

# **立法會**

## ***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)687/15-16  
(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

### **Panel on Public Service**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Monday, 21 December 2015, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH (Chairman)  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
- Members absent** : Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP
- Public officers attending** : Item III  
  
Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service  
  
Mr Thomas CHOW, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Ms Vivian SUM, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 3

Item IV

Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

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

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

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Joey LO  
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Vivian YUEN  
Legislative Assistant (4)2

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Action

**I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

There was no information paper issued since the last meeting.

**II. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(01) — List of outstanding  
items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(02) — List of follow-up  
actions

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting scheduled for 18 January 2016 at 10:45 am:

- (a) Briefing by the Secretary for the Civil Service on the policy initiatives of Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") featured in the 2016 Policy Address
- (b) Extension of a Supernumerary Principal Economist Post in the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit, Financial Secretary's Office

*(Post-meeting note: At the Administration's request and with the concurrence of the Chairman, the item "Upgrading of the Government Economist Post and Creation of a Deputy Government Economist Post in the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit, Financial Secretary's Office" was subsequently included in the agenda of the next meeting.)*

### **III. An overview of training and development for civil servants**

- LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(03) -- Administration's paper on "An Overview of Training and Development for Civil Servants"
- LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(04) -- Updated background brief on "Training and development for civil servants" prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat

#### **Briefing by the Administration**

- 3. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the provision of training and development for civil servants by CSB, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(03)).

## Discussion

### *National studies and Basic Law training*

4. Mr WONG Kwok-hing agreed that keeping civil servants abreast of social and economic issues in the Mainland so as to equip them with updated knowledge on national social and economic strategies and blueprints that might impact on Hong Kong was vital to upholding Hong Kong's status as a premier business centre and opening up new frontiers to propel long-term economic growth. Mr WONG asked whether, and if so, what action(s) would be taken by CSB to keep civil servants abreast of the National 13th Five-Year Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative.

5. SCS responded that it would be one of the work focuses of the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI") under CSB in the coming year to engage experts from the Mainland and in Hong Kong to give talks on the National 13th Five-Year Plan and the Belt and Road Initiative. Apart from this, CSTDI would also support bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") in organizing their own national studies programmes upon request.

6. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted from paragraph 12 of the Administration's paper that only directorate civil servants and civil servants at Master Pay Scale ("MPS") Point 34 or above were eligible to attend the national studies programmes provided by renowned institutions and universities in the Mainland. Mr WONG asked whether consideration could be given to inviting Mainland experts, academics and officials to come to Hong Kong to run seminars for those civil servants not eligible to attend the Mainland programmes.

7. SCS agreed that civil servants at MPS Point 33 or below and equivalent should also equip themselves with updated knowledge on national social and economic strategies and blueprints that might have an impact on Hong Kong, albeit not necessarily at the same depth and breadth of the programmes attended by higher-ranking civil servants. To this end, CSTDI also collaborated with institutions in Hong Kong and the Mainland on organizing local seminars on national studies for civil servants at various ranks.

8. Ms Claudia MO queried about the need for providing training to civil servants on China's foreign affairs as mentioned in paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Administration's paper.

9. SCS explained that it was important to equip civil servants with knowledge and understanding of China's foreign affairs, so as to enable civil servants to better understand the role of Hong Kong in China's development and to better respond to questions from foreign guests/officials on the subject.

10. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it useless and inappropriate to cover books written by Chinese leaders, such as the book entitled "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China", under the national studies or Basic Law programmes organized by CSTDI, as such books were not relevant to the work of civil servants and national policies were constantly changing. Ms Claudia MO also expressed concerns about including the White Paper on "The Practice of 'One Country, Two Systems' Policy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" issued by the Central Government on 10 June 2014 in some of the national studies and the Basic Law training programmes.

11. SCS responded that the aim of national studies training organized by CSTDI was to enhance civil servants' understanding of the latest developments in the Mainland's political, economic, social, cultural and legal systems. CSTDI had not used any books written by Chinese leaders as training materials for civil servants under its national studies and the Basic Law training programmes.

12. Ms Emily LAU hoped that in keeping civil servants abreast of the latest development in the Mainland, the Administration would remind civil servants not to lose sight of the need to uphold "one country, two systems".

