

# **立法會**

## ***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)1134/15-16

(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

### **Panel on Public Service**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Monday, 16 May 2016, 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 Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

**Public officers  
attending** : Item III

Civil Service Bureau

Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

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

Mr Paul CHEUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil  
Service (Pay & Leave)

The Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on  
Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and  
Conditions of Service

Ms Winnie NG, JP  
Secretary General

Item IV

Civil Service Bureau

Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

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

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

**Staff in attendance :** Miss Joyce CHING  
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Ms Jacqueline LAW  
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)961/15-16(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)961/15-16(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 20 June 2016 at 10:45 am:

(a) Employment of persons with disabilities in the Civil Service; and

(b) 2016-2017 Civil Service Pay Adjustment.

**III. 2015 Starting Salaries Survey: Application to the Civil Service**

File Ref: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/76 -- Legislative Council ("LegCo") Brief

LC Paper No. CB(4)961/15-16(03) -- Updated background brief on "Starting Salaries Surveys for the civil service" prepared by LegCo Secretariat

Briefing by the Administration

3. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the Government's next steps to take forward the findings of the 2015 Starting Salaries Survey ("SSS"), details of which were set out in the relevant LegCo Brief (File Ref: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/76). Notably, the Government accepted the recommendations of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service ("SCCS") and the

Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service that the starting salaries of the civil service should remain unchanged. Moreover, considering that the market pay of Qualification Group ("QG") 8 (Degree and Related Grades) had consistently recorded a relatively larger dispersion and the lowest rate of adjustment, the Government also accepted the recommendation of the SCCS that a specific study on QG 8 should be conducted to understand its distinctive features and characteristics, so as to provide a solid basis for an informed decision on QG 8 starting salaries in future.

### Discussion

4. Mr WONG Kwok-hing welcomed the Government's decisions on the application of the 2015 SSS. In view of the increasing pressure faced by frontline staff of the disciplined services grades, in particular frontline Police, in handling conflicts which were becoming more violent, Mr WONG urged the Government to pay due regard to the morale of these staff, such as raising their starting salaries, in order to safeguard the stability of Hong Kong.

5. SCS responded that the purpose of the SSS was to ensure that the starting salaries of the civil service were broadly comparable with market levels and were sufficiently competitive to attract people of suitable calibre to join the Government. It did not aim to boost staff morale. As mentioned at previous meetings of this Panel, it was one of the work focuses of the Civil Service Training and Development Institute under the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") to organize courses for enhancing communication with the public, managing conflicts, coping with stress and maintaining emotional well-being, and efforts in this regard would be stepped up. SCS further said that to enhance the safety of frontline disciplined services staff in their execution of duties, suitable equipment had been and would continue to be procured by the departments concerned. He believed that these measures would have an positive effect on the morale of the civil service.

6. Responding to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's enquiry on when the specific study on QG 8 would be completed, SCS said that the study would be completed before the next SSS. SCS further said that opportunity would also be taken to examine whether the SSS could be conducted in a more co-ordinated manner with the six-yearly Pay Level Survey ("PLS") in future.

7. Mr Tony TSE declared interest as a member of SCCS and welcomed the Government's decision not to change the starting salary of QG 8 despite the findings of the 2015 SSS which indicated that the upper quartile level of market pay was lower than the benchmark pay by 15.3% (around \$3,900 or three pay points on the Master Pay Scale ("MPS")) as well as the CSB's plan to examine how the conduct of the six-yearly PLS and the three-yearly SSS could be better co-ordinated. Mr TSE then asked about staff feedback.

8. SCS responded that one of the factors that the Government had considered when deciding not to adjust the existing benchmark pay of QG 8 at \$25,505 (MPS 14) was its relativity with QG 3 Group I (Higher Diploma or Associate Degree Grades) at \$24,280 (MPS 13). SCS further pointed out that the benchmark pay of QG 8 had already been reduced by two pay points in 2010 following the 2009 SSS, and that in light of its low rate of adjustment and large dispersion over the years, a specific study on the distinctive features of QG 8 and how they should be taken into account in future SSSs was called for.

9. Ms Claudia MO was of the view that findings of SSS should not be applied to the disciplined services grades whose nature of work was distinctly different from that of the civilian grades in the civil service. Ms MO also thought that the benchmark pay of disciplined services staff should be adjusted upwards, in recognition of the fact that some of them, such as Police and firemen, had to perform duties which were life-threatening, whilst others had to handle increasingly more conflicts with the public, such as frontline officers of the Immigration Department ("ImmD") and the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED").

10. SCS responded that SSS did not cover the disciplined services grades due to a lack of market comparators. The Government had therefore invited the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service ("SCDS") to advise whether and, if so, how the 2015 SSS should be applied to the disciplined services grades. The formula adopted by the SCDS to apply findings of the 2015 SSS were set out in Annex D to the relevant LegCo Brief. SCS further said that apart from their different conditions of service compared with civilian staff, eligible disciplined services staff were also provided with job-related allowances to cater for special and unique circumstances, e.g. to compensate for duties involving exceptional danger, risk and hardship or the discharge of duties requiring special technical skills and/or qualifications not normally expected of staff in the same grade or rank. SCS also said that, should a particular disciplined services grade

encounter proven and persistent difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff, a grade structure review would be conducted.

11. Ms Claudia MO noted that the benchmark pay for QG 6 (i.e. Technician, Supervisory and Related Grades, Group II: Craft and skill plus experience, or apprenticeship plus experience) was only higher than market pay by 0.7%. In the light of this, Ms MO queried whether the benchmark pay for QG 6 was sufficiently competitive to attract staff of suitable calibre to join the civil service.

