

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)482/04-05
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Panel on Public Service

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 15 November 2004 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Bernard CHAN, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon KWONG Chi-kin

Member attending : Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Member absent : Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

Public officers attending : **Agenda Item IV**

Mr Joseph W P WONG, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mrs Rebecca LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mrs Jessie TING, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (2)

Attendance by invitation : Agenda Item IV

Mr Andrew ARNOLD
Director
Hay Group Limited

Clerk in attendance : Miss Salumi CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Ms Rosalind MA
Senior Council Secretary (1)8

Ms May LEUNG
Legislative Assistant

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)116/04-05 — Minutes of meeting on
12 October 2004)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2004 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted the information paper on “Maintaining a progressive Hong Kong Civil Service” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)94/04-05(01)) and issued on 21 October 2004.

III. Proposed discussion items for the Panel meetings to be held from December 2004 to June 2005

(LC Paper No. CB(1)178/04-05(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)209/04-05(01) — Letter dated 2 November 2004 from Hon WONG Kwok-hing

LC Paper No. CB(1)209/04-05(02) — Letter dated 3 November 2004 from Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

LC Paper No. CB(1)178/04-05(02) — List of follow-up actions)

3. The Chairman reported that he had discussed with the Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS) on 10 November 2004 on the discussion items proposed by members and the Administration for the Panel meetings to be held from December 2004 to June 2005. He then briefed members on the proposed discussion items set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)178/04-05(01).

4. Members agreed that the following items be discussed at the next regular meeting scheduled for 20 December 2004:

- (a) Review of civil service allowances — proposals for consultation on fringe benefit type of allowances; and
- (b) Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme 2005.

5. On paragraph 4(a) above, members noted that at the Panel meeting held on 12 October 2004, Ms LI Fung-ying had suggested that the Administration be invited to update the Panel on the progress of the review of civil service allowances. In this connection, the Administration proposed to brief the Panel on the outcome of the staff consultation on the phase one proposals of the review on fringe benefit type of allowances and the proposed measures under phase two of the review for staff consultation. As regards paragraph 4(b), members noted that the Administration would brief the Panel on the outcome of a review of the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award in 2004 and an outline of the activities in 2005.

6. The Chairman pointed out that the proposed discussion items for the meetings to be held from January to June 2005 were tentative and would have to be reviewed and updated in due course to meet the needs of the Panel and the Administration.

IV. Proposals on the pay level survey for the civil service

(LC Paper No. CB(1)178/04-05(03) — Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)178/04-05(04) — Consultation Paper on the Proposals on the Methodology of the Pay Level Survey and the Application of the Survey Results)

Declaration of interests

7. The Chairman and Mr Howard YOUNG declared that they were members of the Steering Committee on Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism.

8. Mr KWONG Chi-kin declared that his wife was a civil servant.

Proposed methodology of the pay level survey

Briefing by the Administration and consultant

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, SCS advised that the development of an improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism, which sought to maintain broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay, was an important milestone in the Administration's efforts to improve the civil service pay system and to address public comments on the existing pay adjustment mechanism. The exercise also aimed to facilitate the proper utilization of public funds and inspire public confidence in the civil service pay adjustment mechanism. Mr Andrew ARNOLD, Director of the Hay Group Limited, then briefed members, with the aid of a powerpoint presentation, on the major recommendations of the consultancy on the methodology of a pay level survey (PLS) for the civil service. He highlighted the major recommendations, as follows:

(a) Job comparison method

- Under the proposed broadly-defined job family method, civil service benchmark jobs would be categorized into five job families according to job content and work nature; and five job levels according to level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience. The pay of private sector benchmark jobs within the same job family and job level would be compared with the pay range of civil service benchmark jobs in the corresponding job family and job level.
- An intensive job inspection process would be carried out to ascertain details of the work nature and job characteristics of potential civil service benchmark jobs and to facilitate identification of corresponding private sector benchmark jobs.
- The PLS would include a starting salaries survey to compare the benchmark pay in each civil service qualification group with the starting salaries of those entry-level jobs in the private sector having similar requirements on qualification and experience.

