立法會 Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)664/05-06 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/BC/13/04

Bills Committee on Financial Reporting Council Bill

Minutes of the sixth meeting held on Tuesday, 6 December 2005, at 8:30 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present: Hon TAM Heung-man (Chairman)

Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP

Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC

Members absent: Hon Albert HO Chun-yan

Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP

Hon Bernard CHAN, JP

Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP

Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP

Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP

Public officers attending

: Mr Albert LAM

Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

(Financial Services)

Mr Alan LO

Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the

Treasury (Financial Services)

Mr Jackie LIU

Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

(Financial Services)

Mr Gordon JONES, JP Registrar of Companies

Mr Lawrence PENG Senior Assistant Law Draftsman Department of Justice

Miss Selina LAU Government Counsel Department of Justice

Clerk in attendance: Miss Salumi CHAN

Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance: Mr KAU Kin-wah

Assistant Legal Adviser 6

Ms Connie SZETO

Senior Council Secretary (1)4

I. Meeting with the Administration

(LC Paper No. CB(1)420/05-06(01) — "Follow-up to the fifth meeting on 17 November 2005" prepared by the Legislative

prepared by the Legislative

Council Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03) — Paper provided by the

Administration on "Component Two — Audit Investigation

Board"

LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03) — Paper provided by the

Administration on "Summary of submissions and

Administration's responses")

The Bills Committee deliberated (Index of proceedings attached at **Appendix**).

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Follow-up actions to be taken by the Administration

Admin 2. At the request of the Bills Committee, the Administration agreed to take the following actions:

(a) Interface between the investigation and disciplinary proceedings
In connection with item 3 of the list of follow-up actions for the meeting
on 17 November 2005 (LC Paper No. CB(1)420/05-06(01)), the
Administration was requested to provide a written response to that item
and to some members' view that it should be set out clearly, before the
Financial Reporting Council (FRC) started its operation, how to deal
with fresh evidence or new complaints on a case, which were received
after the case had been referred by the FRC to the Hong Kong Institute
of Certified Public Accountants.

(b) Composition and resource requirements of the Audit Investigation Board (AIB)

Given that there would be only one AIB and that it would consist of a chairman (i.e. the Chief Executive Officer of the FRC) and at least one other member appointed by the FRC, members of the Bills Committee were concerned whether the AIB would have sufficient members and relevant expertise to handle cases of different nature and complexity at the same time. The Administration was requested to provide a paper with the following information:

- (i) The anticipated workload of the AIB;
- (ii) In view of the different nature and complexity of the cases, whether the chairman of the AIB would be able to oversee the investigation work of all cases, and whether sufficient resources would be available for the AIB to engage quality employees and consultants to undertake the investigation;
- (iii) The proposed number of members for the AIB upon its establishment;
- (iv) Whether the "at least one other member appointed by the FRC" referred to in clause 22(2)(b) were members of the FRC;
- (v) The selection criteria of the FRC for appointment of members to the AIB; and
- (vi) Whether new members might be appointed to the AIB after its establishment; if yes -
 - the circumstances under which new members might be

Action - 4 -

appointed; and

• whether the new members would be allowed to handle cases where the investigation work had already commenced or almost completed; if yes, how to address the concern that it was unfair to the parties concerned if the new members, who had no or little involvement in the investigation of the cases, were allowed to make decisions and/or recommendations on the cases.

(c) Powers of the AIB

The Administration was requested to provide a paper with the following information:

- (i) The criteria for the FRC to determine whether it would undertake investigation into an irregularity or direct the AIB to undertake the investigation (clause 23(1), (2) and (3)). Please illustrate with examples;
- (ii) The purpose of clause 23(4), which provided that the FRC might direct the AIB to cease investigation of a case, and the criteria for the FRC to exercise such power. Please illustrate with examples; and
- (iii) In connection with item (ii) above, members noted the example quoted by the Administration that the FRC might direct the AIB to cease investigation of a case if the case was of a criminal nature. The FRC might then refer the case to the law enforcement agencies (e.g. the Police, or the Independent Commission Against Corruption) for further investigation or law enforcement action. Given that cases of a criminal nature might also involve professional misconduct, the Administration was requested to consider whether it was appropriate for the AIB to cease investigation and leave the cases entirely to the law enforcement agencies.

