

Laying of the Report Report No. 72 of the Director of Audit on the results of value for money audits was laid in the Legislative Council ("LegCo") on 17 April 2019. The Public Accounts Committee ("the Committee")'s Report (Report No. 72) was subsequently made on 17 July 2019,¹ which met the requirement of Rule 72 of the Rules of Procedure of LegCo that the Report be made within three months of the Director of Audit's Report ("Audit Report") being laid.

2. **The Government Minute** The Government Minute in response to the Committee's Report No. 72 was laid in LegCo on 11 December 2019. A progress report on matters outstanding in the Government Minute was issued on 5 November 2020. The latest position and the Committee's further comments on these matters are set out in paragraphs 3 to 9 below.

Management of Greening Master Plans (Chapter 2 of Part 4 of P.A.C. Report No. 72)

3. The Committee was informed that:

Handover and maintenance of greening works under Greening Master Plans ("GMPs")

- the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") completed the enhancement of the Tree Data Bank System in December 2019 so as to allow all trees planted, and the locations and sizes of planting areas of shrubs to be input into the Tree Data Bank System for GMP projects in Southwest and Northeast New Territories; and

Overseeing and public engagement of GMPs

- the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau had instructed government departments and encouraged public organizations/private sector to follow up actively and report on the progress of the proposed medium and long-term greening measures under GMPs for urban areas. For the 288 proposed measures under GMPs for urban areas, 89 had been

¹ Due to the cancellation of the LegCo meeting of 10 July 2019, the Report could not be tabled at that Council meeting. Instead, the Report was made on 17 July 2019 in accordance with Rule 72(10) of the Rules of Procedure of LegCo and was circulated to all Members on the same day. The Report was then arranged to be tabled in the Council on 16 October 2019.

completed, 11 would be implemented, 43 would be considered as part of the development parameters of the projects, and 145 were considered not feasible (reasons including the original location being no longer suitable for planting due to changes in surrounding environment, changes in land use in on-going development, or not being technically feasible).

4. The Committee wrote to Secretary for Development on 6 January 2021 seeking information as to how the Administration could reconcile the differences in planting quantities for trees and shrubs between the Civil Engineering and Development Department handover records and LCSD inventory records, and input such information into the enhanced Tree Data Bank System systematically. The replies from **Secretary for Development** are in *Appendix 3*.

5. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of further development on the subject.

Employment services provided by the Labour Department (Chapter 3 of Part 4 of P.A.C. Report No. 72)

6. The Committee was informed that:

General employment services for all job seekers

- the Labour Department ("LD") had reviewed the performance indicators on employment services for able-bodied job seekers provided in the Controlling Officer's Report, and had disclosed in the Controlling Officer's Report for 2020-2021 both the number of direct placements through LD's referrals and indirect placements without going through LD's referrals, as well as the calculation method of relevant figures;

Dedicated employment services for job seekers with special needs

Young people

- a three-year Retention Allowance Pilot Scheme was launched in September 2020 to encourage young people to undergo and complete

on-the-job training ("OJT") under the Youth Employment Training Programme ("YETP");

- starting from July 2019, LD had compiled monthly statistical reports on the reasons for early termination of OJTs under YETP. For trainees whose OJTs were ended prematurely due to inadequate work skills or reasons on the part of the trainees warranting assistance (e.g. behavioural problem), LD would refer the cases to the case managers concerned for taking appropriate follow-up actions with a view to enhancing the trainees' employability and job stability through better equipping themselves;

Elderly and middle-aged

- LD launched a three-year pilot scheme in September 2020 to encourage elderly persons aged 60 or above to undergo and complete OJT under the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged ("EPEM") through the provision of a retention allowance;
- since May 2019, during the regular follow-up with employees and employers, in addition to the verification of the employers' compliance with the requirements of EPEM and other relevant legislation, LD had also looked into the employees' work adaptation, performance and other concerns;

Ethnic minorities ("EMs")

- with a view to enhancing the employment opportunities for EM job seekers, LD launched the Racial Diversity Employment Programme in November 2020 to provide employment services for EM job seekers and render support in their job search through a case management approach;
- to promote the employment of EMs, LD had taken the following actions:
 - (a) when employers placed job vacancies with LD, LD would remind employers to consider the genuine needs of the posts when specifying the language requirement and encourage them to relax the language requirement as far as possible so as to enable more EMs to apply for the vacancies;

- (b) canvassed vacancies suitable for EMs through various channels, including arranging experience sharing sessions for employers, organizing inclusive job fairs, etc.;
- (c) encouraged employers to indicate that "EMs are welcome for the posts" when placing job vacancies with LD; and
- (d) uploaded pre-set job duty descriptions in Chinese and English to the "Interactive Employment Service" website to help employers reduce the time for filling out the relevant job vacancy information and facilitate their provision of the information in both Chinese and English;

