

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1236/14-15
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 20 April 2015, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

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

Public officers attending : Agenda item III

Mr Paul TANG, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

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

Mr Peter CHAN, JP
Director of General Grades
Civil Service Bureau

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

Miss Winnie CHUI
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service
(Pay & Leave)

Miss Margrit LI
Assistant Director (Leisure Services)1
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Alfred CHOW
Chief Leisure Manager (Grade Management)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Mary SO
Chief Council Secretary (4)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Katrina WU
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Ms Rebecca LEE
Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Vivian YUEN
Legislative Assistant (4)2

Action

I. Paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted that no information paper was issued since the last meeting.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(02) -- List of follow-up actions

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 18 May 2015 at 10:45 am:

- (a) Extension of the service of civil servants; and
- (b) An overview of the civil service establishment, strength, retirement, resignation and age profile.

Members further agreed to invite civil service staff associations/unions as well as members of the public to give views on the issue of "Extension of the service of civil servants" and to extend the May 2015 meeting by an hour to 1:45 pm.

3. Referring to the two letters from the Public-funded Organization Unions Committee of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions ("HKCTU") and the Social Welfare Organizations Employees Union ("SWOEU") expressing their concern about non-governmental organizations on lump sum grant subvention refusing to adjust the back pay of their staff in subvented units in line with the 2014-2015 civil service pay adjustment approved by the Finance Committee on 16 January 2015 (LC Paper Nos. CB(4)647/14-15 (01) and (02)), the Chairman said that Mr KWOK Wai-keung had conveyed to him that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the issue raised in the two letters.

4. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed support for discussing the back pay issue raised by HKCTU and SWOEU. As the Panel on

Welfare Services had also received the same two letters from HKCTU and SWOEU and had agreed to follow up with the Administration on the issue raised in the letters, Mr TANG suggested that the clerk to this Panel should follow up with the clerk to the Panel on Welfare Services on holding a joint meeting to follow up with the Administration on the issue raised in the letters. Mr TANG further suggested that the scope of the discussion should be expanded to cover back pay by the Hospital Authority and subvented educational organizations.

(Post-meeting note: The Panel on Welfare Services discussed the issue of "Salary adjustment arrangements for staff in non-governmental organizations receiving Lump Sum Grant Subvention" at its meeting held on 11 May 2015. Members of the Panel on Public Service were invited to join the discussion of the item.)

III. Use of agency workers

- LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(03) -- Administration's paper on the "Use of agency workers"
- LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(04) -- Updated background brief on the "Use of agency workers" prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat

Briefing by the Administration

5. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") updated members on the use of agency workers by Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(03)).

6. Regarding the recent incident whereby a government contractor failed to pay wages to its employees for providing public library service, SCS said that such wage defaults was in connection with the outsourcing of public library service by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"). SCS pointed out that outsourcing, which was outside the portfolio of the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"), was one of the tools for government departments to deliver public services. It was up to B/Ds to decide whether to deliver their services by means of outsourcing and the details of their respective outsourcing programme. SCS further said that to his understanding, the Panel on Manpower would discuss the issue of government policy relating to the outsourcing of service contracts and protection for staff of public libraries service contractors at its meeting on 21 April 2015. Against this background, the issue should more appropriately be followed up by the Panel on Manpower.

Discussion

7. Mr WONG Kwok-hing pointed out that although the number of agency workers working in B/Ds had been on the decline in recent years, the need for agency workers to fill short-term manpower gap and/or unforeseen short-term service needs of B/Ds would always exist. To prevent incidents similar to the recent case of outsourced public libraries workers being owed wages from their employer from happening again, Mr WONG enquired whether the Administration would re-consider his proposal of setting up a department supplying civil service staff to fill short-term manpower gap and/or unforeseen short-term service needs of B/Ds.

8. SCS responded that it would not be a prudent use of resources nor practical for the Administration to set up a department supplying civil service staff to fill short-term manpower gap and/or unforeseen short-term service needs of B/Ds, as such staff would not have enough work to do at times or they would be unable to meet all work requests from B/Ds which came at the same time. The Administration considered that the existing arrangement of allowing B/Ds to use agency workers already provided B/Ds with the necessary flexibility in meeting their short-term operational needs under different circumstances. SCS further said that there was no cause for concern about employment agencies exploiting their workers assigned to work in the procuring B/Ds, as these employment agencies were required to comply with the relevant labour legislation.

9. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed dissatisfaction about the Government taking the lead to wash its hand off of its responsibilities as an employer by allowing B/Ds to procure the service of employment agencies to supply workers. As the Non-civil Service Contract ("NCSC") Staff Scheme was aimed at providing B/Ds with a flexible means of employment to respond more promptly to their changing operational and service needs, Mr LEE asked about the reason(s) for B/Ds procuring the service of employment agencies to supply workers and not recruiting NCSC staff.

10. SCS responded that one of the reasons why B/Ds procured the service of employment agencies to supply workers was that employment agencies could supply workers to meet their manpower or service needs which were often urgent or unforeseen. Hence, it was not practicable for B/Ds to employ NCSC staff to meet their urgent or unforeseen manpower or service needs, as several months were often required to recruit NCSC staff. SCS further said that although the procuring B/Ds did not have a contractual relationship with the agency workers, agency workers were accorded protection and benefits under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57). B/Ds were also required to specify in the service contracts

with employment agencies that the wages of the agency workers assigned to work in the procuring B/Ds must not be lower than the higher of the following two benchmarks, namely, (i) the prevailing Statutory Minimum Wage ("SMW") plus one paid rest day for every period of seven days or (ii) the relevant average monthly wages for a relevant industry/occupation as published in the Census & Statistics Quarterly Report of Wage and Payroll Statistics for December 2010 (for non-skilled workers) or the average monthly wages for "General Workers for all selected industries" as published in the above mentioned Report (for workers other than non-skilled workers). B/Ds were also required to specify in the service contracts that the wages of the agency workers assigned to work in the procuring B/Ds could not be less than that stated in the bids for the whole duration of the concerned contracts.

11. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that as a general guideline, service contracts should last no more than nine months, albeit the service contracts could be renewed/re-let up to 15 months by the procuring B/Ds. Mr LEE further noted that procuring B/Ds would need to obtain the approval from the CSB if the aggregated period of service under the existing and renewed/re-let contracts was expected to exceed 15 months. In the light of this, Mr LEE enquired about the number of agency workers working in B/Ds for more than nine months but not exceeding 15 months as at 30 September 2014.

12. Director of General Grades ("DGG") responded that as at 30 September 2014, about 60% (or 581) of the 965 agency workers were sourced from service contracts lasting nine months or less. Another 28% (or 272) were sourced from service contracts lasting more than nine months but not exceeding 15 months. The remaining 12% (or 112) were mostly sourced from "term contract" under which agency workers would be supplied only as and when needed by the procuring B/Ds.

13. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that Education Bureau ("EDB"), Water Supplies Department and LCSD were the largest users of agency worker with 94, 80 and 68 workers respectively as at 30 September 2014. Mr LEE requested CSB to cite some examples as to why, say, EDB had to use 94 agency workers as at 30 September 2014.

14. DGG explained that there were special tasks, such as the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test, the Student Enrolment Survey, the Kindergarten Teachers' Survey, the Primary One Allocation exercise and the Secondary One Allocation exercise, which EDB had to carry out before the commencement of the 2014 school year. Furthermore, EDB had many vacancies that needed to be filled and additional short-term manpower was required to support the mounting of these recruitment exercises.

15. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that in order to uphold the principle of "same pay for the same job" advocated by the Government, the Government should employ adequate number of civil servants to cope with sudden upsurge of work and fill short-term manpower gap in B/Ds, instead of allowing B/Ds to procure agency worker service to meet the same ends. Mr LEUNG pointed out that the prevailing SMW merely provided a wage floor to protect employees against excessively low wages, not to mention that the existing labour law failed to provide adequate protection for employees against being exploited by their employers.

16. Mr TANG Ka-piu noted that the numbers of agency workers working in B/Ds had decreased from 2 398 as at December 2009 to 965 as at 30 September 2014. Mr TANG enquired whether the decrease was due to the Government's policy of phasing out the use of agency workers by B/Ds or due to insufficient number of employment agencies because of the high employment rate in Hong Kong.

17. SCS responded that one of the reasons for the decline in the numbers of agency workers working in B/Ds in recent years might be attributed to the fact that B/Ds decided to employ NCSC staff to meet their operational needs which were of a relatively longer term but time limited and/or which required staff to work less than the conditioned hours.

18. Mr TANG Ka-piu noted that the guidelines on the use of agency workers did not include information technology manpower supplied by technical service providers under a term contract administrated by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (commonly known as "T-contract staff") and service bureau staff providing public library services in LCSD. Mr TANG sought information on the numbers of T-contract staff and service bureau staff in the past few years.

19. DGG responded that there were some 2 400 T-contract staff in 2014. Regarding the number of service bureau staff providing public library services in LCSD, DGG said that he did not have the information in hand.

