

For discussion
24 February 2005

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Extension of Temporary Jobs in the Public Sector

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's proposal to extend about 10 000 temporary jobs created in the public sector.

Background

2. Since 2000, the Administration created a number of temporary jobs in the public sector to help the unemployed enter/re-enter the labour market and to meet operational needs. In 2004, some 11 700 of these temporary jobs were extended. Most of these jobs will expire by end-March 2005.

3. As announced by the Chief Executive in his 2005 Policy Address, the Administration proposes to extend about 10 000 temporary jobs in the public sector to meet operational needs.

Proposal

4. We propose to extend about **10 000 temporary jobs** at an estimated cost of **\$779.56 million**. Taking into account the anticipated balance of funds under various non-recurrent commitments approved for job creation, we propose to earmark an additional amount of \$633.57 million for the proposed extension. Of these jobs, some 3 500 are for youths and the remaining for other age groups, primarily the middle-aged. The following paragraphs set out the current plan of the various departments/agencies in job extension. A summary table is at **Annex I**. Details such as the number, type and duration of jobs may be fine-tuned during implementation to reflect changing operational requirements, turnover rate, lead time for recruitment, etc.

(I) *Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)*

5. AFCD proposes to extend **322 jobs** to provide cleansing and maintenance services (such as grass-cutting) in various country parks as well as to maintain hygiene standards and animal welfare in animal management centres for a period of **ten to 12 months** at an estimated cost of **\$24.56 million**.

(II) *Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)*

6. FEHD proposes to extend about **2 100 temporary jobs**, for a period of **six to 12 months**, at an estimated cost of **\$212.20 million**. Most of these jobs will be created by private contractors hired by the Department to provide cleansing and cleansing-related services (such as pest control work) in streets and at public places and venues (such as cooked food markets/bazaars).

(III) *Hospital Authority (HA)*

7. HA proposes to extend **2 232 jobs** for **ten to 12 months** at an estimated cost of **\$200.00 million**. Of these, 1 776 are care assistants and general workers, who will provide support to clinicians, nurses and other health professionals in mundane duties, so that the latter could concentrate on patient care and other infection control/health measures. These care workers also perform general cleansing, portering and other housekeeping and domestic services in wards and general areas which greatly assist in maintaining the hygiene standard of hospitals and clinics. Another 456 are construction workers and related supervisory staff who will carry out minor repair and improvement works in hospitals and clinics to maintain and improve their physical environment.

(IV) *Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)*

8. LCSD proposes to extend **1 399 youth training jobs and temporary cleansing jobs** for periods of up to **12 months** at an estimated cost of **\$85.21 million**. Of these, 599 youth training jobs aim to provide assistance to, for example, the operation of public libraries, as well as sports and cultural venues/programmes. The remaining 800 temporary jobs are proposed to be extended to continue the cleansing service for some 1 400 public leisure venues.

(V) Social Welfare Department (SWD)

9. SWD proposes to extend **3 836 jobs** for **12 months** at an estimated cost of **\$249.59 million**. These include 100 community work organizers (to reinforce the Support for Self-reliance Scheme), 2 000 youth ambassadors (to primarily assist in the organization of promotional activities on personal/environmental hygiene among the elderly and other community members), 150 peer counsellors (to help social workers in providing assistance to Form 3 school leavers), 1 303 programme assistants (to help social workers in the organization of activities for the disabled, elderly, family and youth), and 283 care assistants (to enhance the personal care services for frail elders).

(VI) Tourism Commission (TC)

10. Having critically reviewed the operational needs at the land boundary control points and the training opportunities provided to young people, TC proposes to extend a total of **194 training places** (including 10 Supervisors for **12 months** and 92 Tourism Development Assistants (TDAs) per batch for two **6-month** periods) under the Tourism Development Assistant Training Project at an estimated cost of **\$8.00 million**. The TDAs will help ease the passenger flow at immigration counters by assisting visitors to use the Expeditious Immigration Clearance System, and distribute tourism-related information leaflets to visitors. Training will be provided to the TDAs prior to deployment and career development programme will be offered to them after completion of the training programme.