13. SCS explained that the main reasons for equipping civil servants with knowledge and understanding of the latest developments in the Mainland were twofold: (a) to better enable civil servants to attract/convince foreign companies to use Hong Kong as a base/platform to invest in the Mainland; and (b) to forge closer interface on cross-boundary infrastructure projects and promote broader engagement and mutual understanding on coordinated regional initiatives.

#### *Leadership and management development*

14. In view of increasing public confrontation against the Government, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked whether CSTDI would organize courses to equip civil servants with the necessary skills to manage conflicts,

including abusive language, and to cope with stress arising from these conflicts.

15. SCS responded that CSTDI had organized courses for enhancing the quality of customer service, handling public complaints, managing conflicts, coping with stress and maintaining emotional well-being, and efforts in this regard would be stepped up. SCS further said that CSTDI would also organize experience sharing sessions for civil servants to share their valuable experience on these subjects.

16. Responding to Ms Emily LAU's suggestion that CSTDI should also provide training to senior civil servants to enhance their skills in communicating with LegCo Members, SCS said that one of the major functions of CSTDI was to provide training to enhance the skills of civil servants in communicating with different stakeholders such as LegCo Members, District Council members, the public and the media. To enhance the skills of senior civil servants in communicating with LegCo Members, CSTDI had in the past invited Hon Jasper TSANG, President of LegCo, and other LegCo Members, such as Hon Mrs Regina IP and Hon Dennis KWOK, as well as Members of the Executive Council, such as Hon LAM Woon-kwong and Hon Bernard CHAN, to share their valuable insights and experience on the subject.

17. Ms Emily LAU hoped that senior civil servants, in particular bureaux secretaries, could treat attending meetings of LegCo to answer questions from Members as their top priority. Ms LAU further hoped that more LegCo Members could be invited to speak in training programmes for civil servants to enhance their skills in communicating with LegCo Members.

18. To prevent the recurrence of an incident occurred in May last year whereby the Police wrongly arrested a mentally-handicapped person for manslaughter, Ms Emily LAU was of the view that apart from engaging professionals to train frontline police officers on identifying people with mental disabilities, another means was to arrange frontline police officers to meet and interact with people with mental disabilities.

#### *Financial sponsorship*

19. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan noted from paragraph 20 of the Administration's paper that CSTDI had concocted the Training Sponsorship Scheme to promote life-long learning amongst junior staff whose starting salary was at MPS Point 16 or below. With the

sponsorship capped at \$6,000 for up to three courses per applicant, about \$2 million had been earmarked for 600 applications in 2015-2016. Dr CHIANG asked whether consideration could be given to raising the financial sponsorship for the Training Sponsorship Scheme.

20. SCS explained that under the Training Sponsorship Scheme, applicants had to take courses after work. The current sponsorship was capped at \$6,000 for up to three courses per applicant, while CSTDI would closely monitor the utilisation trend and consider injecting additional funding based on actual requirements.

21. Ms Claudia MO asked whether the training courses which applicants sought for training sponsorship under the Training Sponsorship Scheme could be not job-related. Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service ("PSCS") replied that all training courses must be work-related in order to be eligible for sponsorship under the Training Sponsorship Scheme.

#### *Evaluation of CSTDI's training programmes*

22. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked whether CSTDI had conducted any studies to evaluate whether its training programmes met the training and development needs of civil servants.

23. SCS responded that apart from the course enrolment statistics, CSTDI also relied on feedback from course participants, through questionnaires, to assess if its training programmes met the needs of civil servants.

24. Ms Claudia MO was of the view that CSTDI should proactively gather information on the effectiveness of its training programmes, instead of relying on enrolment statistics and questionnaires completed by course participants.

25. SCS responded that CSTDI staff would station throughout the training courses to monitor the interaction between course participants and lecturers/speakers as well as the manner in which the training was delivered.