(d) Checks and balances of the AIB

- (i) Members expressed concern that the common law privilege against self-incriminating was abrogated by clause 31(9) and replaced with a statutory prohibition against the admissibility of self-incriminating evidence in criminal proceedings (clause 30(2)). The Administration was requested to review clauses 31(9) and 30(2) and provide a written response to the following points:
 - Article 39 of the Basic Law provided that the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) should be implemented through the laws of the Hong Kong

- Special Administrative Region. Article 14(3)(g) of the ICCPR (replicated in Article 11(2)(g) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights) provided that a person was not to be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt in the determination of any criminal charge against him. The Administration was requested to elaborate on its view that clause 30(2) was consistent with Article 14(3)(g) of the ICCPR; and
- According to jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, disciplinary proceedings were regarded as quasi-criminal proceedings or criminal proceedings. The Administration was requested to make reference to the relevant case laws and court judgement, and consider whether the statutory prohibition against the admissibility of self-incriminating evidence in criminal proceedings, as provided in clause 30(2), should be extended to cover disciplinary proceedings.
- (ii) The Administration agreed to consider proposing a Committee Stage amendment (CSA) to the effect that the AIB should, before submitting a written report to the FRC on the findings of an investigation, give any person, who might be the subject of any criticism in the AIB's report, a reasonable opportunity of being heard (Paragraph 20 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03)). In this connection, the Administration was requested to consider a member's view that the proposed CSA should have the effect of providing the person with the right to have legal representation.

Date of next meeting

3. <u>The Chairman</u> reminded members that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 20 December 2005, at 10:45 am.

(*Post-meeting note:* As directed by the Chairman, the starting time of the meeting to be held on 20 December 2005 was changed to 11:00 am. Members were informed of the arrangement vide LC Paper No. CB(1)491/05-06 on 9 December 2005.)

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II. Any other business

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:30 am.

Council Business Division 1 <u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u> 10 January 2006

Proceedings of the sixth meeting of the Bills Committee on Financial Reporting Council Bill on Tuesday, 6 December 2005, at 8:30 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
000000-000500	Chairman Ms Emily LAU Administration Clerk	Items 1 and 2 of the list of follow up actions for the last meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)420/05-06(01))	Required
		Administration's confirmation that it would consider members' view and request as stated in items 1 and 2 of the list	
000501-003634	Chairman Ms Emily LAU Administration Clerk Mr Andrew LEUNG Assistant Legal Adviser 6 (ALA6)	Interface between the investigation and disciplinary proceedings (Item 3 of LC Paper No. CB(1)420/05-06(01)) (a) Members' view that it should be set out clearly, before the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) started its operation, how to deal with fresh evidence or new complaints on a case, which were received after the case had been referred by the FRC to the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) (b) The Administration's advice, as follows:	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
			Required
		expressed support for the FRC to enter into	
		Memorandum of	
		Understanding (MOU)	
		with the HKICPA and	
		other regulators and law	
		enforcement agencies	
		setting out the detailed	
		arrangements on	
		cooperation among	
		them;	
		(ii) It was envisaged that	
		the MOU between the	
		FRC and the HKICPA	
		would set out the	
		arrangements for	
		provision of assistance	
		and referral of cases,	
		including the matters referred to in item (a)	
		above; and	
		,	
		(iii) If the HKICPA had	
		commenced	
		disciplinary	
		proceedings on a case, it would be more	
		it would be more appropriate for the	
		parties concerned to	
		submit fresh evidence,	
		if any, to the HKICPA,	
		instead of the FRC	
		(a) Mandania	
		(c) Member's enquiry on whether the FRC would	
		initiate new investigation into	
		a case, which had already	
		been referred to the HKICPA,	
		upon receipt of new	
		complaints on the case	