Support services for those whose temporary jobs will not be extended

11. In the light of the critical review and assessment by the relevant departments/agencies, around 86% of those 11 700 temporary jobs are proposed to be further extended this year. After very careful assessment and consideration by the departments concerned, over 1650 jobs will not be extended because there is no longer any operational need to retain those jobs. A table comparing the number of temporary jobs which the Administration undertook to create under FCR(2003-04)57 in 2004 and that to be extended this year is at **Annex II**. The temporary jobs which will not be extended include programme and community assistants, cleansing workers and related staff and care assistants. Programme and community assistants were mainly created to meet HAD's short-term needs, such as Legislative Council election-related activities, which had

been completed. As for the rest of the posts not to be extended, the departments/agencies concerned have reviewed carefully the possibility of extending them but concluded that there was no real operational need for doing so. For workers whose temporary jobs will not be extended, LD will assist them to find jobs in the open market. The host departments concerned will also provide information on job search, as appropriate. As the economy and labour market continue to improve, there will be more job opportunities in the private sector for these workers.

Way Forward

12. We plan to seek Finance Committee's (FC's) funding approval at its meeting on 4 March 2005 to increase the approved commitments for creation of temporary jobs by AFCD, FEHD, HA, LCSD and SWD, involving a net additional funding of \$633.57 million. The job extension proposed by TC (paragraph 10 above) will be funded entirely by the uncommitted balance for TC in the commitment approved by FC in February 2004.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
Labour Department
February 2005

A summary of temporary jobs to be extended

Department/ agency concerned	Type of jobs	Estimated number of jobs¹	Duration (months)¹	Estimated cost (\$ million)	Estimated additional funding required² (\$ million)
AFCD	Jobs to provide cleansing and maintenance services to country parks as well as to maintain hygiene standards and animal welfare in animal management centres	322	10 to 12	24.56	23.00
FEHD	Jobs mainly engaged through private contractors to provide cleansing and cleansing-related services to streets and public venues/places	2 100	6 to 12	212.20	100.00
HA	Care assistants and general workers to provide support to clinicians, nurses and other health professionals; construction workers and other staff to carry out minor repair and maintenance works in hospitals and clinics	2 232	10 to 12	200.00	200.00
LCSD	Trainees to provide assistance to, for example, the operation of public libraries, as well as sports and cultural venues/programmes; workers to continue the cleansing services for some 1 400 public leisure venues	1 399	up to 12	85.21	73.00

¹ The number and duration of jobs to be extended might vary having regard to operational needs of departments/agencies concerned.

² In estimating the additional amount proposed to be earmarked for the extension exercise, we have taken into account the anticipated balance of funds under various commitments approved for job extension over the years.

Department/ agency concerned	Type of jobs	Estimated number of jobs¹	Duration (months)¹	Estimated cost (\$ million)	Estimated additional funding required² (\$ million)
SWD	Community work organizers to reinforce the Support for Self-reliance Scheme; youth ambassadors to primarily assist in the organization of promotional activities on personal/environmental hygiene among the elderly and other community members; peer counsellors to help social workers in providing assistance to Form 3 school leavers; programme assistants to help social workers in the organization of activities for the disabled, elderly, family and youth; care assistants to enhance the personal care services for frail elders	3 836	12	249.59	237.57
TC	Tourism Development Assistants (TDAs) to help ease the passenger flow at the immigration counters by assisting visitors to use the Expeditious Immigration Clearance System, and distribute tourism-related information leaflets to visitors (including 10 Supervisors and two batches of a total of 184 TDAs).	194	6 to 12	8.00	—
<i>Overall Total</i>		<i>10 083</i>		<i>779.56</i>	<i>633.57</i>

Annex II**A table comparing the number of jobs involved in the job extension exercises in 2004 and 2005**

Department/agency concerned	Number of committed openings under FCR(2003-04)57 in 2004	Estimated number of jobs proposed to be extended in 2005	Change
AFC D	280	322	+42
FEHD	3 287	2 100	-1 187
HA	2 420	2 232	-188
HAD	358	0	-358
LCSD	1 349	1 399	+50
SWD	3 855	3 836	-19
TC	205	194	-11
<i>Overall Total</i>	11 754	10 083	-1 671