20. Mr TANG Ka-piu pointed out that the number of agency workers working in the Department of Health ("DH"), EDB and LCSD had decreased from 323, 285 and 299 respectively as at 30 September 2009 to 50, 94 and 68 respectively as at 30 September 2014. Mr TANG enquired whether the reason for the decrease in the numbers of agency workers working in these departments was due to outsourcing of public services or employment of NCSC staff.

21. SCS said that the decrease in the numbers of agency workers working in

DH, EDB and LCSD over the past years might be due to reduction in unexpected upsurge in service demands and the implementation of new or improved mode of delivery. DGG supplemented that the fact that B/Ds had made early planning and taken timely action to recruit staff to fill vacancies arising from, say, retirement, had reduced the need for B/Ds to use agency workers to fill such short-term manpower gap.

22. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that B/Ds should be well aware when their civil service staff would retire. Mr LEE questioned why B/Ds did not make more early planning and take more timely action to recruit staff to fill the posts to be vacated by civil servants upon their retirement.

23. Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service ("PSCS") explained that this was because unexpected situation, such as more time was needed to process all applications if an unexpected large number of applications were received and the appointees needed more time to report to work because they had to serve a longer resignation notice to their employers, might happen during the recruitment and appointment process.

24. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that the fact that B/Ds had to resort to using agency workers to meet short-term manpower needs was a testament that the existing civil service establishment should be strengthened to better meet operational needs.

25. PSCS responded that the existing civil service establishment was sufficient to meet the operational needs of B/Ds. One of the reasons for using agency workers, as illustrated by EDB, was to meet short-term service needs requiring short-term manpower to handle the extra workload.

26. Noting the need for B/Ds to deliver 1% savings on their respective annual operating expenditure in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, the Chairman asked whether it would have any impact on the use of agency workers by B/Ds. SCS replied that he was not in a position to answer the question as how individual B/Ds would achieve the savings was entirely up to the respective B/Ds to decide.

Conclusion

27. In closing, the Chairman said that the Panel would continue to closely monitor the use of agency workers by B/Ds.

IV. The manpower situation and the request for a grade structure review of civil service lifeguards

LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(05) -- Administration's paper on "The manpower situation and the request for a grade structure review of civil service lifeguards"

LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(06) -- Updated background brief on "Grade structure reviews" prepared by LegCo Secretariat

Briefing by the Administration

28. SCS and Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services)1 ("AD(LS)1") briefed members on the Government's views on the request for a grade structure review ("GSR") of civil service lifeguards and the manpower situation of civil service lifeguards respectively, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)773/14-15(05)).

Discussion

29. The Chairman referred members to a submission from the Hong Kong & Kowloon Life Guards' Union (Chinese version only) tabled at the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The submission was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4) 826/14-15(01) on 21 April 2015.)

Request for a GSR of civil service lifeguards

30. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed dissatisfaction about the Government's refusal to introduce a separate grade for civil service lifeguards in recognition of the professional nature of their work, as repeatedly requested by civil service lifeguards and the union representatives over the past 10 years, so as to better attract qualified candidates to become and remain as lifeguards to address the lifeguard shortage at swimming pools and beaches managed by LCSD. Mr WONG pointed out that placing civil service lifeguards and senior civil service lifeguards under the Artisan grade and Senior Artisan grade respectively was outdated and inappropriate, as lifeguards were professionals akin to firemen and ambulancemen.

31. SCS responded that as explained in the Administration's paper, GSRs for individual non-directorate civilian grades would only be considered if (a) the

concerned grades had proven and persistent recruitment and retention difficulties which could not be resolved through the regular pay surveys under the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism which had been put in place in 2007 or (b) there were fundamental changes to the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of the grades. As neither of the aforesaid circumstances had occurred in civil service lifeguards, there was no ground for the Government to conduct a GSR of civil service lifeguards. SCS further said that introducing a new grade for certain non-directorate civilian grade was not the only means to help the civil servants concerned cope with the increased workload. Individual B/Ds could adopt various measures such as strengthening their manpower and providing more training to enhance the skills of their staff. To help civil service lifeguards cope with the increased workload, LCSD had strengthened the manpower of lifeguards and put in place appropriate human resource measures and manpower as set out in paragraphs 4 to 8 of the Administration's paper.

