

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1036/13-14

(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 23 June 2014, at 16:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon Claudia MO
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen
- Members absent** : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon TANG Ka-piu
- Public Officers attending** : **Agenda item IV**
Mr Paul TANG, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Ms May CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Agenda item V

Mr Paul TANG, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Eddie MAK, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Council Secretary (4)1

Staff in attendance : Ms Shirley CHAN
Senior Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Angela CHU
Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Prima LAI
Legislative Assistant (4)1

Action

The Deputy Chairman informed members that he would chair the meeting as Mrs Regina IP, Panel Chairman, could not attend the meeting due to other engagement.

I. Confirmation of minutes

LC Paper No. CB(4)829/13-14 -- Minutes of meeting
held on 25 April 2014

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2014 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

- LC Paper No. CB(4)775/13-14(01) -- Administration's response to the submission from the Hong Kong Fire Services Department Ambulancemen's Union on meal break arrangement for Ambulanceman Grade in the Fire Services Department
- LC Paper No. CB(4)805/13-14(01) -- Submission on posting arrangement for Clerical Grades from a staff member of Clerical Grades (Chinese version only) (Restricted to members only)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)830/13-14(01) -- Submission on meal break arrangement for Ambulanceman Grade in the Fire Services Department from a member of public (Chinese version only) (Restricted to members only)

3. Members noted that the above papers had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

- LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(02) -- List of follow-up actions

4. The Deputy Chairman said that pursuant to the decision made at the Panel meeting on 19 May 2014, the next regular meeting scheduled for 21 July 2014 would start early at 9:30 am to receive views from civil service associations/unions and members of the public on the item of "Consultation on extension of the service of civil servants".

5. The Deputy Chairman informed members that the Administration had proposed to discuss the item of "Integrity enhancement initiatives for civil servants" at the next regular meeting. Members noted and raised no objection to the proposed discussion item.

IV. 2014-2015 Civil Service Pay Adjustment

File Ref.: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/73 -- Legislative Council Brief on "2014-15 civil service Pay Adjustment" issued by the Civil Service Bureau on 10 June 2014

File Ref.: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/73 -- Legislative Council Brief on "2014-15 civil service Pay Adjustment" issued by the Civil Service Bureau on 17 June 2014

LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(03) -- Paper on 2014-2015 Civil Service Pay Adjustment prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)

6. The Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the decision of the Chief Executive-in-Council ("CE-in-Council") on 17 June 2014 that, with retrospective effect from 1 April 2014, civil service pay for 2014-2015 should be adjusted in accordance with the

following pay offers made to the staff sides of the four central consultative councils -

- (a) a pay increase of 5.96% (i.e. the net pay trend indicator ("PTI") for the upper salary band) for civil servants in the upper salary band and the directorate;
- (b) a pay increase of 4.71% (i.e. the net PTI for the middle salary band) for civil servants in the middle salary band; and
- (c) a pay increase of 4.71% (i.e. the net PTI for the middle salary band) for civil servants in the lower salary band by invoking the "bring-up" arrangement.

Civil service pay adjustment rates

7. Mr IP Kin-yuen said that there was disparity between the CE-in-Council's pay offers and pay claims of staff sides, and some staff side representatives were disappointed with the pay offers for the middle and lower salary bands.

8. Noting that the civil service pay adjustment rates for 2014-2015 were the same as their respective net PTIs, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan commented that the Administration had not paid heed to the pay claims and views of staff sides in deciding the civil service pay adjustment rates, and this was a typical example of the Government's practice of "fattening the top and slimming the bottom". He expressed dissatisfaction that the pay adjustment rate of 4.71% for the civil servants in the middle and lower salary bands could not catch up with the 5.1% change in headline Consumer Price Index ("CPI") (A) for the 12-month period ended March 2014.

9. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that although this year's pay adjustment rates were close to the inflation rate, it was undesirable that the pay increase of the civil servants of the middle and lower bands was lower than the change in headline CPI (A) for the 12-month period ended March 2014. He urged the Administration to reconsider the pay claims of staff sides.