#### *Other issues*

26. Ms Emily LAU said that provision of training and development for civil servants was particularly important, if the number of vacancies in

the civil service was high. Responding to Ms LAU's enquiry, SCS said that it might not put things in proper perspective by taking a snapshot of the vacancy position. First, the number of vacancies in the civil service changed from day-to-day. Second, some posts were temporarily unfilled for such reasons as the lead time for new recruits to report duty or to complete the induction training as in the case of disciplined services grades. SCS further said that a more meaningful assessment was the wastage situation of the civil service. Currently, the natural wastage rate of the civil service, primarily due to retirement, and the unnatural wastage rate of the civil service, primarily due to resignation, completion of agreement and death, only stood at 2.8% and below 1% respectively.

27. Ms Claudia MO hoped that B/Ds could employ more ethnic minorities and people with disabilities as far as practicable.

### Conclusion

28. In closing, the Chairman said that the Panel would continue to monitor the provision of training and development for civil servants by CSB.

## **IV. Update on extension of the service of civil servants**

LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(05)      -- Administration's paper on "Update on Extension of the Service of Civil Servants "

LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(06)      -- Updated background brief on "Extension of the service of civil servants" prepared by LegCo Secretariat

### Briefing by the Administration

29. SCS highlighted the background of the initiatives for extending the service of civil servants which were announced by the Government in January 2015 as follows:

- (a) according to the latest projection, the proportion of people aged 65 or above in Hong Kong would increase from 15%



in 2014 to 36% in 2064. The labour force participation rate would also decline from 59% in 2014 to 49% in 2064, and the labour force was expected to drop from 3.6 million in 2014 to 3.1 million in 2064. Under the strategy announced by the Steering Committee on Population Policy, the Government would adopt suitable initiatives to unleash the potential of the local labour force, including extension of service for civil servants. In this regard, to provide a long-term solution to address the challenges arising from the ageing population ahead, the retirement age of new recruits joining the civil service on or after 1 June 2015 had been raised to 65 in respect of the civilian grades and 60 in respect of the disciplined services grades; and

- (b) due to the rapid expansion of the civil service in the 1980s, the natural wastage rate of civil servants would rise from 2.8% for the five-year period ending 2013-14 to 4.2% in the five-year period ending 2023-24. The wastage rate would however drop to 2.8% in the five-year period ending 2033-34 and 2.3% in the five-year period ending 2038-39. While there would be no anticipated significant succession or recruitment problems across-the-board over the coming decade or so, to better address the cyclical movements in natural wastage of civil servants in the coming years, flexible human resource tools, including the employment of retired/retiring civil servants on contract terms under the Post-retirement Service Contract ("PRSC") Scheme and adjustments to the further employment mechanism, were needed to allow Heads of Department/Heads of Grade ("HoDs/HoGs") to address the different operational and succession needs of individual grades/departments which would change from time to time.

SCS then briefed members on the progress made in implementing the initiatives for extending the service of civil servants, details of which were set out in the paper provided by CSB (LC Paper No. CB(4)356/15-16(05)).

## Discussion

### *Higher retirement age for new recruits*

30. Whilst welcoming the initiative of raising the retirement age for new civil service recruits, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that it would be desirable if these civil servants could be given the option to retire earlier.

31. SCS responded that the general direction of extending the service of civil servants was supported by the majority of civil servants and the package of initiatives for extending the service of civil servants had been devised after careful consideration. SCS further said that there was an incentive for civil servants under the Civil Service Provident Fund (“CSPF”) Scheme to work until retirement age under which the Government's contribution rate would increase progressively with years of continuous service.

32. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan hoped that the Administration would in future review the need to allow those civil servants who were appointed on or after 1 June 2015 to retire earlier without affecting their retirement benefits under the CSPF Scheme.

33. Mr IP Kin-yuen said that Government school teachers did not strongly request to raise the retirement age of new Government school teachers from 60 to 65, as to do so would make it more difficult for young people to get employed as teachers in Government schools due to the decline in the number of students in Hong Kong.

34. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that raising the retirement age of new recruits would lessen the appeal of civil service jobs, as the time it would take for a new recruit to get promoted to the next higher rank would be longer than that for serving civil servants. Mr LEUNG asked whether the Administration had conducted any assessment on the impact of higher retirement age on the promotion prospects of civil servants.