Time marker	Speaker	Sub	ject(s)	Action
				Required
		(d) The Admir as follows:	nistration's advice,	
		a ca thresh were might invest which	l circumstances of use, and if the holds in clause 23 passed, the FRC	
		into N bodie arrang	FRC would enter MOU with relevant s setting out gements in respect m (i) above	
		(e) ALA6's ad	vice, as follows:	
		evide which referr and proce by the alread would appro partie submi-	the disciplinary edings conducted the HKICPA had the HKICPA had the HKICPA had the HKICPA the more opriate for the seconcerned to the the fresh	
		(ii) If nev lodge	w complaints were d with the	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		HKICPA, it would handle the complaints in accordance with the mechanism provided in the Professional Accountants Ordinance (PAO); and	Required
		(iii) If new complaints were lodged with the FRC, it would decide whether or not to investigate the complaints	
		(f) Administration's agreement with ALA6's views set out in item (e) above	
		(g) Member's views, as follows:	
		(i) Given that clause 9 set out the statutory functions of the FRC, which included receiving and investigating into complaints concerning relevant irregularities, the FRC could not abdicate or delegate its statutory functions under clause 9 to other bodies;	
		(ii) As such, the FRC could not refer complaints about auditing irregularities under its purview to the relevant bodies through the MOU; and	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
Time marker	Speaker	 (iii) It was not clear what purpose would be achieved by the MOU (h) The Administration's advice, as follows: (i) Clause 23 provided that the FRC might initiate a preliminary investigation if it appeared to the FRC that there were circumstances suggesting that there was a relevant irregularity in relation to a listed entity, or an 	Action Required
		extensive investigation if the FRC had reasonable cause to believe that there was a relevant irregularity in relation to a listed entity; and (ii) If the thresholds provided in clause 23 were not met, the FRC might decide not to undertake any investigation into the case. If the thresholds were met, the FRC might undertake investigation and it was envisaged that the MOU entered between the FRC and the	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
Time marker	Бреаксі	enforcement bodies would provide a smooth interface between FRC's investigation and the HKICPA's disciplinary proceedings/law enforcement bodies' proceedings. (i) The Administration's confirmation that the MOU was a general agreement, but not an agreement for individual cases (j) Request for the Administration to provide a written response to item 3 of LC Paper No.	Required The Administration to take action under paragraph 2(a) of the minutes
003635-010700	Chairman Clerk Administration Ms Emily LAU ALA6	CB(1)420/05-06(01) and the view in item (a) above Part 1 (Clause 4 – "Relevant irregularity"), Part 3 (Composition of the Audit Investigation Board; scope of the investigation; investigation powers; referral of cases, etc., Schedule 4 to the Bill) Organizational structure of the Audit Investigation Board (AIB) (Paragraphs 5 to 6 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03)) (a) Briefing by the Administration (b) Briefing by the Clerk on the relevant comments by deputations (Item 4.7 of LC	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		Paper No.	Required
		CB(1)166/05-06(03))	
		(c) Member's and ALA6's enquiries about the establishment, size, composition, operation, and monitoring of the AIB	
		(d) The Administration's advice, as follows:	
		(i) Only one AIB would be established under the FRC to act as its executive arm for undertaking investigation into relevant irregularities;	
		(ii) The AIB would be chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the FRC, who would be supported by full-time employees of the FRC and its consultants;	
		(iii) The AIB would consist of a minimum of two members (including the Chairman) and there was no upper limit on the number of members. The FRC would have the flexibility to decide on the size of the AIB in the light of caseload and resources available;	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
Time marker	Speaker	and (iv) The FRC would monitor the work of the AIB through reports submitted by the AIB (e) Member's concern that given that there would be only one AIB and that it would consist of a chairman (i.e. the CEO of the FRC) and at least one other member appointed by the FRC, the AIB might not have sufficient members and relevant expertise to handle cases of different nature and complexity at the same time (f) Request for the Administration to provide a paper with the following information: (i) The anticipated workload of the AIB; (ii) In view of the different nature and complexity of the cases, whether the chairman of the AIB would be able to oversee the investigation work of all cases, and whether sufficient resources would be available for the AIB to engage quality employees and consultants to undertake the investigation;	Action Required The Administration to take action under paragraph 2(b) of the minutes

