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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Meeting on 15 March 2021

Updated background brief on the governance and management of Radio Television Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper gives a brief account of the development of Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK"), its existing governance, administrative and organizational structures, as well as the matters relating to RTHK's staff establishment and deployment of resources. It also summarizes the salient points of discussions involving RTHK held by the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), particularly the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting ("the Panel"), and the major concerns raised during such discussions.

Background

2. The official radio broadcaster of Hong Kong was launched in 1928. In 1929, the then Postmaster General was assigned to chair the Hong Kong Broadcasting Committee in the preparation of programmes for the broadcaster, which was later officially renamed the "Radio Hong Kong" ("RHK") by the Hong Kong Government in 1948. The daily operation of RHK had been taken over by the then Government Public Relations Office (i.e. the predecessor of the former Government Information Service ("GIS")) since 1951, and not until 1954 did RHK become an independent government department under the purview of the Controller of Broadcasting.

3. Initially, RHK only provided Chinese and English radio broadcasting services. It was not until 1970 that RHK established the "Public Affairs Television Unit" and started producing television ("TV")

programmes aired on licensed commercial TV stations. RHK was later renamed "RTHK" in 1976. Apart from producing programmes in respect of current and public affairs, RTHK also set up the Education Television ("ETV") Centre in 1976 to render assistance to the then Education Department to produce educational programmes. Prior to the setting up of its own newsroom in 1973, the news bulletins disseminated by RHK were provided by GIS.

4. In 1984, the Administration appointed the Broadcasting Review Board. Upon completion of the review, the Board recommended that RTHK be hived off from the Government to establish editorial independence. One of the recommendations was to "corporatize" RTHK. The recommendation was not implemented despite having been discussed for many years and was shelved by the authorities in 1995. Reform of RTHK's structure continued. In the light of the Public Sector Reform put forward by the Government in the 1990s, RTHK and the then Secretary for Recreation and Culture entered into a Framework Agreement ("FA") to lay down their rights and responsibilities. It was stipulated in FA that RTHK would enjoy editorial independence and that the Director of Broadcasting ("D of B") would take up the role of the Editor-in-chief of RTHK. In addition, RTHK and the then Broadcasting Authority ("BA") signed the Memorandum of Understanding in 1995. According to the Memorandum, RTHK agreed to comply with the codes of practice on programme standards laid down by BA; should BA receive any public complaints against RTHK's programmes, they would be dealt with in accordance with the procedures for regulating commercial broadcasters. RTHK formulated its Producers' Guidelines in 1998 to codify its effective practices.

Review of Public Service Broadcasting

5. Given the continuous changes in the broadcasting market and the absence of a clear policy on public service broadcasting, in 2006, the Chief Executive ("CE") appointed an independent Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting ("the Review Committee") to review public service broadcasting in Hong Kong. The Review Committee was chaired by Mr Raymond Roy WONG, a senior media professional, and comprised seven non-official members from the media industry, arts groups and academia. A report of the Review Committee was submitted to the Government in March 2007. It was pointed out in the report that there was a need for a public service broadcaster ("PSB") in Hong Kong, and thus a new PSB should be constituted and publicly funded. Such broadcaster should have a high degree of autonomy in determining its own organizational structure, internal rules and practices as well as staff requirements and employment terms, and should have independence in its

editorial and programming decisions. The Review Committee was also of the view that the Board, management and rank-and-file of the new PSB should exercise freedom of speech and of the press responsibly. The new PSB should also be operated under stringent governance and accountability measures, and it should exercise all due financial prudence when expending public money.

6. The Review Committee considered that, to be a genuine PSB, RTHK would need to be freed from its present government department status and reconstituted into a statutory body with a clear public service mission. However, such an arrangement would result in a drastic change in RTHK's status quo, which was bound to be fraught with practical and insurmountable problems. Therefore, regarding the proposed constitution of a PSB, the Review Committee did not favour the transformation of RTHK into one. Instead, it proposed the establishment of a new PSB with a fresh start.

