

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting  
held at the Conference Room A  
on Wednesday, 8 February 2006, at 8:30 am**

**Members present:**

Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon KWONG Chi-kin (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, S.B.St.J., JP  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS  
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Hon MA Lik, GBS, JP

**Non-Subcommittee Members attending:**

Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP

**Public Officers attending:**

Miss Elizabeth TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Miss Jennifer MAK, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service
Mr Alfred FOK	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mrs Carrie YAU, JP	Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Miss Vivian KO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Mr Gregory LEUNG, JP	Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene
Dr LAU Chau-ming	Assistant Government Chemist (Acting)
Mrs Susan MAK, JP	Deputy Director of Administration
Mr CHAN Shuen-yiu, Sidney	Assistant Director of Administration
Mr Albert LAI, JP	Deputy Head, Central Policy Unit
Mr Nicholas CHAN	Research Director, Central Policy Unit (Acting)
Mrs Millie NG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)
Mr Christopher MUNN	Executive Director (Corporate Services), Hong Kong Monetary Authority

**Clerk in attendance:**

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

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Guy YIP	Council Secretary (1)1
Mr Justin TAM	Council Secretary (1)3
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper No. ECI(2005-06)8 provided by the Administration on the changes in directorate establishment approved since 2002. According to the Administration, the changes arising from the four proposals to be considered at the meeting, if endorsed, would result in a net reduction of three permanent posts and an increase of one supernumerary post.

**EC(2005-06)14 Proposed establishment of a Centre for Food Safety in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and rationalization of the directorate structure of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau of Government Secretariat with effect from 2 May 2006**

2. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (FSEH Panel) and the Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) were consulted on the proposal at the joint meeting on 17 January 2006.

3. Mr Fred LI, Chairman of the FSEH Panel, said that members of the two Panels had no objection in principle to the establishment of a Centre for Food Safety (CFS). While some members supported the speedy establishment of CFS to enhance food safety, there were diverse views on the Administration's initial plan to reorganize the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), which members had discussed and received views from deputations at joint meetings of the two Panels on 29 November 2005, 15 December 2005 and 6 January 2006. There was no consensus on the interface between the food safety regulatory functions and the trade facilitation functions when the Administration's reorganization proposal was discussed. There was concern, in particular about the effectiveness of the reorganization proposal in enhancing food safety, the staffing requirements, the necessity of appointing a medical doctor as the Controller, CFS, and the effectiveness of exercising control at source in the absence of veterinarians in the 69 non-directorate posts initially proposed to be created under CFS in 2006-07. As regards the proposed creation of an additional post of Permanent Secretary in the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB), the majority of members of the Panels had no strong views on this proposal.

Staffing support for CFS

4. Dr KWOK Ka-ki appreciated the need to strengthen support at the top policy-making level of HWFB given the volume and complexity of work under its portfolio and therefore supported the proposed creation of an additional post of Permanent Secretary in the Bureau. Nevertheless, Dr KWOK expressed reservation about setting up a CFS under FEHD as this would present an incomplete regulatory framework in enhancing food safety. Dr KWOK stressed the importance of bringing in a new mode of thinking rather than just providing additional staff. As a start, there was a need to appoint experts from outside the

civil service, in particular those with overseas experience in food safety regulation, as consultants or contract staff, to provide the new CFS with the necessary expertise and experience in enhancing food safety control in line with international standards and practices.

5. In reply, the Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (PSHWF) advised that with the establishment of CFS, the Administration endeavoured to bring in new ideas and measures in food safety control, such as enhancing food surveillance and sampling for better assessment of food safety risks and enhancing risk communication through more rapid and frequent dissemination of information to the public and the food trade. PSHWF assured members that CFS would strengthen the communication and exchanges with the relevant stakeholders through different ways, including setting up a Food Safety Committee to provide advice on the formulation of food safety measures and review of food safety standards in light of international practices, trends and developments.

