement protection, and the composition and way forward of the Steering Committee on Population Policy (SCPP), etc. Members had no objection to the Administration submitting the staffing proposal for ESC's consideration.

Long-term population policy

29. Mrs Regina IP remarked that although the Government of past terms had undertaken work to develop a population policy, most of the work was piecemeal in nature and lacked long-term vision. For instance, the levy for employment of foreign domestic helpers (the levy for FDHs) and work of the dedicated team on population policy set up in 2011 mentioned in paragraph 22 of EC(2012-13)12 were short-term measures. In this connection, Mrs IP enquired about the Administration's plan in handling the levy for FDHs, of which the waiver would end on 31 July 2013. On the other hand, Mrs IP urged the Administration to make reference to the experience of Singapore, which had set clear goals in its population policy, including the optimum size of its population and the composition, and undertaken relevant urban planning studies and mapped out appropriate measures to achieve the goals. She

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enquired whether SCPP would focus on formulating a long-term population policy and working out appropriate measures in meeting Hong Kong's challenges ahead.

30. On the levy for FDHs, Director of Administration (D of A) said that it involved subsidiary legislation. She understood that LWB was working on the subject and would consult the relevant Panel at the opportune time. As regards population policy, D of A pointed out that the former SCPP set up by the Third Term Government had undertaken preliminary work in formulating a long-term population policy and put forward in May 2012 ten recommendations covering a wide range of complicated and controversial issues. The Administration was mindful of the need to formulate a long-term population policy to prepare Hong Kong in facing new challenges ahead. As such, the Administration had revamped and expanded the membership of SCPP to include academics, professionals and experts from various relevant sectors as non-official members so as to canvass views of different sectors early with a view to building a common understanding on the challenges besetting Hong Kong's population. SCPP would be involved in developing a long-term population policy for Hong Kong to enhance the structure of the population for promoting steady social and economic development in the long term, and would put forward goals, policies and measures for the short, medium and long term. The first meeting of SCPP was scheduled for mid January 2013 when the Steering Committee would determine details of its work plans. The priorities of SCPP's work might include examining the impact of the ageing population on public services, issues relating to social integration of new arrivals via the One-Way Permit Scheme, issues concerning ethnic minorities and other migrants, and measures to attract overseas and Mainland talents to Hong Kong.

31. Noting that the Central Policy Unit of Macau had published a report on population policy mapping out measures to tackle various population issues, Ms Starry LEE stressed the need for the Hong Kong Government to examine the population policy adopting a holistic approach. Ms LEE opined that besides studying the impact of the ageing population on public services, SCPP should examine how Hong Kong should prepare for the ageing population problem such as implementation of flexible retirement age and provision of retirement protection for the population at large. She enquired whether the Administration would examine issues arising from inconsistencies in the provision of various existing welfare measures for the elders to map out a comprehensive policy for the elderly.

32. D of A said that SCPP might look into issues such as the provision of home-care, hostels and medical services for the elderly. SCPP would work out its priorities and detailed work plans through meetings in future. Issues

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related to retirement age were covered in the Progress Report published by SCPP in May 2012. The Administration understood that these issues were controversial and would relay Ms Starry LEE's views to SCPP. D of A added that the Efficiency Unit under CSO was undertaking a study of how all the different benefit schemes, including those offered to the elderly, were operated with a view to identifying and introducing arrangements to improve administrative efficiency.

33. Mr Kenneth LEUNG conveyed the Professional Commons' support for the establishment of PPCU. He expressed concern that the workload of PPCU might be low. He pointed out that the ten recommendations put forward by the former SCPP in May 2012 lacked long-term vision and considered that the revamped SCPP should examine issues, including how to strike a balance between increase in productivity of the population and quality of life of the workforce, whether Hong Kong should enhance its population structure through encouraging local child-bearing or admission of talented people, and productivity of the local population over a longer time-span, say beyond 30 years.

34. D of A said that formulation of a long-term population policy had been included in the terms of reference of SCPP and the Steering Committee would examine various related issues in a comprehensive manner, including identifying the main social and economic challenges to Hong Kong and policy issues which required further study having regard to the changes to the local population profile in the next 30 years. She reiterated that SCPP would formulate short, medium and long-term measures in addressing various issues relating to ageing population taking into account the need to ensure sustainable economic and social development of Hong Kong and the structure and quality of Hong Kong's population.