7. The Administration accepted most of the suggestions made by the Review Committee except the issue about the constitution of an independent PSB. The Administration finally decided that RTHK would perform the role of a PSB while maintaining its status and practices as a government department. The Administration also introduced measures to strengthen RTHK's governance structure, which included:

- (a) providing the editorial independence arrangement set out in FA of RTHK in the form of the Charter of RTHK ("the Charter"): the Charter was issued by the Government, setting out the relationship between the Government and RTHK in respect of various regulatory issues. It also stipulated that RTHK was editorially independent, and clarified issues such as the role of BA in providing content regulation for RTHK programming, transparency in RTHK's operation, and the accountability of RTHK;
- (b) maintaining the annual budgeting control mechanism for RTHK: RTHK would be provided with the manpower and expenses required for operation and development through the Resource Allocation Exercise process and preparation of annual estimates for budgetary control; and
- (c) setting up a Board of Advisors: to ensure achievement of better standards of editorial and institutional output from RTHK. The Board of Advisors is currently chaired by Dr LAM Tai-fai, with D of B as the ex-officio member, and comprises 12 other members. It is mainly tasked to advise

D of B on matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming, and to track how well RTHK programming meets up to audience expectations.

8. In terms of programme development, the Administration has decided that RTHK, as Hong Kong's PSB, has to provide the following programmes:

- (a) Local original content production: RTHK should run one TV channel to show the self-productions, which no longer have to be shown through the commercial broadcasters;
- (b) Programmes under the partnership with overseas broadcasters and content producers: RTHK may work with overseas counterparts such as NHK of Japan or National Geographic of the United States on co-productions;
- (c) Programmes with community participation in broadcasting: including that RTHK should devote part of its airtime for programmes that allow individuals and community groups to express and exchange their views; programmes that community groups produce on their own; and programmes produced on specific themes or topics by commissioning projects from community groups; and
- (d) National broadcasting programmes: to relay programmes of China Central Television and China National Radio.

Services provided by Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK")

9. Currently, RTHK provides radio and TV broadcasts and new media services. Regarding radio services, RTHK has seven radio channels broadcasting programmes mainly in Cantonese, Putonghua and English. It also provides Community Involvement Broadcasting Service ("CIBS"), which allows non-governmental organizations and underprivileged communities, individuals or groups to participate in broadcasting by submitting applications for producing radio programmes. In respect of TV services, RTHK currently operates three digital terrestrial television channels broadcasting general programming, live events and real-time information, as well as relaying programmes of China Central Television. Since 2000, RTHK has launched an outsourced scheme on its TV services. During the period between April 2016 and November 2020, RTHK once took over the operation of the analogue TV channels vacated

by the Asia Television Limited upon cessation of its free TV services. The total hours of first-run programmes transmitted by RTHK's TV services surged over 300% over the past decade from 577.3 hours in 2009-2010 to 1 775.6 hours in 2019-2020. RTHK plans to produce 1 830 hours of first-run programmes in 2021-2022.

Missions of RTHK

10. RTHK's vision is "to be a leading public broadcaster in the new media environment" and its missions are as follows:

- (a) to inform, educate and entertain its audiences through multi-media programming;
- (b) to provide timely, impartial coverage of local and global events and issues;
- (c) to deliver programming which contributes to the openness and cultural diversity of Hong Kong;
- (d) to provide a platform for free and unfettered expression of views; and
- (e) to serve a broad spectrum of audiences and cater to the needs of minority interest groups.

Administrative and organizational structures of RTHK

11. D of B is supported by a deputy director. The post of deputy director is taken up by a Staff Grade B Administrative Officer. The deputy director is underpinned by two assistant directors and one controller, who respectively oversee the radio and corporate programming, TV and corporate businesses, and production services. As advised by D of B in the Controlling Officer's Report ("COR") on the 2021-2022 Estimates, the actual establishment of RTHK as at 31 March 2020 was 736 posts. It was estimated that the establishment of RTHK would increase to 760 posts, including 752 non-directorate posts and eight directorate posts, by 31 March 2021 and would remain unchanged for 2021-2022. The administrative structure of RTHK is in **Appendix I**.

12. Apart from civil servants, RTHK also employs contract staff (including Non-Civil Service Contract staff, Post-retirement Service Contract staff and Departmental Contract Staff Category I staff) and agency

workers outside the establishment. Furthermore, additional flexibility has been given for the department to engage freelance service providers (commonly known as "Category II service providers") to cater for its special needs as a broadcaster. These service providers are freelancers and they are paid a fee for their service in order to meet short-term programme needs. Five categories of job titles are covered, namely artistes, presenters, scriptwriters, researchers and contributors. The actual staff size of RTHK is, therefore, greater than the establishment set out in the Estimates. According to RTHK's Annual Report 2019-2020, the total manpower of RTHK as at 31 March 2020 was 873, which covered 232, 161, 97, 263, 6, 96 and 18 staff members respectively in the Production Services Division, Administration, Radio Services, TV Services, School ETV Services, as well as Productions of News and New Media.