(b) Selection of civil service benchmark jobs

The survey field would exclude those civil service grades/ranks that were not sufficiently representative of the civil service (e.g. those grades with less than 100 posts on the establishment), those without reasonable job matches in the private sector (e.g. directorate positions and disciplined services grades) and those with private sector counterparts only in organizations that made reference to the civil service pay scales or had done so in the past five years in determining the pay levels of their staff (e.g. grades in the medical and health, social welfare and education fields).

(c) Selection of private sector organizations

The selection criteria should broadly follow those in the pay trend surveys (PTSs), with necessary minor adjustments to cater for the difference in the objectives of PLS and PTS.

(d) Data collection and analysis

- The survey would collect information on all cash compensation elements (including basic salary, guaranteed bonus, cash allowances and variable pay) that were paid directly to the staff of the surveyed organizations during the survey reference period.
- Two aggregates of cash compensation would be compared, i.e. (i) the annual base salary (including basic salary and contractually guaranteed bonus) of the private sector benchmark jobs compared to the annual civil service salary paid for the corresponding range of civil service pay points of the civil service benchmark jobs; and (ii) the annual total cash compensation (including annual base salary and other cash payments) of the private sector benchmark jobs compared to the annual civil service salary paid for the corresponding range of civil service pay points of the civil service benchmark jobs, adjusted by the annual cost to the Government of the provision of major cash allowances to civil servants.

(e) Implications on pay trend survey

If PLSs were conducted frequently (say every three to five years), the precision and comprehensiveness required of PTSs would not be as critical as compared to the existing arrangements where PLSs were not conducted periodically. The Government might make reference to pay trend analyses available in the market instead of conducting customized PTSs, in considering any

necessary fine-tuning of civil service pay levels in between two PLSs.

(Post-meeting note: The powerpoint presentation material provided by the consultant and tabled at the meeting was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)249/04-05(01) on 16 November 2004.)

Scope of survey field

10. Noting that directorate positions would not be included in the survey field, Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered it unfair to target the PLS at the middle and lower ranks of the civil service.

11. The Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (PSCS) explained that in determining the criteria for selection of civil service benchmark jobs, the consultant recommended that the selected jobs should be reasonably representative of the civil service in terms of breadth and depth and be of reasonable number and manageable for pay data to be collected from private sector job matches. Jobs without reasonable job matches in the private sector (e.g. the disciplined services grades and the directorate positions) as well as jobs with private sector counterparts whose pay levels and adjustments were largely guided by civil service pay practices (e.g. grades in medical and health, social welfare and education fields) would be excluded from the survey field. PSCS pointed out that even with the exclusion of the above-mentioned grades, the proposed survey field of the PLS would still cover about 44% of the total number of posts in the civil service, thus providing a representative sample for data collection.

12. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was not convinced by the Administration's reply. He maintained his view that the proposed scope of PLS was unfair to the middle and lower ranks of the civil service. In this connection, Mr WONG referred to paragraph 5.12 of the consultation paper and expressed his concern that with the operating expenditure envelope approach in financial management on the one hand and the further delegation of civil service management authority to departmental and grade management on the other, the proposal of decentralizing pay administration would result in excessive authority for the departmental and grade management in both financial and human resources planning. Mr WONG was particularly concerned that the directorate officers, as the departmental and grade management, would be given absolute power in the deployment of financial resources under the envelope approach. He enquired whether the Administration would set a limit in the percentage of expenditure for personal emoluments for directorate officers in the operating expenditure envelope for each bureau and department so as to ensure that they could not protect their own pay levels at the expense of those of the civil servants at the middle and lower ranks.