6. Noting the concern expressed by members of the two Panels about filling the post of the Controller, CFS by a medical officer, Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that given the long tradition of medical officers leading the work in food safety control, it might not be feasible to identify suitable talents in other professions to fill the post immediately upon the setting up of CFS. Dr KWOK opined that with the establishment of CFS, there might be more opportunities to train up officers in other professions to take up the leadership role in food safety control.

7. Mr WONG Yung-kan and Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) supported the establishment of CFS in principle. Noting that under the current proposal, the two posts created to head the two functional divisions under CFS were to be filled by medical officers instead of veterinarians, Mr WONG Yung-kan expressed grave concern that without the involvement of veterinarians at the policy-making level, CFS would not be able to adopt the “from feed to table” approach for food safety control. In this connection, Mr WONG urged the Administration to revise the current proposal so that one of the two Principal Medical Officer (PMO) posts would be filled by a veterinarian.

8. In response, PSHWF referred to the responsibilities of the two functional divisions under CFS and the job descriptions of the two proposed PMO posts. PSHWF pointed out that as far as risk management was concerned, the PMOs would be required to assist in the formulation and review of food safety control measures, guidelines and programmes using local epidemiological information as well as other sources of data and intelligence. PSHWF stressed that while food safety control was an interdisciplinary task which required the joint expertise of different grades and departments, the regulatory framework had all along been developed on the basis of minimizing public health hazards and therefore traditionally led by medical officers. PSHWF further pointed out that having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities and professional input required, the grading and ranking of the proposed posts under the current proposal were considered appropriate by the relevant government bureaux during the established procedures of internal scrutiny

and by the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service.

9. PSHWF clarified that additional posts of veterinarians would be created in CFS. Indeed, recruitment of veterinarians to fill three posts in FEHD was in progress. Nevertheless, the Administration had encountered difficulties in recruitment as a result of strong market demand for veterinarians with the increasing number of pet-lovers. PSHWF explained that under the existing regulatory framework, there were two directorate posts in AFCD filled by veterinarian. As such, the directorate staffing composition of CFS might be subject to changes upon the implementation of the reorganization proposal in the future, for example, by putting part of the functions undertaken by AFCD under CFS.

10. Referring to measures to strengthen liaison with the Mainland and overseas authorities, Mr James TIEN enquired whether this would involve stepping up inspections to Mainland farms exporting food animals to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), thereby necessitating the creation of large number of non-directorate staff in CFS and incurring considerable staff cost not accounted for under the current proposal.

11. In reply, PSHWF explained that the liaison work with Mainland and overseas authorities mainly concerned monitoring compliance with agreed import protocols and working out improvement measures to enhance the notification systems to cope with public health hazards under changing circumstances. In view of the number of food incidents involving food animals from Mainland farms, in addition to the cooperation arrangement established with the State General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine in Beijing, HKSAR had to establish liaison and maintain communication with different provincial and municipal authorities in the Mainland, such as the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government, for more effective exchange of information on food safety matters.

12. Regarding the audit inspections to Mainland farms, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) advised that the purpose of these inspections was to ensure compliance of farms with agreed import protocols through conveying to the Mainland authorities cases of non-compliance for follow-up actions. This arrangement was provided under the agreement signed between HKSAR and the Mainland authorities. As to Mr James TIEN's concern about the proposed creation of 69 additional non-directorate posts for CFS in 2006-07, DFEH advised that the 69 posts would include professional and technical staff, the majority of which would be required for performing duties of CFS in Hong Kong. The Administration only planned to provide resources for two to three additional teams for conducting audit inspections in Mainland farms.

13. Referring to Mr James TIEN's question on the estimated staff cost for the creation of 69 additional non-directorate posts initially in 2006-07 and whether the funding requirement would be subject to approval by the Legislative Council (LegCo), the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1 said that the Administration would include the provision for creation of the

69 additional non-directorate posts in the draft 2006-07 Estimates. The draft Estimates would be subject to vetting by the LegCo under the established procedures for Members to consider and approve the annual Estimates.