Deployment of resources

13. In line with the status of RTHK as a government department and its missions as a public broadcaster, and also to dovetail with the development of digital TV services, the Government undertook to provide resources as appropriate to enhance RTHK's service, with a view to expanding the scope of its services. In 2009-2010, the actual expenditure of RTHK amounted to \$482.67 million while that in 2019-2020 rose to \$1,041.65 million. The estimated expenditure for 2021-2022 will be \$995.16 million.

Role of the Information Services Department

14. Apart from RTHK, the Government established the Information Services Department ("ISD") to provide a communication link between the Government and the people through newspapers, TV, radio, magazines and other media. ISD is organized into four divisions, namely Local Public Relations, Public Relations Outside Hong Kong, Publicity and Promotions and Administration. Its mission is to provide professional public relations advice and promote Government policies and services with a view to projecting an accurate image of the city within and outside Hong Kong. As advised by the Director of Information Services in COR on the 2021-2022 Estimates, the actual establishment of ISD as at 31 March 2020 was 436 posts. It was estimated that the establishment of ISD would increase to 456 posts, including 444 non-directorate posts and 12 directorate posts, by 31 March 2021 and one non-directorate post would be reduced in 2021-2022. The administrative structure of ISD is in **Appendix I**.

Discussion by LegCo Members

The previous terms of LegCo preceding the Sixth LegCo

15. The Panel had discussed issues related to RTHK, including its broadcasting policies, the contents of programmes it developed, its role as PSB, as well as RTHK's editorial independence and the stance of its reports. Motions for debate about the relevant issues had been moved by Members at LegCo meetings. Questions on RTHK's deployment of resources had also been raised by the Finance Committee ("FC") during the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure. The major concerns expressed by Members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Commercialization of RTHK's productions

16. The Panel had discussed whether the valuable archives of RTHK's past productions should be commercialized and marketed or sold, in order to generate income for the Government. In addition, members were concerned about the feasibility for RTHK to market and license its self-produced programmes to other service providers. Members noted that RTHK had licensed its online broadcasting contents to mobile network operators and web portals. RTHK would also explore the possibilities of distributing RTHK programme archives on the Internet through partnership and strategic alliances with both the commercial and non-commercial sectors.

17. Regarding the commercialization of RTHK's programmes and services, the Administration advised that raising revenue was not the primary objective of RTHK as PSB, and it had yet to finalize the matter because of the complex issues involved in the commercialization of RTHK's assets, such as intellectual property rights of the programmes and the public finances policies.

18. Some members commented that the revenue generated from the licensing fees of the contents of programmes was not significant. Instead, they urged the Administration to explore other options such as outsourcing part of the process so as to reduce the costs incurred, and to devise a more effective marketing strategy in commercializing the contents of RTHK's programmes.

Education Television Services

19. School ETV services had been provided by RTHK since 1971. The education authority was responsible for developing the programmes

and writing programme scripts while RTHK was responsible for the production of the programmes. School ETV services were covered in Chapter 8 of the Director of Audit's Report ("Audit Report") No. 37 issued in October 2001. Upon consideration of the Audit Report No. 37, the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC") concluded in February 2002 that it expressed "grave dismay" about the low viewing rates for the ETV programmes, and questioned the value of the school ETV services. Questions were raised by Members on the measures adopted by RTHK to reduce production cost and increase productivity in the production of ETV programmes.

Public broadcaster and the RTHK Charter

20. In respect of the CE-in-Council's decision for RTHK to remain as a government department while performing the role of PSB, the Panel expressed disappointment at the authority for making such a decision without conducting any public consultations. Some members were of the view that RTHK was publicly funded and the general mechanism requiring commercial broadcasters to renew their licences at regular intervals did not apply to the department. This gave RTHK an unfair advantage over its private-sector counterparts. Some members suggested that RTHK should cease to produce programmes that the private-sector broadcasters were capable of producing. It should also spearhead the production of programmes which were not within the realm of popular entertainment, with a view to catering to the needs of minority communities.

21. Some Members hoped that RTHK would uphold editorial independence and provide a platform for free and unfettered expression of views, instead of serving as the Government's mouthpiece to promote its policies. Some other Members, however, were concerned that some of RTHK's current affairs and personal view programmes were too critical of government policies and lacked a balanced perspective.

22. Some Panel members cast doubt on the need for setting up the Board of Advisors and questioned the rationale for empowering the Board to advise D of B on matters such as editorial principles, programming standards, and quality of RTHK programming. These members were worried that such move would jeopardize RTHK's editorial independence, resulting in self-censorship and turning RTHK into a Government mouthpiece. However, some members supported the establishment of the Board of Advisors as a check and balance mechanism to enhance RTHK's accountability to the public and to ensure that RTHK would uphold professional standard of journalism and the principles of impartiality and objectivity in its editorial principles.