13. In response, SCS clarified that as the number of directorate officers only constituted 0.9% of the total civil service establishment, the expenditure for the personal emoluments of directorate officers in each bureau and department represented only a small percentage of the total sum in the envelope. He explained that the introduction of the operating expenditure envelope approach aimed to achieve flexibility and effectiveness in financial management for better control of public expenditure. This approach was particularly appropriate under the present stringent financial position of the Government. SCS also pointed out that although not all civil service grades and ranks would be included in the survey field, the Administration had proposed to apply the survey results to all grades and ranks based on the existing system of internal pay relativities. In other words, directorate officers would not be excluded from the application of the survey results. SCS called upon Members to refrain from making unfair criticisms of directorate officers who were part of the civil service. In fact, most of the directorate officers were promoted to their present rank from the non-directorate ranks. He opined that endless criticisms of the directorate officers were unhealthy and might provoke discord between civil servants at directorate and non-directorate levels.

14. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was not satisfied with SCS's response. He regretted that SCS considered his views as provoking discord between civil servants at directorate and non-directorate levels.

15. The Chairman recalled that previous surveys had shown that the pay levels of directorate officers were lower than their private sector counterparts. If the directorate positions were included in the survey field of the upcoming PLS and the survey result was the same as that of the previous surveys, it would give rise to the question of whether the pay of the directorate officers should be increased.

16. SCS pointed out that as set out in the consultation paper, the Administration intended to carry out grade structure reviews separately after the completion of the current exercise. In doing so, priority would be accorded to certain grades/ranks which might have experienced notable changes in their job nature and requirements in recent years, in particular those that continued to have a recruitment need, such as the disciplined services grades. In addition, the Administration would consider conducting a pay review for the directorate positions. SCS also pointed out that generally speaking, the pay at the most senior levels of the civil service would be lower than that of similar levels in the private sector and this discrepancy should be accepted as reflecting an element of public service on the part of senior civil servants.

17. Mr WONG Kwok-hing also considered it unfair for not including non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff in the survey field, as they were required to take up the same duties and responsibilities as those civil servants at comparable ranks. In response, PSCS pointed out that the objective of the

NCSC Staff Scheme was to provide Heads of Department (HoDs) with greater flexibility to deploy their resources and to better enable them to meeting their changing service and operational needs. She advised that there were established guidelines on the scope, terms of employment, remuneration package, etc for HoDs to follow in the employment of NCSC staff. Responding to Mr WONG's concern about the potential difficulties encountered by NCSC staff in the Architectural Services Department in monitoring compliance of contractors due to their insecure terms of employment, PSCS advised that the departmental management concerned would put in place appropriate measures to address issues arising from the daily operation of the department. SCS also pointed out that as the upcoming PLS sought to compare the civil service pay and private sector pay, it would not include non-civil service positions, such as the positions held by NCSC staff. SCS appreciated Mr WONG's concern about the employment of NCSC staff and advised that the Civil Service Bureau would brief Members on the updated position of the subject at the Panel meeting to be held in April 2005.

Inherent differences between civil service and private sector jobs

18. Being concerned about the Administration's application of the principle of broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay, Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested the Administration to clarify the meaning of "broad comparability". He opined that the inherent differences in goals and operational needs between the Government and private organizations should be set out clearly before conducting the PLS, and the importance of maintaining a stable civil service should be highlighted as one of the major differences from the highly volatile employment policy adopted by the private sector.

19. In reply, SCS explained that broad comparability with private sector pay was an important factor in setting civil service pay, as the remuneration of civil servants was paid from the public purse and it should be regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public they served. He pointed out that as clearly set out in paragraph 2.3 of the consultation paper, the consultant was well aware of the need to take into account inherent differences in the nature of operation and the employment/remuneration practices between the civil service and the private sector in making comparison of the pay levels. Given the inherent differences, the Administration should seek to maintain broad comparability, rather than strict comparability, between civil service pay and private sector pay. SCS also pointed out that under the methodology of PLS recommended by the consultant, civil service jobs and private sector jobs that were broadly comparable in job content, work nature, level of responsibility and typical requirements on qualification and experience would be matched to serve as a basis for pay level comparison.