32. AD(LS)1 supplemented that LCSD had all along been keeping a close dialogue with civil service lifeguards and the union representatives to understand their concerns and demands. To enhance the overall supply of lifeguards, LCSD had raised the monthly salary of beach seasonal lifeguards by \$700 to \$14,815 for the 2015 swimming season. As of mid-April 2015, all beach seasonal lifeguard vacancies had been filled. Although there were at present some 30 swimming pool seasonal lifeguard vacancies, LCSD envisaged that there should not be significant difficulty in filling these vacancies for the peak season from June to August as many qualified secondary school and tertiary institution students might apply for the NCSC seasonal lifeguard positions during their summer holidays.

33. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that as the Government refused to create a new grade for civil service lifeguards, it should remove the word "Artisan", which was derogatory, in its recruitment of civil service lifeguards.

34. AD(LS)1 responded that only the post title of lifeguards was used for the of civil service lifeguards. AD(LS)1 further said that the fact that civil service lifeguards were placed under the Artisan grade should not be perceived as a derogatory treatment as the duties of other civil service posts belonging to the Artisan grade in LCSD, such as keeping animals and maintaining trees, were equally important and respectable.

35. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that conducting a GSR of civil service lifeguards was necessary, as placing civil service lifeguards under the Artisan grade was wrong in the first place given the professional nature of the work of lifeguards. Mr LEE further said that if the Administration genuinely recognized the professionalism and importance of the work of lifeguards and in order to attract and retain qualified lifeguards, it should place civil service lifeguards under the Professional grades which had better remuneration and advancement, as civil

service lifeguards in the Artisan grade were remunerated at Master Pay Scale ("MPS") points 5 to 8 whereas those in the Senior Artisan grade were remunerated at MPS points 8 to 10 only. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed similar views. Mr TANG further said that to his understanding, persons who wished to become a lifeguard had to obtain more professional certifications than in the past.

36. SCS responded that the fact that a person had to obtain more qualification than in the past in order to be qualified for becoming a lifeguard was not a justifiable reason for conducting a GSR of civil service lifeguards, as additional job qualifications required would not change the job nature, job complexity and level of responsibilities of a lifeguard.

Manpower provision of lifeguards in LCSD

37. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan queried whether increasing the number of civil service lifeguards by 27% from 893 in 2011 to 1 133 in March 2015, as mentioned in paragraph 5 of the Administration's paper, was sufficient to cope with the increased workload for the following reasons. First, the establishment of civil service lifeguards had been reduced by some 30% in 2004 as mentioned by the Hong Kong & Kowloon Life Guards' Union in its submission to the Panel. Second, the population of Hong Kong had grown over the past 10 years. Third, the number of Mainland visitors using Hong Kong swimming pools and beaches had greatly increased. Mr LEE expressed concern that reduction in the lifeguard establishment at public swimming pools had undermined the safety of swimmers. A case in point was that security guards were placed at the top of the water slides at public swimming pools.

38. AD(LS)1 responded that the reduction in the number of the lifeguards in the peak and non-peak seasons by 216 and 154 respectively in 2004 was the result of a review of the manpower requirements for lifeguards at public swimming pools conducted by LCSD in 2003-2004 ("the 2004 review"). Such reduction was achieved mainly through reassignment of non-lifesaving jobs carried out by lifeguards to non-lifeguards, removal of blind spots and visual obstacles at swimming pools through implementation of improvement works, and standardization of the provision and deployment of lifeguard manpower at swimming pools in the urban areas and the New Territories. In other words, all lifeguard positions which were deleted were justified because they were no longer required. AD(LS)1 stressed that the safety of swimmers and players of water sports centres had always been LCSD's prime concern when considering manpower requirements of lifeguard. For instance, lifeguards were posted in close proximity to the lower part of the water slides to facilitate swift lifesaving. The major duty of non-lifeguards at the top of the water slides was to maintain order in using the water slides and such work did not require lifesaving skills.

39. Noting that 21 civil service Artisan (Beach/Swimming Pool) posts would be created in 2015-2016 to enhance the manpower at swimming pools, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether these posts were to replace the employment of NCSC swimming pool seasonal lifeguards.

40. AD(LS)1 responded that apart from increasing the number of civil service lifeguards by another 21 lifeguards in 2015-2016, LCSD planned to employ an additional 20-odd NCSC seasonal lifeguards for the peak and non-peak seasons in 2015-2016.

41. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan remained unconvinced that increasing the number of civil service lifeguards from 893 in 2011 to 1 133 in March 2015 and further increasing the number of civil service lifeguards by 21 in 2015-2016 could help to cope with the increased workload brought about by the increase in the numbers of public swimming pools and gazetted beaches and in the increase of the patronage level of these venues during the past 10 years. According to the lifeguards' unions, there were some 2 400 lifeguards employed by LCSD prior to the 2004 review. However, the number of lifeguards employed by LCSD as at 1 August 2014 at 2 121 was only comparable to the number of lifeguards employed by LCSD prior to the 2004 review. Mr LEE pointed out that having insufficient lifeguards on duty had resulted in temporary closure of some public swimming pools and suspension of lifesaving services at beaches on numerous occasions in the past, which was unacceptable. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung and Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed similar views. Mr TANG further requested LCSD to provide the numbers of civil service lifeguard posts prior to and after the 2004 review.