Demand for and deployment of resources and community involvement in broadcasting

23. Some Members considered that the Government had put far too little funding into RTHK's programme production. However, some Members pointed out that RTHK's programmes were broadcast simultaneously on different channels, reflecting that RTHK had not optimized the output capacity of each of its channels. As such, they urged the Administration to make available RTHK's underused radio channels for use by the community, such as setting up public access channels. As regards RTHK devoting part of its airtime to provide a platform for community participation in broadcasting, some Panel members urged RTHK to provide more airtime for CIBS to cater for more interested applicants.

The Sixth LegCo

24. During the sixth term of LegCo, a number of discussions on the operation of RTHK had been held. The Panel's concerns over RTHK were triggered by the Communications Authority's ("CA's") decision in March 2020 to revoke its directions to free TV licensees on the requirements to broadcast RTHK's programmes. Members were also concerned about the Administration's position on a criticism that RTHK had breached the "One-China" principle in some of its programmes. Meanwhile, some members had also expressed concerns about the progress of RTHK in following up the recommendations of the Audit Report No. 71 on RTHK, as well as the public feedback which criticized that some of RTHK's programmes appeared to be partial and biased. Some members were of the view that if RTHK's news reports on government policies were produced in the same approach as the media would generally do, it would possibly give rise to conflicts between its dual roles as a government department and PSB. As such, some members had raised the issue of whether it was possible to strengthen the cooperation between RTHK and ISD. The major discussions held and views expressed by Members of the Sixth LegCo at Panel meetings and other occasions are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Boosting the TV ratings of RTHK

25. The Panel expressed concerns about the low TV ratings of RTHK TV channels. Some members enquired if RTHK would broadcast more sports programmes through its digital TV channels so as to boost RTHK's rating as well as promote sports in the community. The Administration advised that the number of hours of sports programmes produced by RTHK had increased to about 50 hours in 2017-2018, compared to 32 hours a year

ago. Apart from producing sports TV programmes, RTHK had broadcast a number of inter-school sports competitions. As regards international mega sports events, the Administration explained that they were being broadcast in commercial TV channels with private sector sponsorship. RTHK should provide TV services in areas not adequately provided by commercial TV broadcasters. Some members suggested that the Administration should arrange the film projects funded under the Film Development Fund to be released through the TV channels of RTHK after they had been screened in local cinemas.

26. Members criticized RTHK for the slow progress on implementing two of the recommendations in the Audit Report No. 71 released in October 2018, where RTHK should develop viewership indicators, such as appreciation index, for TV channels and programmes, and consider setting targets/benchmarks for different categories of RTHK programmes. The Administration responded that RTHK had been pressed to follow up the relevant recommendations of the Audit Report No. 71. In particular, RTHK had been requested to collect more detailed data on the cross-media TV ratings of its TV channels and programmes, and report them in COR so as to further understand the reasons for low TV ratings of its programmes. In this connection, RTHK should make reference to the TV rating data widely adopted by the broadcasting industry to fully grasp the viewership of its programmes on TV, as well as collect more detailed data on the click rates of its programmes on other media platforms.

New RTHK Broadcasting House

27. Given that little progress had been noted in the development of the new Broadcasting House ("BH"), members had made repeated requests urging the Administration to provide the timetable for construction of the new BH of RTHK. The Administration responded that RTHK and the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD") had been discussing with interested departments on the prospect of sharing the use of the new BH. Once agreement on user requirements could be reached, ArchSD could proceed with the necessary technical work, and RTHK could carry out planning work.

Production of programmes similar to other market players'

28. The Panel had discussed how RTHK could ensure that its services were cost effective. Some members considered that RTHK should focus on services not being provided in the market. Some members raised a suggestion that RTHK should continue to broadcast cultural programmes and cover more local sports events, but terminate the news services and the ETV programme. Some other members, however, commented that RTHK,

as PSB, should retain the function of providing news, similar to other PSBs in many overseas jurisdictions. A motion was passed at the Panel meeting on 11 March 2019 which urged the Administration to enhance the cost-effectiveness of RTHK's operation, including reviewing whether the ETV service should continue, and to ensure that RTHK would make the best use of the most up-to-date information technologies to widen the coverage and broadcasting of local sports activities, so as to strengthen support to the local sports development. In its reply to PAC dated 31 October 2019 on the production of ETV programmes, the Education Bureau ("EDB") stated that, ETV service would be repositioned. The future direction of EDB would be engaging other service providers in the market. In future, RTHK could be one of the service providers which EDB would engage on a need basis. With effect from 2020-2021, EDB would cease to provide annual funding to RTHK for production of a certain number of ETV programmes.