Persons with disabilities

- LD had separately reported the number of placements secured by referral service of its Selective Placement Division ("SPD") and the number of placements secured by job seekers by making job applications to employers direct subsequent to the assistance provided by SPD, and disclosed the relevant calculation method in the Controlling Officer's Report for 2020-2021;
- LD launched a three-year pilot scheme in September 2020 to encourage persons with disabilities who secured jobs under the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme ("WOPS") or by referrals of SPD to stay longer in their jobs through the provision of a retention allowance;
- SPD had enhanced the monitoring of the matching of job vacancies against job seekers' abilities and preference so as to help them stay in their jobs for longer period of time;
- LD had published the performance against the pledges of WOPS of the previous year in January of each year in the webpage of the Interactive Selective Placement Service of SPD starting from January 2020; and

Raising of the ceiling of OJT allowance payable

- in light of the deteriorating employment situation, LD raised the ceiling of OJT allowance payable to employers under YETP, EPEM and WOPS in September 2020 with a view to further encouraging employers to hire young people, the elderly and middle aged, as well as persons with disabilities. Details were as follows:

- (a) the maximum amount of OJT allowance payable to employers under YETP had been increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month for a period of 6 to 12 months;
- (b) the maximum amount of OJT allowance payable to employers engaging unemployed job seekers aged 40 to 59 under EPEM had been increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per month per employee for a period of three to six months; whereas the maximum amount payable to employers engaging job seekers aged 60 or above who were unemployed or had left the workforce had been increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per month per employee for a period of 6 to 12 months; and
- (c) the maximum amount of OJT allowance payable to employers under WOPS had been increased from \$7,000 to \$8,000 per month during the work adaptation period in the first three months and from \$5,000 to \$6,000 per month for the following six months.

7. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of further development on the subject.

Hospitality training provided by the Hotel and Tourism Institute, the Chinese Culinary Institute and the International Culinary Institute
(Chapter 7 of Part 4 of P.A.C. Report No. 72)

8. The Committee was informed that:

Management of programmes

- regarding the Survey of Employers' Views, the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") had analysed past statistics and noted that the most crucial factor affecting the number of employers covered in the survey was the consent of graduates to contact their employers;
- to encourage students to give consent to VTC to contact their employers for the purpose of the survey starting from the graduates of the 2018-2019 cohort, VTC had stepped up its efforts including fine-tuning the format and wordings of the student survey, with a view to reaching out to more employers;

Management of The T Hotel and training restaurants

- the Hotel and Tourism Institute, the Chinese Culinary Institute and the International Culinary Institute ("the Institutes") had explored the feasibility of engaging food waste collectors at the VTC Kowloon Bay Complex and the VTC Tin Shui Wai Building;
- the Institutes had identified a non-governmental organization, namely, Food for Good, to collect food waste from the VTC Kowloon Bay Complex from 1 September 2020 onwards;
- as for the VTC Tin Shui Wai Building, with a prevailing amount of less than 30 kilograms/day, the Institutes could not identify any food waste collector due to the low food waste level. To address the situation, the Institutes had invited Food for Good to conduct food waste seminars on 7 and 9 July 2020 for the VTC students to increase their awareness of environmental protection and treatment of food waste;
- VTC would also implement the food waste collection schemes introduced by the Environmental Protection Department in the VTC Tin Shui Wai Building as appropriate;

Administrative issues

Campus management – Carbon Footprint Reduction Plan

- VTC had commissioned a consultant since 2017 for a Carbon Footprint Reduction Plan. The study area included devising longer-term carbon reduction targets, a roadmap and implementation plans for VTC campuses. The consultant would submit the Plan to VTC by the end of the first quarter of 2021;

Campus management – safety and accidents

- the Safety, Health and Environmental Local Committee of VTC had completed an analysis report in December 2019 on all the 97 accidents reported from 2013-2014 to 2017-2018. Most of the accidents occurred were related to cut or fall (67%). Other accidents included injuries due to burn and manual handling of heavy objects;

- VTC had implemented the following improvement measures recommended by the Safety, Health and Environmental Local Committee in December 2019 to reduce the occurrence of accidents:
 - (a) to raise the safety alert of staff by reporting the accident figures twice a year through the Safety, Health and Environmental Local Committee meetings;
 - (b) to enhance safety awareness among staff by sharing relevant safety tips and arranging relevant training programmes;
 - (c) to relay injury figures to students via instructors to alert students of the safety measures while undergoing training;
 - (d) to remind the cleaning contractor to keep the floor dry and place warning signage when cleaning floor; and
 - (e) to request the cleaning contractor to conduct safety compliance check on floor cleaning on a monthly basis; and

Inventory management

- the Institutes completed the surprise stock and security checks as stipulated in the Store Manual for the 2019-2020 financial year in March 2020. The Institutes would conduct the surprise stock and security checks at least once a year by the respective Section Store Controlling Officers, and the Supplies Unit would examine the related logbooks for such checks every year during the annual stocktaking exercise.

9. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of further development on the subject.