12. SCS responded that with upper quartile level of private sector pay adopted as the basis for comparison in the 2015 SSS, the benchmark pay for QG 6 should be sufficiently competitive to attract staff of suitable calibre to join the civil service.

#### Conclusion

13. In closing, the Chairman said that the Panel would continue to monitor the starting salaries of civil servants.

### **IV. Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government**

LC Paper No. CB(4)961/15-16(04) -- Administration's paper on "Implementation of Five-day Week in the Government"

LC Paper No. CB(4)961/15-16(05) -- Updated background brief on "Implementation of five-day week in the government" prepared by LegCo Secretariat

#### Briefing by the Administration

14. SCS updated members on implementation of five-day week ("FDW") in the Government, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4) 961/15-16(04)).

## Discussion

15. Whilst welcoming the progress on implementation of FDW in the Government, Ms Claudia MO expressed regret that legislation on standard working hours had yet to be enacted. Ms MO then asked the following questions:

- (a) what measures were taken by bureaux/departments ("B/Ds") to ensure parity in arranging Saturday/Sunday off for their staff who were on a FDW work pattern; and
- (b) how B/Ds could migrate their staff to work on a FDW work pattern without incurring additional resources on the one hand and not compromising the quality of their services provided to the public on the other.

16. SCS responded as follows:

- (a) the Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, had been and would continue to set a good example for others to follow by striving to implement FDW for its workforce without compromising the overall level and efficiency of public services or incurring additional costs to taxpayers;
- (b) the conditioned hours of work varied among different civil service grades. For instance, operational staff of the Fire Stream in Fire Services Department were working 51 hours per week (on a trial basis) and Model Scale 1 staff were working 45 hours per week without meal breaks;
- (c) not all staff preferred working from Monday to Friday, and CSB would encourage B/Ds to arrange their staff to rotate between FDW posts where operational circumstances permitted; and
- (d) it was possible to migrate staff to work on a FDW work pattern without incurring additional resources or compromising the quality of their services provided to the public. For instance, ImmD had devised a trial scheme for some counter services which did not have a high usage rate on Saturdays to be substituted by on-line application systems or drop-boxes located outside office premises, even though

the same approach might not be feasible for services targeted at the elderly who were less IT-savvy and who preferred personalized services.

17. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was pleased that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") had recently devised a FDW trial scheme for its hawker control task forces involving around 430 staff. Referring to paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper, Mr WONG asked when the trial scheme would be launched and completed.

18. SCS responded that FEHD would launch the trial scheme within one to two months and conduct a review after one year to ensure that the new arrangements, which entailed, lengthening the working hours of the staff concerned by one and a half hours per shift on average, would not affect enforcement efficacy.

19. Further noting from paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper that ImmD would also launch a trial scheme for around 70 of its staff shortly, Mr WONG Kwok-hing hoped that consideration could be given to migrating more staff working at immigration checkpoints to work on a FDW work pattern.

20. SCS expected that the additional manpower resources to be provided in 2016-2017 would allow room for ImmD to migrate more staff to a FDW work pattern. SCS however emphasized that effective immigration control, particularly during the peak hours, must not be compromised.

21. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired whether the some 700 staff who were undergoing FDW trial schemes, referred to in paragraph 7 of the Administration's paper, included the some 430 FEHD staff and the some 70 ImmD staff referred to in paragraph 8 of the same. SCS clarified that the aforesaid some 700 staff were undergoing FDW trial schemes as at 30 September 2014 in departments such as C&ED, Social Welfare Department and Civil Engineering and Development Department. The vast majority of them had been migrated to FDW upon the successful completion of their respective trial schemes.

22. Mr WONG Kwok-hing commended the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Miss Vivian LAU Lee-kwan, for devising a FDW trial scheme for its hawker control task forces. Mr WONG said



that he looked forward to seeing the success of the trial scheme so that the staff concerned could be migrated to FDW.

23. The Chairman said that although the FDW initiative had been implemented since 2006, 42 900 civil servants as at 30 September 2014 (or around 27.6% of the then civil service strength) were still sticking to a non-FDW work pattern. The Chairman asked whether these staff had any chance to migrate to FDW while adhering to the four basic principles set out in paragraph 2 of the Administration's paper.

24. SCS responded that about 60% of the around 42 900 civil servants as at 30 September 2014 who had to work on a non-FDW work pattern came from disciplined services departments responsible for immigration control, passenger/cargo clearance, law enforcement, management of penal institutions, etc., whereas the remaining 40% were engaged in social welfare services, cultural services, postal services, environmental hygiene services, etc. In order to maintain the overall level and efficiency of public services, it might not be possible for all of them to enjoy FDW eventually. Nevertheless, some B/Ds were actively exploring the feasibility of introducing trial schemes to migrate more staff to a FDW work pattern and arranging their staff to fill the posts with a FDW work pattern by rotation. From the staff management perspective, he considered it paramount that sufficient rest period should be provided to those operating on a shift pattern.

25. The Chairman said that he had received complaints from some staff associations/unions about conditioned hours of work of staff at different ranks within the same grade. For instance, the Proof Reader Grade of the Government Logistics Department had two different conditioned hours of work, i.e. 45 hours net per week for the Proof Reader rank and 44 hours gross per week for the Senior and Chief Proof Reader ranks. The Chairman urged the Administration to address such inconsistencies to ensure parity amongst civil servants.

26. SCS responded that as specific conditioned hours of work were laid down for different grades in the civil service having regard to their job nature and operational requirements, any reduction in the conditioned hours of a particular grade/rank without corresponding change to its pay was in effect an improvement to employment conditions.

Conclusion

27. In closing, the Chairman said that the Panel would continue to closely monitor the implementation of FDW in the Government.

**V. Any other business**

28. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:38 am.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
17 June 2016