Charter of RTHK and RTHK's dual identities

29. Some members criticized the Administration for often being intolerant of RTHK's programmes that were critical of the Government, and having been trying to reduce RTHK to a mere Government's mouthpiece, disregarding RTHK's mission as Hong Kong's sole PSB. The Administration responded that RTHK had to fulfil the public purposes stipulated in the Charter, including sustaining citizenship and civil society, promoting understanding of the concept of "One Country, Two Systems" and its implementation in Hong Kong, engendering a sense of citizenship and national identity through programmes that contribute to the understanding of the community and nation, as well as providing an open platform for the free exchange of views without fear or favour. The Administration did not expect RTHK to become its mouthpiece.

30. Members noted that RTHK enjoyed editorial independence. D of B, as RTHK's Editor-in-chief, was responsible for the final editorial decisions and was accountable for editorial decisions taken by RTHK programme producers. The Administration indicated that the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau ("CEDB"), which had policy oversight of RTHK, had the responsibility to ensure that RTHK, as PSB and a government department, adhered to the "One-China" principle in its programmes.

Communications Authority's codes of practice

31. Some members pointed out that there had been several occasions where CA had ruled that RTHK had breached the Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Standards. They queried whether any civil

servant working in RTHK had been subject to disciplinary actions. The Administration explained that RTHK had followed up complaint cases rigorously with professionalism, taking into account the requirements under the Civil Service Regulations. In the case of *Pentaprisism*, an RTHK programme, the department had quickly withdrawn the subject episode from its web archive even before CA had made its ruling. A review of the production process was also conducted thereafter to prevent recurrence in the future.

The "One-China" principle in The Pulse and Taiwan Stories III

32. In one episode of *The Pulse*, an RTHK-produced programme, a reporter asked a senior World Health Organization ("WHO") official whether WHO would reconsider Taiwan's membership given the latter's contribution in combating the coronavirus disease 2019. In *Taiwan Stories III*, a programme commissioned by RTHK, the bilateral relations between Taiwan and an African country was referred to as "diplomatic ties between two countries". In response to the two aforementioned instances at the special meetings of FC and a Panel meeting, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development ("SCED") pointed out that RTHK had breached the "One-China" principle and the public purposes and mission as stipulated in the Charter. Some members queried how, specifically, RTHK had breached the "One-China" principle in these two programmes, and whether the Administration intended to impose censorship on RTHK. Meanwhile, some members queried the motive of the interviewer in *The Pulse* in asking the question. The Administration maintained that *The Pulse* had given audience an overall impression that the "One-China" principle had not been upheld, and the reference to Taiwan as a country in *Taiwan Stories III* was considered incompatible with that principle as well.

Genre and nature of Headliner

33. In April 2020, at the special meetings of FC to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2020-2021 and the meeting for consideration of the Appropriation Bill 2020 by the Committee of the Whole Council, a number of Members expressed their views on *Headliner*, an RTHK programme. Some Members commented that *Headliner* was very popular among the audience, reflecting that the satirical commentaries made in the programme were widely echoed among the public. The programme did not only fit in the way how Hong Kong people liked to speak by teasing each other, but from a certain perspective, it was also a symbol of values enshrined in the "One Country, Two Systems" that made Hong Kong a free and open city. These Members were of the view that as a government, which was broad-minded and always strived for improvements, it should in fact use *Headliner* as a mirror to enhance its governance instead of

suppressing the programme and acting counter to public opinions. Some Members, however, questioned whether the programme could actually, as described by D of B, sync with the social pulse by being satirical and ironic and achieve the effect of serving as an outlet for grudges and resentment.

34. D of B responded that as a satire, *Headliner* had adopted a form of expression that would lend itself as an outlet for grudges and resentment, bringing a sense of release to its viewers with its broadcast for over three decades. He appreciated that different viewers might respond differently to satirical genre. Ongoing efforts had been made by RTHK staff to explain to the public about the genre and nature of *Headliner* for years. SCED reiterated that as a government department and PSB, RTHK was required to fulfil its public purposes and mission as specified in the Charter.