The Administration's reorganization plan for the food safety regulatory framework

14. While appreciating the Administration's positive response to views and concerns of staff and trade associations for further discussion of its original reorganization proposal to break up AFCD into three departments, Mr WONG Yung-kan expressed concern about the effective performance of functions on facilitating and promoting the development of the agriculture and fisheries industries in the long run after the proposed reorganization. He requested the Administration to provide further information to the LegCo on the future operation under the proposed food safety regulatory framework. In reply, PSHWF assured members that the Administration had devoted considerable efforts in facilitating and promoting the development of the agriculture and fisheries industries and would continue its effort in the future. For example, the number of poultry bred in local farms had recorded significant increase since 1997 despite threats of avian influenza.

15. While not objecting to the current staffing proposal, Mr Howard YOUNG enquired whether the Administration could submit this proposal for consideration by the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) at a later stage when a consensus had been reached with stakeholders regarding the proposed reorganization of the food safety regulatory framework.

16. Mr Fred LI pointed out that Members of the Democratic Party (DP) supported the Administration's initial reorganization proposal to adopt the "from feed to table" approach for food safety control. Members of DP were disappointed that the Administration did not conduct prior staff consultation on the reorganization proposal, resulting in strong staff dissatisfaction and objection to the proposal which had forced the Administration to withhold its initial proposal and pursue the option of setting up CFS first. Mr LI requested to put on record that Members of DP supported the current proposal as a transitional arrangement, on the condition that the Administration should attach paramount importance to the discussions and consultations with stakeholders with a view to implementing the proposed reorganization plan, so that the regulation of local agriculture and fisheries product which constituted a small portion (about 4%) of total food consumption would be transferred from AFCD to CFS expeditiously.

17. In response, PSHWF said that as the Administration needed more time to engage the stakeholders in further discussion on the reorganization plan with a view to achieving consensus in this regard, the Administration had decided to put forward the proposal for setting up CFS under FEHD as the next step to address the imminent need to enhance the existing food safety control functions and to meet growing public expectation for better food quality and safety standard. PSHWF pointed out that it remained the Administration's intention to establish a dedicated department responsible for food safety control in the longer term. She assured members that the Administration would continue its discussion with the stakeholders

with a view to reaching a consensus on the best way forward for food safety regulatory framework.

Admin

18. Mr Fred LI and Mr WONG Ting-kwong expressed concern about the need and the timing for the Administration to revert to the LegCo on the reorganization proposal. In response, PSHWF undertook to revert to the FSEH Panel and the EA Panel on the reorganization proposal as soon as practicable. PSHWF explained that while the Administration could not confirm the exact timing for reverting to the Panels at the present stage, taking into account the lead time required for seeking funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC), if the current proposal was endorsed by ESC, the setting up of CFS and its operation to go smooth from its initial set up, it was expected the Administration might only be ready to revert to the Panels at least one year from the approval of the posts.

19. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**EC(2005-06)12 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Administration Wing of the Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary of Government Secretariat with immediate effect up to 31 March 2008 to coordinate and undertake the major tasks in implementation of the Tamar development project**

20. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (PLW Panel) was briefed on the Tamar development project and members of the Panel noted the staffing proposal at the meeting on 22 November 2005.

Reprovisioning of the Central Government Complex (CGC) and the LegCo Complex (LCC)

21. Pointing out that the Tamar site was a valuable piece of land in Central where the public could access and enjoy the waterfront, Dr KWOK Ka-ki stressed that the site should be reserved for members of the public. In this connection, Dr KWOK urged the Administration to consider other modes of redevelopment of CGC. Dr KWOK also requested the Administration to give due consideration to the present sentiments of the public towards the harbour, which were considerably different from those two years ago, and provide detailed response to address the concern of LegCo Members, the media and concerned parties on the alternative options for redevelopment of CGC.