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42. AD(LS)1 responded that LCSD had from time to time reviewed the lifeguard manpower arrangements for pools, beaches as well as water sports centres, taking into account the actual operational needs. For instance, in response to concerns raised by a lifeguards' union about the manpower situation of swimming pool lifeguards, LCSD formed a working group in August 2004 to review the provision of lifeguards at all public swimming venues. Having regard to the particular configuration and patronage level of certain swimming pools, LCSD increased the number of swimming pool lifeguards in 2005 by 27 and 32 for the peak and non-peak seasons respectively. The manpower at LCSD swimming pools for the peak and non-peak seasons were further increased by 33 and 38 lifeguards respectively during the period from 2007 to 2009. In order to review the lifeguard manpower in a more comprehensive manner, LCSD set up a "Working Group on Lifeguard Manpower Review" in 2013 to serve as an effective platform to collect views from frontline staff and staff unions concerned. After reviewing the lifeguard manpower in the past three years, an additional \$14 million had been allocated annually in the past three years to increase more than 160 lifeguard places at different times for employment of

NCSC seasonal lifeguards for existing swimming pools and beaches. LCSD would keep the manpower provision and deployment of lifeguards at swimming pools, gazetted beaches and water sports centres under review with the grade members and take appropriate follow up action whenever necessary.

43. As the Financial Secretary ("FS") had requested B/Ds to deliver 1% savings on their respective annual operating expenditure in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked whether this would mean that LCSD would cease to increase or even reduce the strength of its lifeguard manpower in the coming two years.

44. SCS responded that he was not in a position to speak for the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services. SCS however pointed out that as explained by FS earlier, the objective of the cost savings exercise was to take timely action to ensure the sustainability of public finance and to re-allocate resources saved for providing new public services. Under the aforesaid exercise, whilst B/Ds should strive to introduce efficiency measures through re-engineering and re-prioritizing, new posts would still be created for delivering new services where justified.

45. AD(LS)1 supplemented that LCSD would ensure that all cost-saving measures would not adversely affect its services to the public.

46. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan requested LCSD to provide the following information -

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- (a) the numbers of civil service lifeguards and the numbers of NCSC seasonal lifeguards employed by LCSD each year between 2004 and 2015; and
- (b) the numbers of public swimming pools, gazetted beaches and water sports centres managed by LCSD each year between 2004 and 2015.

AD(LS)1 agreed to provide the information after the meeting.

47. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that with Hong Kong in a state of full or close to full employment, it had become increasingly difficult for LCSD to employ sufficient number of seasonal lifeguards during the peak and non-peak seasons. To prevent temporary closure of public swimming pools and suspension of lifesaving service at beaches due to insufficient lifeguards on duty, Mr TANG urged LCSD to create more civil service lifeguard posts to obviate the need of employing seasonal lifeguards.

48. AD(LS)1 responded that as the peak swimming season generally fell between June and August, it would not be a prudent use of public money to

engage civil service lifeguards only as they would be left mostly idle during the non-peak season. Hence, it was appropriate for LCSD to employ seasonal lifeguards to augment the lifeguard provision during the peak season or at other times where warranted. Should there be any difficulty in recruiting seasonal lifeguards, appropriate measures would be taken. Raising the monthly salary of beach seasonal lifeguards by \$700 for the 2015 swimming season was a case in point.

49. Responding to the Chairman's enquiry about whether there were any standards on manpower requirements of swimming pools, AD(LS)1 said that as the level of lifeguard provision varied from country to country, there was no universal standard to follow. Individual places (including Hong Kong) set their own level of lifeguard provision taking into account variations in pool attendance, design and facilities. For instance, for a standard 50-metre main pool, LCSD would deploy four lifeguards for lookout and/or patrol posts and one for the first aid post during the opening hours of the swimming pool. More lifeguards would be deployed if a certain pool, say, had more visual obstacles or was particularly deep. AD(LS)1 further said that more lifeguards would also be deployed to a swimming pool if the patronage level of the pool was very high.

Conclusion

50. In closing, the Chairman urged the Administration to provide the information requested by members at the meeting as soon as practicable.

V. Any other business

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:45 pm.