Time marker	Speaker		Subject(s)	Action Bogyinad
				Required
		(iii)	The proposed number of members for the AIB upon its establishment;	
		(iv)	Whether the "at least one other member appointed by the FRC" referred to in clause 22(2)(b) were members of the FRC;	
		(v)	The selection criteria of the FRC for appointment of members to the AIB; and	
		(vi)	Whether new members might be appointed to the AIB after its establishment; if yes –	
			 the circumstances under which new members might be appointed; and whether the new members would be allowed to handle cases where the investigation work had already commenced or almost completed; if yes, how to address the concern that it was unfair to the 	
			parties concerned if the new members, who had no or little	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		involvement in the investigation of the cases, were allowed to make decisions and/or recommendations on the cases	Troquir ou
010701-011341	Mr Ronny TONG Administration	Investigation by the AIB The Administration's advice, as follows: (a) The AIB would exercise the powers under clauses 25 to 28 to undertake preliminary and extensive investigations into relevant irregularities; and (b) Depending on the actual circumstances of a case, the investigations might be undertaken by different levels of staff of the FRC	
011342-012100	Ms Emily LAU Administration	Powers of the AIB (a) Member's enquiries, as follows: (i) The circumstances under which the FRC might undertake investigation into a case by itself or direct the AIB to undertake the investigation (subclauses (1), (2) and (3) of clause 23); and	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		('') TI	Required
		(ii) The circumstances under which the FRC might direct the AIB to cease investigation of a case (clause 23(4))	
		(b) The Administration's advice, as follows:	
		(i) As the FRC might direct the AIB to undertake investigation under subclauses (1), (2) and (3) of clause 23, it was appropriate to empower the FRC to cease AIB's investigation when necessary under subclause (4);	
		(ii) The FRC might consider giving direction to the AIB to cease investigation of a case if the case was of a criminal nature; and	
		(iii) The modus operandi of the AIB was in some ways similar to that of the Investigation Committee (IC) of the HKICPA and the Accountancy Investigation and Discipline Board (AIDB) of the United Kingdom (UK). In practice, the investigation work of	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
			Required
		the IC and the AIDB was conducted by staff of the HKICPA and the Executive Counsel of the AIDB (who was a legally qualified officer of the AIDB) respectively	
		(c) Request for the Administration to provide a paper with the following information:	The Administration to take action under paragraph 2(c)(i) and (ii) of the minutes
		(i) The criteria for the FRC to determine whether it would undertake investigation into an irregularity or direct the AIB to undertake the investigation (clause 23(1), (2) and (3)), to be illustrated with examples; and	
		(ii) The purpose of clause 23(4), which provided that the FRC might direct the AIB to cease investigation of a case, and the criteria for the FRC to exercise such power, to be illustrated with examples	
012101-013132	Chairman Administration Clerk Ms Emily LAU ALA6	Jurisdiction of the AIB (Paragraphs 7 to 13 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03)) (a) Briefing by the Administration, as follows:	

Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		Required
	irregularity" to me "auditing irregu	elevant ean an clarity" corting to (6) the here a
	(ii) Subclauses (4) to clause 4 were mo on section 34 of PAO which set of areas of irregular currently subject investigation by to of the HKICPA; a	odelled of the out the larities to the the IC
	irregularities investigated by th could fall withi jurisdiction of disciplinary proceedings unde PAO, and the ensuring that would be s	e new ities in to to ith a g that elevant he AIB in the the erefore there smooth
	Speaker	(i) Subclause (1) of 4 defined "re irregularity" to m "auditing irregu and a "rep irregularity". Subclauses (4) specified circumstances where relevant irregularity occurred; (ii) Subclauses (4) to clause 4 were mo on section 34 of PAO which set of areas of irregularity subject investigation by of the HKICPA; a (iii) The Bill did propose to creat types of irregularities investigated by the could fall within jurisdiction of disciplinary proceedings und PAO, and the ensuring that