10. SCS advised that the civil service pay adjustment did not aim at tracking inflation. Under the current mechanism, civil service pay adjustment could be higher or lower than the inflation rate. In considering the pay offers, all relevant CPI figures for the 12-month

period ended March 2014, including the headline Composite CPI inflation (4.4%) which reflected the impact of consumer price change on 90% of households and the headline CPI(A) inflation (5.1%) which reflected the impact of consumer price change on 50% of households, had been submitted to the Executive Council for consideration. This year, the net PTIs for the middle and lower salary bands were 4.71% and 3.8% respectively. In deciding the civil service pay adjustment, the CE-in-Council had aligned the pay offer for the lower salary band with that for the middle salary band by invoking the “bring-up” arrangement.

Civil service morale

11. Noting that the request from some staff side representatives for aligning the pay offers for the middle and lower salary bands with that for the upper salary band was not acceded to, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed concern over the civil service morale. He was worried that the civil service morale had already been on the decline owing to the increasing work pressure and replacement of pension benefits by the civil service Provident Fund Scheme for civil servants appointed on or after 1 June 2000. He suggested that the Administration should conduct a survey to assess the state of civil service morale.

12. SCS explained that the Administration attached great importance to staff morale and would continue to work on various fronts to sustain staff morale, including the provision of additional manpower to alleviate the increasing work pressure among civil servants. He believed that civil service jobs were still attractive in retaining and motivating staff, and in attracting persons of suitable calibre to join the civil service. In general, there was no significant recruitment or retention problem after the implementation of the new package of fringe and retirement benefits in 2000. As far as he knew, pension or post-retirement medical protection for employees was not prevalent in the private sector. At present, the Administration had no plan to conduct a survey on staff morale.

Pay Trend Survey

13. Noting that the results of the 2014 Pay Trend Survey ("PTS") were more favourable than last year's results, Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired about the composition of the companies included in these two years' PTS.

14. SCS said that both the 2013 and 2014 PTSs were conducted in accordance with the established mechanism and methodology agreed by the PTS Committee which comprised representatives of the staff sides, the Administration as well as two independent advisory bodies on civil

service salaries and conditions of service. Every year before the conduct of the PTS, the PTS Committee convened meetings to review the survey methodology and also the list of companies in the survey field. Noting that many staff associations had made suggestions for improving the PTS methodology in the course and after the conclusion of the 2013-2014 civil service pay adjustment exercise, the PTS Committee had reviewed the survey methodology to be adopted for 2014 PTS. During the review, the PTS Committee had accepted a few staff suggestions for changes to the PTS methodology.

15. The Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service supplemented that to ensure continuity and year-on-year comparability, a majority of the companies participated in the 2013 PTS had also participated in the 2014 PTS. The distribution of companies by major economic sectors in the survey field reflected quite closely the overall distribution of Hong Kong's economically active population.

16. Mr IP Kin-yuen expressed concern about the withdrawal of some staff side representatives from the PTS Committee after the conclusion of the 2013-2014 civil service pay adjustment. He asked about the measures taken by the Administration to encourage these representatives to participate in the PTS Committee again.

17. SCS advised that persistent efforts had been made in persuading these staff side representatives to return to the PTS Committee. The Secretariat of the PTS Committee had kept them informed of the discussion of the 2014 PTS and welcomed any views from them. Although some staff side representatives did not participate in the 2014 PTS, the other PTS Committee members had offered comments on the survey methodology and overseen the conduct of the survey.

18. Mr KWOK Wai-keung considered that the reason for the refusal of the staff side representatives to return and support the PTS Committee was that the Administration had failed to convince them that due consideration had been given to all the six factors under the civil service pay adjustment mechanism in making the final decision on the rates of civil service pay adjustment.

19. SCS advised that in arriving at the pay adjustment decision, the CE-in-Council had considered carefully the six relevant factors (i.e. the net PTIs, the state of the economy, changes in the cost of living, the Government's fiscal position, pay claims of the staff sides and civil service morale) as well as the staff sides' responses to the pay offers. The decision was in line with the civil service pay policy objective of

maintaining broad comparability between civil service and private sector pay. In fact, the CE-in-Council had, after considering all relevant factors, decided to adjust the civil service pay in accordance with the respective net PTIs on most occasions in the past.

V. Employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service

LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(04) -- Administration's paper on employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service

LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(05) -- Paper on employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)

20. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, SCS briefed members on the employment of persons with disabilities ("PWDs") in the civil service, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)820/13-14(04)).

Ratio of PWDs being employed in the civil service

21. Noting that the number of PWDs being employed in the civil service as at 31 March 2013 was 3 401 (around 2% of the strength of the civil service), Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that the number was too small. He expressed concern that the number of PWDs serving in the civil service had merely increased by about 170 since 2008 (i.e. 3 225 in 2008 Vs 3 401 in 2013), and considered that the Administration should demonstrate greater commitment to promoting employment of PWDs by adopting a benchmark target for employing PWDs in the civil service. He asked whether those 3 401 PWDs were employed as civil servants or under the Non-Civil service Contract Staff Scheme.

22. SCS replied that as revealed by overseas experience, a mandatory employment quota for PWDs no longer represented the most appropriate means to promote the employment of PWDs. The prevailing trend had moved away from employment quota system to anti-discrimination legislation, enhanced support measures and promotion of equal

opportunities for PWDs. The Administration did not consider it appropriate to set any numeric target of PWDs working in the Government. Instead, it had been implementing suitable measures to ensure that applicants with disabilities could compete with able-bodied applicants on an equal footing. As revealed from the findings of the survey conducted by the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), for the civil service recruitment exercises launched and concluded in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, all 2 222 qualified applicants who had declared their disabilities were invited to selection tests/interviews, 118 (or 5.3%) of them were subsequently offered appointment, whereas the corresponding figure for recruitment exercises launched and concluded in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 was 94 (or 3%). The findings showed the steady progress made by the Government in implementing the measures in facilitating the employment of PWDs in the civil service. The number of appointments offered to applicants with disabilities would depend on a number of factors, including the number of qualified applicants with disabilities, as well as their suitability for appointment. That said, the Administration would continue with the efforts in implementing the measures for promoting the employment of PWDs in the civil service.

23. The Deputy Secretary for Civil Service 1 ("DSCS1") confirmed that the "3 401" PWDs serving in the civil service were all civil servants. At the request of Mr KWOK, SCS agreed to provide the number of civil servants with disabilities who left the civil service for various reasons in the past five years after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)975/13-14(01) on 29 July 2014)

24. On Mr KWOK's enquiry on the promotion prospects of civil servants with disabilities and his request for relevant figures, SCS advised that in a promotion exercise, all eligible civil servants in a lower rank would be considered according to the same selection criteria. The disability status, if any, of individual officers, would not be a factor to be considered. Hence, the Administration did not collect such data.

25. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that the Administration had only made trifling progress in the employment of PWDs in the civil service over the years. He said that the figures on the number of PWDs in the civil service as provided by the Administration included those civil servants who became disabled after joining the civil service, and thus could not provide an accurate picture of their employment situation. Sharing similar concern, Ms Emily LAU said that many PWDs were disappointed

that the measures taken by the Government could not address the difficulties they faced in seeking employment. She urged the Administration to genuinely listen to the views of PWDs, and to learn from the best practices of the private sector (e.g. the Disneyland) and other overseas jurisdictions on how to effectively promote the employment of PWDs.

26. In reply, SCS said that statistics on PWDs serving in the civil service were compiled on the basis of information available to the management of bureaux/departments ("B/Ds"). There were no mandatory requirements for civil service job applicants and serving officers to declare their disability status, if any. That said, it was noted from the findings of the survey conducted by CSB that there was an increase in the number of appointments offered to applicants with disabilities. In addition, the Administration had joined the "Talent-wise Employment Charter and Inclusive Organisations Recognition Scheme", which was launched by the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") in collaboration with other organisations to demonstrate its commitment in promoting the employment of PWDs. CSB would continue its efforts in raising the awareness of B/Ds in the application of the relevant policy and recruitment guidelines, and to cultivate peer acceptance within the civil service to facilitate integration of PWDs in the workplace. In fact, it was also the trend in many overseas jurisdictions to enhance supportive measures to enable PWDs to have equal access, like other applicants, to job opportunities, so as to promote the employment of PWDs. Owing to the differences between the civil service and the private sector, SCS said that it might not be appropriate to copy some of the practices of private enterprises in the civil service.