Recent incidents

35. Some members had expressed concerns about the comments in society concerning the unfair suppression faced by RTHK. According to some Members, certain recent incidents had shown that press freedom in Hong Kong was under threat. One incident involved an Assistant Programme Officer ("APO") who had raised piercing questions at a government press conference. Complaints against that APO were received, but were found unsubstantiated in an initial investigation. The RTHK management extended her probationary period on the grounds that internal investigation into the complaints from the public against her should be reopened. RTHK subsequently terminated the APO's contract and asked her to sign a temporary contract instead. Another incident involved a producer who was arrested and suspended from her duties for suspicion of making false statements in her application for a certificate of particulars of motor vehicle (commonly known as "licence plate search") when conducting investigative reporting. A number of members had requested the Panel to hold a special meeting to discuss the Administration's measures in place to safeguard press freedom.

36. On the other hand, some members also expressed concerns that CA had recently found seven substantiated complaint cases concerning RTHK's programmes in just two years, and a number of serious warnings, warnings or strong advices had been issued to RTHK. In addition, some Members said that there were voices in the community which accused that RTHK programmes were biased and the contents were inaccurate and partial. They had cited several recent incidents. One of the incidents concerned an episode of *Hong Kong Connection*, in which detainees at the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre were said to have received inhumane treatment. Four staff associations of the Immigration Department reacted by issuing a joint declaration claiming that the report was not accurate. Another

incident concerned a misreporting of a message delivered by President XI Jinping at the World Economic Forum recently. There were also queries that a RTHK news report about supplies kits supplied to people subject to compulsory virus testing in the "restricted area" in Jordan was biased. A number of Members had made requests at the Panel meetings for discussing the aforementioned incidents and sought response from CE in this regard at the CE's Question and Answer Session.

RTHK Board of Advisors

37. Some Members had written to individual Government advisory bodies relevant to the Panel expressing views on issues of RTHK. For example, Dr Hon Junius HO had addressed a letter to the RTHK Board of Advisors complaining about the reporters of *Hong Kong Connection* for not having made a full analysis of the "721 Incident" after one year, but, instead, picked on him during the interview. Although the Chairman of the Board indicated that he had no intention of handling the complaint, he exchanged views on some of the perspectives provided in the letter with members of the Board and D of B at the meeting held in July 2020.

38. At the meeting, D of B responded that when handling diverging views in society, RTHK would not give up any angle to follow up. However, when producing documentaries in search of the truth, it was not just about reporting equal number of views of each side of the argument. In the case of having many perspectives to an issue, the media practitioner had to be particularly circumspect about how to strike a true balance. He believed that, from whatever angle one might judge, be it journalistic, documentary, shooting, editing, investigation, or material selection perspective, the quality of the two episodes of *Hong Kong Connection* concerning the "721 Incident" ("*Hong Kong Connection: 721 Who Holds the Truth*" and "*Hong Kong Connection: 721 Yuen Long Nightmare*") was good enough to be used as teaching materials and regarded as a model of journalism. As *Hong Kong Connection* was a unit-based programme, it might not be appropriate to produce a whole series of programme on a single topic. However, RTHK had allowed in-depth and diversified discussions on the "721 Incident" through other TV and radio programmes, including news reports and phone-in programmes, so that viewers could express different comments and voice different opinions. He further said that this kind of investigative programme would sometimes inevitably cause some people to feel offended, and thus draw vigorous reactions.

Questions raised at Council meetings

39. Members had raised questions relating to issues relevant to RTHK

at various Council meetings. Details of the questions and the Administration's replies are given in the hyperlinks in **Appendix II**.

Latest position

40. CEDB announced in May 2020 that a dedicated team would be established to conduct an internal review on RTHK's administration, its progress of implementing the recommendations of the Audit Report No. 71, as well as its overall management systems, processes and practices, with the objective of ensuring that the department's public broadcasting services would fully abide by the requirements stipulated in the Charter, all applicable Government rules and regulations, and the codes of practice on programming standards issued by CA. Mrs Jessie TING YIP Yin-mei, a directorate administrative officer, would lead the dedicated team comprising officers from various grades of the Government, such as Assistant Director of Broadcasting, RTHK, Mr Albert CHEUNG Kin-wah. The Administration released the Governance and Management of Radio Television Hong Kong Review Report in February 2021, and will brief the Panel on the findings and recommendations of the review on 15 March 2021.