20. Noting the inherent differences between civil service and private sector jobs, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that upholding the principle of broad comparability between civil service pay and private sector pay was an impossible task to achieve. He pointed out that given the inherent differences in the primary goals of the private sector and the civil service, the former being profit-making and the latter being providing service to the community, the comparison of their job nature would not be comparing the like with like. Pointing out that private sector pay normally comprised cash compensation such as bonus, Mr LEE was also concerned that the comparison of pay data would not be made on a fair basis if only the annual base salary of civil service pay and private sector pay would be collected in the survey. In response, Mr Andrew ARNOLD explained that the survey would collect information on all cash compensation elements that were paid directly to the staff of the surveyed organizations. Based on the information collected, the two aggregates of cash compensation, inter alia, annual base salary and annual total cash compensation, would be analyzed to facilitate a comprehensive pay comparison between the civil service and the private sector.

21. Responding to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's enquiry about whether the seniority and/or years of experience in the job would be taken into account in the comparison, Mr Andrew ARNOLD said that instead of comparing the pay of jobs with similar years of service or seniority of the officers concerned, the proposed methodology would compare civil service pay and private sectors pay for comparable jobs in terms of job content, work nature as well as level of responsibility and requirements on qualification and experience. Mr LEE was concerned that given the relatively stable career of civil servants, they were generally having longer years of service in the job compared with their private sector counterparts. He considered it unfair and a serious policy defect if the years of service would not be taken into account in the pay comparison. In these circumstances, even the findings of PLS revealed a pay level disparity between the civil service and the private sector, such disparity might not be taken as representative. Mr KWONG Chi-kin also considered that the impact of the difference in years of service between civil servants and private sector employees on their pay levels should not be overlooked. He suggested that information on the years of service should be collected during PLS.

22. The Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service (2) (DSCS2) responded that the consultant recommended a job inspection process to ascertain the details of the work nature and job characteristics of the proposed civil service benchmark jobs. The years of work experience required of the jobs would be taken into consideration in this job inspection process. Quoting the works-related job family as an example, DSCS2 pointed out that this job family included jobs of different levels from those performing technical support and inspection to those offering professional services, and that the years of experience required would increase with the job level. Having regard to the situation of the civil service benchmark jobs, job descriptions would be prepared for each of the proposed

private sector benchmark jobs to facilitate the identification of comparable private sector jobs for the survey. Mr Andrew ARNOLD added that while it would be possible to collect data on elements such as the years of service in the organizations and the age of the employees, there were limitations in making a direct comparison of such information as the years of experience that was relevant to the current jobs had to be ascertained.

23. SCS said that the purpose of PLS was to obtain private sector pay data in a professional manner, based on broadly comparable job matches, in order to establish the extent to which civil service pay was broadly comparable to private sector pay. In the course of identifying job matches in the two sectors for comparison, it would not be practically feasible to look for jobs which were identical in all aspects. While appreciating members' concern about the inherent differences between civil service and private sector jobs, SCS said that the significance of the difference in years of service had yet to be established.

Other common job requirements in the private sector

24. Mrs Sophie LEUNG pointed out that in recent years, the private sector was putting more emphasis on the soft skills and core competencies of the employees concerned, rather than their years of experience or service, in the determination of pay levels. Responding to Mrs LEUNG's enquiry, Mr Andrew ARNOLD advised that these new types of job requirements would not be taken into consideration in data collection of the survey. He explained that the assessment of soft skills and core competencies involved subjective judgment, and would vary across different organizations and economic sectors. He advised that for the purpose of selecting civil service benchmark jobs and private sector job matches, the job requirements and job contents were examined in detail in an objective manner. Responding to Mrs LEUNG's further enquiry, Mr ARNOLD confirmed that in deciding the pay levels of individual employees, private sector organizations could, base on available market information, exercise flexibility and take into consideration elements such as soft skills and core competencies.