35. SCS responded that due regard had been given to staff concerns about promotion blockage. Given such concerns and taking into account other relevant considerations, it was considered inappropriate to allow all serving civil servants to opt for a higher retirement age. Instead, applications from serving civil servants for further employment beyond retirement age would be considered on the basis of a set of objective approval criteria, including operational and/or succession needs,

no undue promotion blockage, satisfactory performance and conduct, physical fitness, etc.

*Extending the retirement age of serving officers on a voluntary basis*

36. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan hoped that the Administration would re-consider giving serving civil servants (i.e. those appointed before 1 June 2015) the option to work beyond retirement age for up to five years. In particular, such an option should be given to junior civil servants whose grade had no promotion rank or whose grade had only two to three incremental points to the next and final promotion rank, as their continued employment in the civil service beyond retirement age should not give rise to promotion blockage.

37. SCS underlined that the Administration did not consider it appropriate to allow all serving civil servants to opt for a higher retirement age given that no significant succession or recruitment problems across the board were envisaged over the coming decade. Automatic extension of the service of serving civil servants would give rise to management problems such as manpower mismatch, promotion blockage and lack of healthy turnover. On promotion, it took an average of 14 years for a civil servant to get promoted to the next higher rank, whereas certain rank and file officers in disciplined services grades could take a longer period of 15 to 22 years to be promoted. SCS pointed out that in the absence of significant succession or recruitment problems, staff concerns about the impact on promotion prospects had to be carefully addressed in considering extension of service of serving civil servants.

38. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan urged that junior civil servants whose grade had no promotion rank or whose grade had only two to three incremental points to the next and final promotion rank be allowed to continue to work beyond their retirement age in the civil service if they so wished under the adjusted further employment mechanism.

39. SCS responded that for entry ranks/one-rank grades, HoDs/HoGs would take into account relevant considerations, e.g. whether there were recruitment difficulties, in deciding on the mix of flexible human resource tools to address its manpower needs. Other than further employment of serving civil servants, the HoDs/HoGs concerned could consider engaging retired/retiring civil servants on final leave on contract terms under the PRSC Scheme to undertake ad hoc, time-limited, seasonal or part-time tasks which called for specific civil service expertise/experience.

*Adjusted mechanism on further employment of civil servants beyond retirement age*

40. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that the adjusted mechanism on further employment beyond retirement age would include (a) raising the maximum period for final extension of service beyond retirement age from 90 days to 120 days and (b) allowing a longer period of up to five years for further employment other than final extension. Mr LEE enquired about the timing for implementing the adjusted further employment mechanism and the approval criteria to be adopted.

41. SCS responded that the Administration aimed at finalizing the implementation details of the adjusted further employment mechanism within the first quarter of 2016. As regards the approval process under the adjusted mechanism, SCS said that the selection process would make reference to the *modus operandi* for promotion and recruitment under which selection boards would be convened to consider applications for further employment. The *modus operandi* for promotion and recruitment was well established and familiar to civil servants in general. In addition, reports of the selection boards would be scrutinized by CSB and the Public Service Commission ("PSC") (as appropriate) before approval. SCS further said that to instill confidence in preparing for implementing the adjusted further employment mechanism, CSB would engage some B/Ds with a larger establishment to take the lead in mapping out their manpower planning approach. CSB would provide guidance to these B/Ds in this regard.

42. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan queried whether the adjusted further employment mechanism was a pilot scheme, with the intention of only confining the use of the mechanism by B/Ds with higher wastage rate after the pilot scheme ended.

43. SCS stressed that the adjusted further employment mechanism would be applicable to all ranks and grades upon implementation. He clarified that CSB would engage some B/Ds and provide guidance in mapping out their manpower planning approach so as to instill confidence during the inception period.

44. Responding to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's concern that HoDs/HoGs would be given wide discretion in approving applications for further employment, SCS reiterated that there would be suitable checks and balances. Specifically, selection boards would be convened to consider applications for further employment having regard to the relevant

approval criteria. The selection boards' reports would be subject to scrutiny by CSB and PSC (as appropriate).