Advice sought

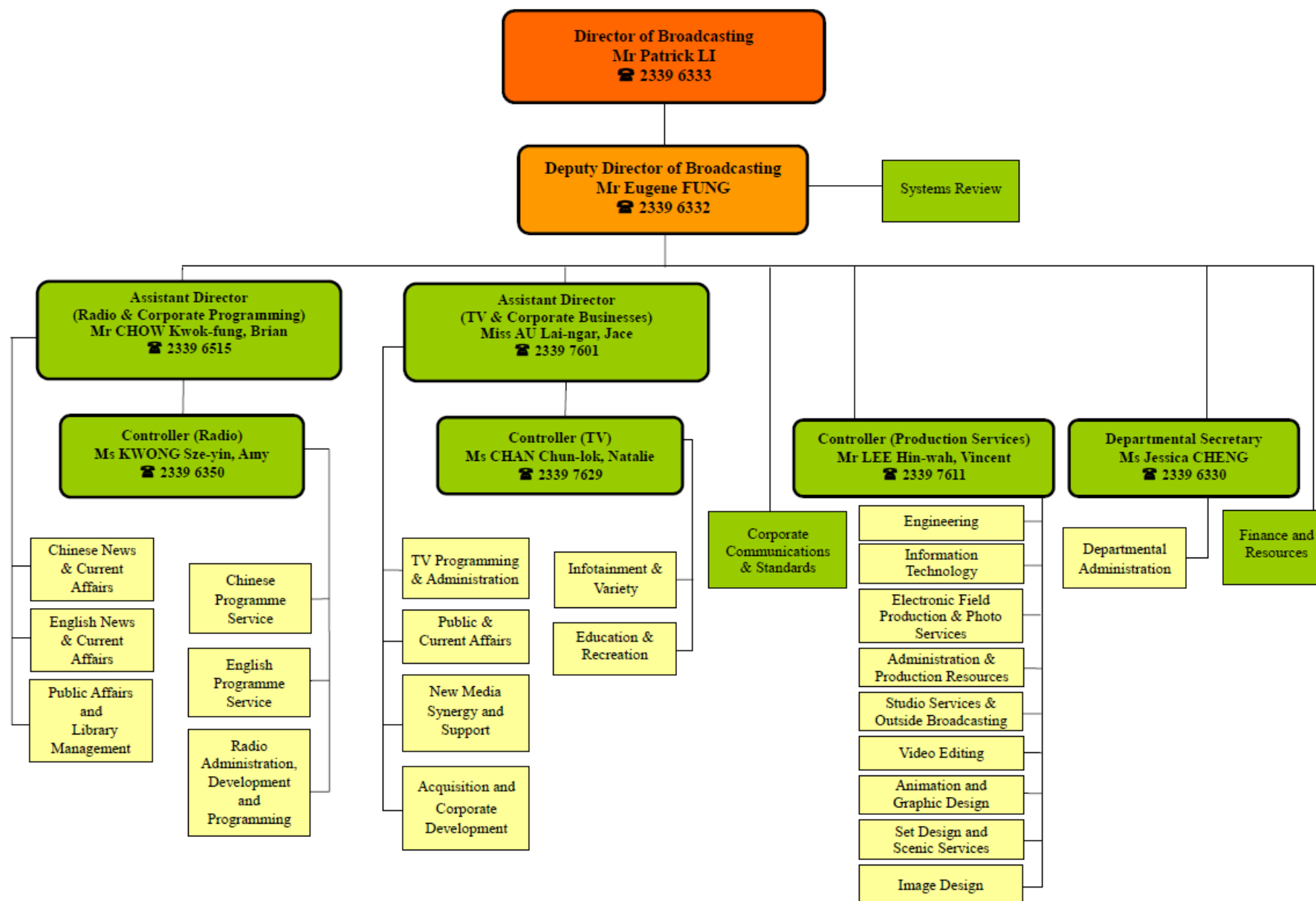
41. Members are invited to comment on the operation and governance of RTHK, and discuss how to strengthen collaboration and coordination between RTHK and ISD.