27. Ms Emily LAU said that the Administration should make greater efforts in promoting the employment of PWDs in the civil service. She relayed the views of persons with visual impairment that they hoped to work as telephone operators in the civil service.

28. SCS replied that as an initiative to encourage PWDs to apply for government jobs, CSB, in collaboration with the Labour Department, had been actively promoting the policy and relevant facilitating measures adopted by the Administration. DSCS1 supplemented that a booklet setting out information such as the application procedures for government posts, the facilitating measures for applicants with disabilities and the assistance provided for them to attend tests/interviews was being compiled and would be distributed to PWDs through non-government organisations, the Vocational Training Council, etc.

29. DSCS1 also said that sharing sessions for human resource managers in B/Ds had been conducted to refresh their understanding of the policy and guidelines, and to share with them the practical means to facilitate the recruitment and integration of PWDs in the workplace. As regards the accommodation provided to PWDs, special arrangements had been made, where appropriate, to job-match suitable posting for appointees with disabilities having regard to their different nature and degree of disabilities.

30. As regards the job of Telephone Operators, SCS said that staff of the "1823 Hotline" were required to perform a much wider scope of work apart from picking up phone calls from members of public. For instance, they had to undertake customer service duties including the handling of public enquiries and complaints. Applicants for the posts in the "1823 Hotline", able-bodied and disabled alike, would be assessed in accordance with the stipulated requirements.

Effectiveness of the Sunnyway Programme

31. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired about the effectiveness of the Sunnyway Programme organised by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"). DSCS1 replied that the programme offered participants with job attachment opportunities in B/Ds with a view to helping them to acquire work habits and gain employment skills in a real working environment. The experience gained would be beneficial to the participants if they wished to apply for government jobs in future. About 20 B/Ds participated in the programme which offered about 30 job placements each year. In response to Mr LEE's concern that the number of job placements offered by B/Ds each year was too small, DSCS1 advised that CSB would continue to work closely with B/Ds to provide more placement opportunities and liaise with SWD to see if more matching could be made.

Recruitment of persons with intellectual disability in the civil service

32. The Deputy Chairman asked why no persons with intellectual disability were recruited in the civil service over the past 10 years. DSCS1 replied that the facilitating measures put forward by the Administration applied to all PWDs irrespective of their types of disability. It would not be appropriate for the Administration to assign additional preference to applicants with a particular type of disability.

Assistance offered to PWDs serving in the civil service

33. Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired whether the Administration had offered any assistance to PWDs serving in the civil service to enhance their productivity. DSCS1 advised that the Administration had been providing on-the-job assistance and making modification of work areas and facilities where appropriate to facilitate PWDs in performing their duties. Funding was made available for the purchase of technical aids for officers with disabilities. Disbursements from the fund ranged from \$50,000 to over \$100, 000 each year for the past few years.

Provision of adequate rebus service for PWDs to go to work

34. Ms Emily LAU expressed concern over the inadequate supply of rebus service and the high cost of similar service provided by the private sector. She opined that PWDs might be unable to take up employment because of transportation problems. SCS replied that special arrangements would be made to post appointees with disabilities to an office near their place of residence, where possible. As regards the rebus service for commuting PWDs to and from their place of work, SCS said that as far as he was aware, PWDs would be accorded with priority in using rebus service for travelling to and from their place of work on regular basis. He undertook to refer Ms LAU's request to LWB for provision of information regarding the number of rebuses available for use by PWDs and the capacity of the buses after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)975/13-14(01) on 29 July 2014)

Other issue

The post of Commissioner for Rehabilitation

35. Noting that the Commissioner for Rehabilitation ("C for R") would be upgraded from the rank of D2 to D3, Ms Emily LAU enquired about the relevant duties and responsibilities of the post, and how C for R would fulfill the obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities effectively. SCS said that the relevant staffing proposal was endorsed by the Establishment Subcommittee on 30 April 2014 and would be considered by the Finance Committee in due course.

VI. Any other business

36. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 17:55pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
27 August 2014