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		the HKICPA's disciplinary proceedings	Required
		(b) Briefing by the Clerk on the relevant comments by deputations, including comments on the meaning of "relevant irregularity" provided in clause 4 (Items 3.15 to 3.17, 4.5 and 4.6 of LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03))	
		(c) The Administration's briefing on its written response to item 4.5 of LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03)	
		(d) Member's emphasis of the need for the Administration to ensure a smooth interface mentioned in item (a) above	
		(e) ALA6's concern that in the absence of the actual operational procedures, it was not clear how the interface could be effected	
		(f) The Administration's view that the Bills Committee might examine issues relating to item (e) above during the clause-by-clause examination of the Bill	
013133-013638	Chairman Administration Clerk	Powers of the AIB (Paragraphs 14 to 17 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03))	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		(a) Briefing by the Administration, as follows:	Required
		(i) The AIB's main and supplementary powers for undertaking investigation were modelled on those provided to the Securities and Futures Commission in relation to investigation of a listed corporation under sections 179, 182, 183, 185 and 191 of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (SFO); and	
		(ii) The proposed investigatory powers for the AIB represented enhancement to the existing powers vested in the IC of the HKICPA and would provide stronger teeth to the investigation function for the auditing profession	
		(b) Briefing by the Clerk on the relevant comments by deputations (Items 4.8 to 4.17, 4.22 to 4.24 of LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03))	
		(c) The Administration's briefing on its written response to item 4.10 of LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03))	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
013639-013824	Mr Ronny TONG Administration	Legal professional privilege The Administration's advice that clause 55 contained provision on legal professional privilege	
013825-014239	Chairman Administration Clerk	Check and balances of the AIB (Paragraphs 18 to 20 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03)) (a) Briefing by the Administration (b) The Administration's undertaking to consider proposing a Committee Stage amendment (CSA) to the effect that the AIB should, before submitting a written report to the FRC on the findings of an investigation, give any person, who might be the subject of any criticism in the AIB's report, a reasonable opportunity of being heard (Paragraph 20 of LC Paper No.	The Administration to take action under paragraph 2(d)(ii) of the minutes
		CB(1)286/05-06(03)) (c) Briefing by the Clerk on the relevant comments by deputations (Items 4.18 to 4.21, 4.25, 6.4, 6.5 and 6.7 of LC Paper No. CB(1)166/05-06(03)), and that the CSA proposed by the Administration in item (b)	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		above would address the concern raised by some of the deputations	Required
014240-015654	Ms Emily LAU Administration ALA6 Mr Ronny TONG	Prohibition of the use of incriminating evidence in criminal proceedings (Paragraph 18 of LC Paper No. CB(1) 286/05-06(03)) (a) The Administration's advice, as follows: (i) Clause 31(9) provided that a person was not excused from complying with an information-gathering requirement under clauses 25, 26, 27 or 28 only on the ground that to do so might tend to incriminate him; (ii) Although by virtue of	
		clause 31(9), the common law privilege for a person against self-incriminating was abrogated, clause 30(2) expressly provided that such incriminating evidence was not admissible in evidence against the person in criminal proceedings (other than proceedings in which the person was charged with an offence under clause 31 of the Bill, or under Part V of	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		the Crimes Ordinand (Cap. 200), or for perjury);	e
		(iii) Clause 30(2) did no cover disciplinar proceedings;	
		clause 30(2).	o It a a cr C d y ree a, g e e ot e e
		(v) Clauses 31(9) and 3 were modelled of sections 184(4) and 18 of the SFO; and	n
		(vi) Clause 30(2) was consistent with Artice 14(3)(g) of the International Covenar on Civil and Politice Rights (ICCPF (replicated in Artice 11(2)(g) of the Horn Kong Bill of Rights which guaranteed that person was not to be	e e e nt nt al l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt in the determination of any criminal charge against him	Required
		(b) Members expressed concern that the common law privilege against self-incriminating was abrogated by clause 31(9) and replaced with a statutory prohibition against the admissibility of self-incriminating evidence in criminal proceedings (clause 30(2))	
		Administration to take the to to following actions:	e Administration take action under ragraph 2(d)(i) of e minutes
		(ii) To provide a written response to the following points:	
		• Article 39 of the Basic Law provided that the provisions of the ICCPR should be implemented through the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Article	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		14(3)(g) of the	Required
		ICCPR (replicated	
		in Article 11(2)(g)	
		of the Hong Kong	
		Bill of Rights)	
		provided that a	
		person was not to be	
		compelled to testify	
		against himself or to	
		confess guilt in the	
		determination of any	
		requested to elaborate on its view	
		that clause 30(2)	
		was consistent with	
		Article 14(3)(g) of	
		the ICCPR; and	
		• According to	
		jurisprudence of the	
		European Court of	
		Human Rights,	
		disciplinary	
		proceedings were	
		regarded as	
		quasi-criminal	
		proceedings or	
		criminal	
		proceedings. The	
		Administration was	
		requested to make	
		reference to the	
		relevant case laws	
		and court	
		judgement, and	
		consider whether the	
		statutory prohibition	
		against the	
		admissibility of	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action
		self-incriminating evidence in criminal proceedings, as provided in clause 30(2), should be extended to cover disciplinary proceedings; and (iii) To consider a member's view that the proposed CSA for giving any person an opportunity of being heard (Paragraph 20 of LC Paper No. CB(1)286/05-06(03)) should have the effect of providing the person with the right to have legal representation	The Administration to take action under paragraph 2(d)(ii) of the minutes
015655-015854	Ms Emily LAU ALA6	Clause 23(4) (a) Member's request for the Administration to provide information on the criteria for the FRC to exercise the power of directing the AIB to cease investigation of a case (clause 23(4)); and (b) Noting the example quoted by the Administration that the FRC might direct the AIB to cease investigation of a case if the case was of a criminal nature and then refer the case	
		to the law enforcement agencies (e.g. the Police, or the Independent Commission	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action Required
		Against Corruption) for further investigation or law enforcement action, a member requested that as cases of a criminal nature might also involve professional misconduct, the Administration should consider whether it was appropriate for the AIB to cease investigation and leave the cases entirely to the law enforcement agencies	
015855-015910	Chairman	Date of next meeting	

Council Business Division 1 <u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u> 10 January 2006