45. Mr Tony TSE urged the Administration to finalize the implementation details of the adjusted further employment mechanism as soon as practicable to better facilitate retiring civil servants to plan their post-retirement life. As B/Ds should be well apprised of the job performance of the applicants for further employment, Mr TSE hoped that the arrangements for processing applications for further employment could be made as simple as possible and the time required for processing such could be made as short as possible to save time and efforts on all sides.

46. SCS responded that the Administration appreciated the need to implement the initiatives for extending the service of civil servants early. In November 2015, the Administration promulgated a set of guidelines that gave immediate effect to the PRSC Scheme. As regards the adjusted further employment mechanism, CSB was in discussion with B/Ds and the staff sides with a view to finalising the implementation details. To facilitate better forward planning, CSB would work with B/Ds to work out their medium-term manpower plans for HoDs/HoGs to assess the need to deploy the flexible human resource tools and if so, the timing and extent (e.g. number of officers and their ranks).

47. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan hoped that B/Ds would not be overly stringent in approving applications for further employment, as to her understanding many retiring civil servants wished to continue working in the civil service beyond their retirement age and were physically fit to work longer. Dr CHIANG then enquired about the composition of the selection boards for considering applications for further employment.

48. SCS responded that the composition of the selection board to be convened under the adjusted further employment mechanism would model on that of the promotion boards. PSCS added that it would comprise officers who were familiar with the work of the relevant rank.

49. Mr IP Kin-yuen said that to ensure continuity in teaching in the interests of students, many retiring teachers hoped that they could continue to teach beyond their retirement age until the end of the respective school year. Mr IP asked whether the adjusted further employment mechanism could accommodate such aspirations from retiring Government school teachers. If the answer was in the positive, Mr IP hoped that the process for considering applications from retiring

Government school teachers for further employment would not be too cumbersome and take long time to complete, so as to avoid discouraging retiring Government school teachers from applying for further employment.

50. SCS responded that the package of flexible human resource tools could cope with different operational needs of individual grades/departments at different times. Final extension of service would be one of the tools that could address the need to retain government school teachers who had reached their retirement age during a school year so that they could continue teaching until the end of the respective school year. Under the adjusted further employment mechanism, the maximum period of final extension of service would be raised from 90 days to 120 days, and the processing of applications would be streamlined, which would facilitate, to a large extent, the retention of government school teachers towards the end of the respective school years.

51. Mr IP Kin-yuen suggested raising the maximum period for final extension of service to up to one year for Government school teachers, so as to cater for the situation whereby extending the final service of the retiring Government school teachers to 120 days was still not long enough to allow these teachers to continue teaching beyond their retirement age until the end of the respective school year.

52. SCS responded that other than final extension of service, a longer period of further employment beyond retirement age of up to five years could be considered under the adjusted further employment mechanism, which would provide more flexibility as compared with the existing mechanism.

53. Ms Emily LAU enquired how the initiatives for extending the service of civil servants in Hong Kong could address the challenges arising from an ageing population as compared with the measures taken by overseas jurisdictions in addressing the impact of an ageing population on their civil service.

54. SCS noted that the retirement age of civil servants in a number of overseas jurisdictions had been raised, as in the case of Hong Kong, as a long-term solution to better respond to the challenges arising from an ageing population. That said, it might not be appropriate to compare directly the initiatives for extending the service of civil servants in Hong Kong with those taken by overseas jurisdictions which involved different considerations. For instance, the retirement age of civil servants in

certain overseas jurisdictions was adjusted in tandem with changes relating to the universal retirement protection and/or national pension plans.

*Employment situation of retired civil servants*

55. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan sought information on the employment situation of retired civil servants, such as how many of them were engaged in paid or unpaid work, full-time or part-time employment, and the types of work they undertook.

56. SCS responded that the Administration did not collate information on the employment situation of all retired civil servants. Relevant information available to the Administration regarding civil servants who were subject to control on post-service outside work might not present a full picture. As a general impression, SCS noted that the jobs generally took up by senior civil servants after retirement were related to non-commercial organizations, such as universities and voluntary agencies, whereas junior civil servants tended to take up paid employment after retirement.

57. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan hoped that the Administration could at least collect information on the employment situation of retired middle-ranking or above civil servants, as far as practicable.

**V. Any other business**

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