25. SCS appreciated Mrs LEUNG's concern and agreed that soft skills such as communication and interpersonal skills would certainly enhance the performance of an employee. While the Administration was committed to upgrading the performance of civil servants and the quality of the civil service through effective management, soft skills would not be included in the job description for private sector job matches for the purpose of the upcoming PLS.

26. Mrs Sophie LEUNG considered that certain soft skills and core competencies would be necessary for an individual to demonstrate good performance in his/her job and these elements should not be overlooked in the determination of the appropriate pay level.

Selection of private sector organizations for inclusion in the survey field

27. Pointing out that the selection of private sector organizations would have significant impact on the private sector pay data to be collected, Ms LI Fung-ying sought information on the selection criteria. In reply, Mr Andrew ARNOLD said that the criteria for selecting the organizations to be surveyed in PLS would broadly follow those in PTS. In selecting the private sector organizations, the consultant engaged for conducting PLS should ensure that the selected organizations met the set criteria, such as being steady and good employer conducting wage and salary administration on a rational and systematic basis, not using civil service pay scales or pay adjustments as the major factors in determining pay levels or pay adjustment of their staff and taken together, these organizations would encompass a reasonably wide range of economic sectors.

28. Ms LI Fung-ying expressed concern about the representativeness and transparency of the private sector organizations to be selected. DSCS2 responded that while the list of organizations had yet to be worked out by the consultant to be engaged for conducting PLS, the recommended selection criteria were set out clearly in paragraph 3.10 of the consultation paper. In addition to the criteria mentioned by Mr Andrew ARNOLD, DSCS2 pointed out that the organizations had to meet other criteria before invitations were sent to them for participation in the survey, such as, having a sufficient number of jobs that were reasonable counterparts to the civil service benchmark jobs, and being typical employers in their respective fields normally employing 100 or more employees. She also pointed out that the sample size of about 70 to 100 organizations, together with the recommended selection criteria, should help to ensure the representativeness of the data collected in the survey.

Consultation with civil servants

29. Mr KWONG Chi-kin stressed the importance of staff consultation and enquired whether the Administration had any plans to further consult civil servants on PLS. In reply, SCS pointed out that in order to facilitate staff input in the process of developing an improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism, the Consultative Group on Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism was set up in 2003. The Consultative Group comprised staff side representatives from four consultative councils and four major service-wide civil service unions. SCS further pointed out that the Administration would make a decision on the way forward for the exercise, taking into account the views received on the proposals in the consultation paper. As the staff sides had been involved in developing the improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism, the Administration would decide on the survey methodology and the general approach for applying the survey results in the light of the consultation outcome and then proceed with the field work of the PLS.

Application of PLS results

Briefing by the Administration

30. On the application of PLS results, SCS said that the Administration proposed that if PLS findings revealed that the civil service pay levels exceeded the private sector pay levels, the pay of all serving officers would be frozen at the prevailing level until it was caught up by the private sector pay levels. But the disparity would be noted and would be taken into account in the subsequent annual civil service pay adjustment exercises before the next PLS. He pointed out that on staff management and staff morale grounds, the Administration proposed to adopt the same approach for all serving officers in application of the PLS results, irrespective of whether their appointment dates were before or after 1 July 1997. The Administration would also draw up a new set of civil service pay scales, based on the existing system of internal pay relativities, after taking account of the results of PLS and other relevant policy considerations. The new set of civil service pay scales would apply to new recruits who joined the civil service from a prospective date.

System of internal pay relativities

31. Noting that the PLS results would be used in consideration for making adjustment to the civil service pay scales based on the existing system of internal pay relativities among grades and ranks, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan sought information on the details of the system. He doubted whether reference to the existing internal pay relativities system would ensure that adjustments to all the 11 sets of civil service pay scale would be made in a fair manner for all grades and ranks.