The structure and work of the Policy and Project Co-ordination Unit

35. Mr TANG Ka-piu remarked that currently most of the new jobs created in Hong Kong were white-collar jobs or jobs relating to the financial sector. He had also received complaints about some large companies tapping in the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals by establishing separate departments to recruit university graduates from the Mainland direct. He expressed concern that the interest of local university graduates had been adversely affected as a result. Mr TANG considered that these issues were related to population policy and should be examined by PPCU. Pointing out that PPCU would have a heavy workload attributed by the expanded work portfolio of the new CoP and the work of SCPP, Mr TANG enquired why the Administration had proposed a leaner structure for PPCU with fewer directorate staff and pitched at lower ranks than those of the

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secretariats for the former CoP and SCPP.

36. On the establishment structure of PPCU, D of A advised that the structure of PPCU was a consolidated one compared with the former CoP and SCPP secretariats. She explained that it was suffice to provide a relatively lean structure for PPCU. It was because while PPCU would enhance policy co-ordination of various bureaux and departments in pursuing the population policy and work to alleviate poverty, it would not conduct research work on its own and would rely on inputs provided by CPU, Government Economist and the Census and Statistics Department. On work relating to land development and other special projects that would contribute to achievement of Government's policy objectives, PPCU would assume a project co-ordination role in providing first-stop and one-stop consultation services to non-government sector whereas the relevant policy bureaux and departments would continue to take charge of the detailed work in the various process.

37. Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan supported the establishment of PPCU. Pointing out that tackling poverty and work on the population policy were long-term tasks, he enquired the reasons for not establishing a permanent PPUC. He was concern that the work of PPCU might end prematurely given that it was proposed to be created till 30 June 2017 only.

38. D of A stressed that the need for the Administration to adopt a prudent approach in the creation of new offices and directorate posts to ensure the most cost-effective use of public resources. She assured members that the Administration would monitor the work of PPCU and review its structure before the expiry of the four-year period. If necessary, the Administration would submit staffing proposal(s) to extend the duration of the two posts. The work of PPCU would not be terminated abruptly.

39. Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan said that while he agreed that the Administration should be prudent in utilization of public resources, he was concerned that continuity of PPCU's work might be affected by change in the term of the Government. The Chairman concurred that it was important to ensure continuity of PPCU's work and invited the Administration to take note of members' views.

40. Ms Emily LAU expressed support for the establishment of PPCU. She considered that PPCU should enhance the government-wide co-ordination in formulating the policy on URPS and improving barrier free access and facilities for persons with disabilities. D of A confirmed that PPCU would co-ordinate the formulation of policy on URPS and pointed out that the Chairman of CoP would be CS and one of CoP's six Task Forces would look into issues relating to social security and retirement protection. She said that

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the work to promote barrier free and a universally accessible environment involved cross-bureaux and cross-department efforts. The territory-wide lift installation programme quoted in paragraph 4 of EC(2012-13)12 was an example demonstrating the Administration's determination to set up a joined-Government, and the value of cross-bureaux and high-level co-ordination in taking forward public interest projects. D of A said that besides work on policies relating to population and poverty alleviation, PPCU would also assume a co-ordination role in projects of great public interest.

41. Noting from paragraph 14 of EC(2012-13)12 that work of the former Development Opportunities Office (DOO) established under the Development Bureau had received positive comments from the Land and Development Advisory Committee and proponents pursuing non-government land development projects, Ms Emily LAU enquired why the Administration had decided to discontinue DOO's service.

42. D of A clarified that the duty of DOO was not to seek new land but to offer facilitation services to non-government sector for the smooth implementation of land development and other special projects that required cross-bureaux efforts that would contribute to the achievement of Government's policy objectives. Successful projects assisted by DOO included revitalization of industrial buildings and relocation of the Maritime Museum to Central Ferry Pier 8. She added that the establishment of the former DOO consisted of nine time-limited posts which had lapsed. Given resource consideration and PPCU's focus on policy work, PPCU would not replicate a full-fledged DOO by re-establishing the posts of the former DOO.

43. The item was voted on. Members agreed that the Subcommittee should recommend the item to FC for approval.

44. The Chairman enquired whether it was necessary for the two staffing proposals considered at this meeting to be voted on separately at the FC meeting to be held on 11 January 2013. No members requested for the arrangement. Ms Emily LAU remarked that she might consider making the request to FC on the item of retaining the supernumerary D2 post in the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau after perusing the information she had requested the Administration to provide on that item.

45. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:11 am.