Relevant papers

42. A list of relevant papers is set out in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 March 2021

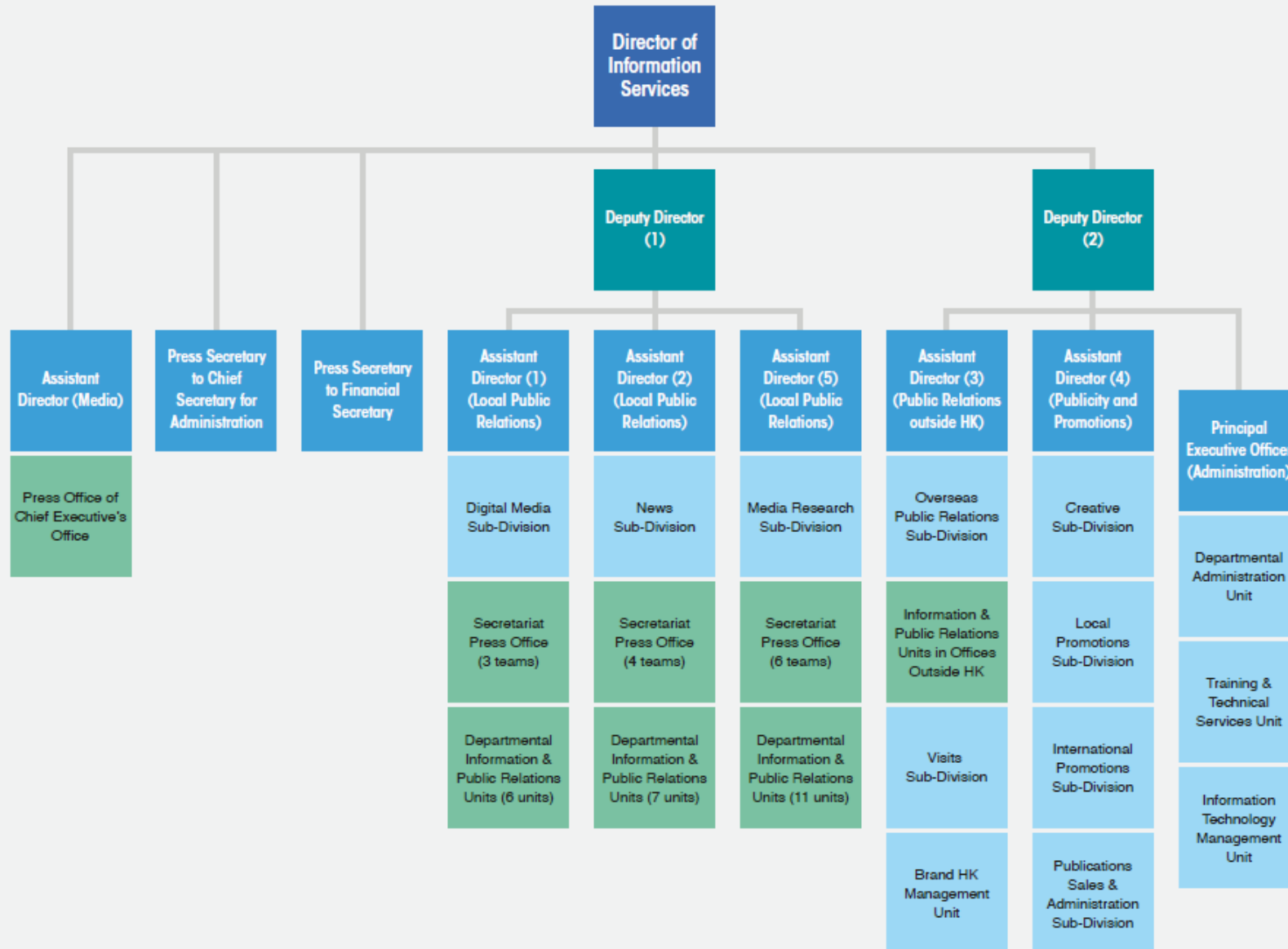
Organization Chart of Radio Television Hong Kong (as at 1.3.2021)



Source: RTHK

Information Services Department - Organisation Chart

27 July 2020



Source: Information Services Department

List of relevant papers

Committee	Meeting date	Paper
Finance Committee	8 to 12 April 2019	Special meetings of the Finance Committee to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2019-2020 Minutes of meeting
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	29 October 2019	Administration's paper on 2019 Policy Address - Policy initiatives of Communications and Creative Industries Branch, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau LC Paper No. CB(1)42/19-20(02) Minutes of policy briefing LC Paper No. CB(1)242/19-20
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting	11 May 2020	Administration's paper on the Governance and Management of Radio Television Hong Kong LC Paper No. CB(1)593/19-20(05) Minutes of meeting LC Paper No. CB(1)876/19-20
Council	27 May 2020	Question No. 12 raised by Hon Elizabeth QUAT Operation of RTHK
Council	27 May 2020	Question No. 16 raised by Hon Alvin YEUNG Office accommodation for RTHK
Council	3 June 2020	Question No. 5 raised by Hon Alvin YEUNG Office accommodation for RTHK

Committee	Meeting date	Paper
Council	17 June 2020	Question No. 16 raised by Hon Charles Peter MOK Operation and development of RTHK
Council	21 October 2020	Question No. 20 raised by Hon Charles Peter MOK Work of dedicated team to review governance and management of RTHK
Council	28 October 2020	Question No. 5 raised by Hon Charles Peter MOK Appointment of RTHK staff members