32. PSCS explained that each of the 11 sets of civil service pay scales had a range of pay points. Grades with similar qualification requirement for appointment were broad-banded into qualification groups. The entry pay of civil service grades in the same qualification group was determined having regard to both the entry pay for private sector jobs requiring similar qualifications for appointment and other factors relating to the job nature of the grades concerned. There were at present 12 qualification groups and grades within the same group shared a similar pay scale. The existing internal pay relativities had evolved principally through a series of large-scale, service-wide pay reviews carried out in the 1980s and 1990s, such as the Starting Salaries Review conducted in 1999. In making a decision on any necessary adjustments to the civil service pay scales, the existing pay relativities among different civil service grades and ranks would be maintained. This was similar to the practice in the annual civil service pay adjustments in the past. PSCS also pointed out that following the Salaries Structure Review in 1989, a 11.5% difference had

been maintained between the maximum pay point on the Master Pay Scale and the starting point on the Directorate Pay Scale.

Continuity of the proposal for the application of PLS results

33. Ms LI Fung-ying noted that it was set out in paragraph 4.11 of the consultation paper that “[i]t is the current Administration’s policy that during its term of office ending 30 June 2007, the pay of civil servants who were serving immediately before 1 July 1997 will not be reduced to below the levels as at 30 June 1997 in dollar terms”. Ms LI was concerned whether the emphasis on “the current Administration’s policy” implied that the current proposal for the application of PLS results to serving officers (i.e. freezing the pay of serving officers at the prevailing level if the PLS findings revealed that civil service pay exceeded private sector pay) might change in the next term of Government. She opined that the Government should maintain consistency and continuity of its civil service policy for the maintenance of a stable civil service. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed similar concern. He suggested that if the PLS findings revealed that civil service pay exceeded private sector pay, the Administration should implement the decision of pay freeze for serving officers through contractual/collective agreements to ensure continued implementation of the decision after the end of the current Government’s term of office.

34. In response, SCS said that the consideration set out in paragraph 4.11 of the consultation paper had no special implications other than stating the fact about the current Government’s policy on the pay of those civil servants serving immediately before 1 July 1997. While the current Government was not in a position to determine the policy of the next term of Government, SCS believed that the next term of Government would not introduce changes to any policy without due consideration of the original policy intent and the background leading to the formulation of the policy. He shared members’ view that civil service policy should be implemented with consistency and continuity. SCS also pointed out that instead of seeking the implementation of civil service policies through contractual/collective agreements, the Administration considered it more appropriate to implement policies in a transparent manner, with the support of LegCo, civil servants and the community at large. While attaching importance to the stability of the civil service, SCS stressed that the Administration was committed to modernizing the management of the civil service through a series of reform measures aimed to improve the efficiency and quality of public service.

Impact on serving civil servants upon promotion

35. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned that if the PLS results revealed that civil service pay exceeded private sector pay and a new set of civil service pay scales were drawn up for application to new recruits, serving officers remunerated on the current pay scales might receive a lower pay upon

promotion if they had to be paid on the new pay scale. He considered it unreasonable for civil servants to get a pay reduction as a result of promotion and asked the Administration to consider allowing promoted officers to be remunerated on the current set of pay scales. Mr Howard YOUNG shared Mr LEE's view. Mr YOUNG however pointed out that Members of the Liberal Party had reservation on the Administration's proposal of a pay freeze for serving civil servants instead of a pay reduction, at this early stage when the results of PLS were not yet available.

36. In response, SCS shared members' view that consideration should be given to allow serving officers to continue to be paid on the current set of pay scales upon promotion. He said that as the Administration's policy was not to apply the new set of pay scales to serving officers, it was inclined to keep all serving officers, including those on promotion, to be remunerated on the current set of pay scales having regard to consistency of policy implementation and staff morale considerations.

V. New special unpaid leave arrangement

(LC Paper No. — Paper provided by the
CB(1)178/04-05(05) Administration)

37. Owing to time constraints, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the subject under Agenda Item V be deferred to the next regular meeting to be held on 20 December 2004. At the request of the Administration, members agreed that the subject should be discussed before the other two proposed discussion items set out in paragraph 4 above.

VI. Any other business

38. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.