22. The Deputy Director of Administration (DD of Adm) explained that the Administration had set out in its paper to the PLW Panel for the meeting on 22 November 2005 its analysis on the suggestion of in-situ redevelopment of the Central Government Offices (CGO) and the Murray Building but decided not to pursue this option as it was found to be less cost effective. In essence, implementation of an in-situ redevelopment would incur significant additional costs

in terms of the necessary demolition of buildings, and interim accommodation of the bureau offices during the site preparation and construction phases. It was estimated that the implementation of the in-situ redevelopment project would take about four more years compared with the Tamar development project.

23. Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that Members of DAB were disappointed that the Administration had not given any positive response to their earlier suggestion of developing CGC and LCC at other sites, such as Kai Tak in the East Kowloon district, but insisted on taking forward the Tamar development project. Mr WONG stated that Members of DAB would not support the current staffing proposal and requested the Administration to give serious consideration of the alternative site option suggested by DAB for reprovisioning CGC and LCC.

24. DD of Adm explained that the land use planning of the Tamar site had been approved by the Town Planning Board under the Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan (OZP). Among the 4.2 hectares of land at the Tamar site, 2 hectares were zoned "Open space" and the remaining 2.2 hectares were zoned "Government, Institution or Community" (GIC). The Administration was committed to developing a Civic Place of at least 2 hectares at the Tamar site, making use of the "Open Space" earmarked on OZP and developing CGC and LCC on the land earmarked for "GIC".

25. Mr James TIEN said that Members of the Liberal Party (LP) considered the reprovisioning of CGC in the central business district would allow more efficient operation of the government secretariat. Moreover, developing CGC and LCC on the same site would facilitate the work of Government officials in LegCo business. They therefore supported the development of CGC and LCC at the Tamar site. Mr TIEN pointed out that with the reprovisioning of CGO and the Murray Building, revenue could be generated from sale proceeds of the land released in the prime location of the Central district. Regarding the proposed location of LCC, Mr TIEN noted that the location plan was not included in the paper. DD of Adm undertook to provide a copy of the updated location plan provided for the PLW Panel meeting on 22 November 2005 for members' reference.

*(Post-meeting note: The location plan provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. ESC18/05-06 on 10 February 2006.)*

#### Timing and justifications of the staffing proposal

26. Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that members had diverse views on a number of issues relating to the Tamar development project and the Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar site) had recently been set up under the PLW Panel to deliberate in detail issues of public concern. He queried why the Administration had put forward the current staffing proposal for the consideration of ESC at the present stage. Dr KWOK was of the view that the Administration's attempt to seek approval for staffing support for the Tamar development project well before completing the necessary procedures for obtaining



LegCo's funding approval for the project was detrimental to the relationship between the Administration and the LegCo. Dr KWOK questioned whether the Administration intended to bypass the LegCo in taking forward the Tamar development project.

27. In response, DD of Adm assured members that it was never the Administration's intention to bypass the LegCo in the re-launch of the Tamar development project. She recalled that the Government decided in April 2002 to launch the Tamar development project and in 2003, it had obtained the support of the PLW Panel and the Public Works Subcommittee for the project. The project had subsequently been shelved in November 2003 due to the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and the financial position of the Government at that time. Following the Chief Executive (CE)'s announcement to re-launch the project in his Policy Address delivered on 12 October 2005, the Administration had briefed the PLW Panel on the re-launch of the project on 22 November 2005 and had undertaken to present to the Panel updated details of the project, such as the gross floor area requirements and other user requirements around April 2006 before seeking funding approval of FC.

28. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was not convinced of the need for the Administration to put forward the current staffing proposal at the present stage. Dr KWOK doubted the necessity of creating a supernumerary directorate post to oversee the implementation of the project and whether there were precedent cases of providing similar staffing support for the implementation of other "design and build" contracts. In his view, the preparatory work for the Tamar development project could be taken up by non-directorate officers in the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office or the Architectural Services Department.

29. In reply, DD of Adm explained that since the announcement of the re-launch, the Administration had proceeded with the preparatory work to facilitate early implementation of the Tamar development project. The work included commencement of the prequalification exercise in December 2005 for shortlisting applicants with the required capabilities to undertake the project. The prequalification exercise was a complicated task which required dedicated input of an officer at the directorate level. Moreover, directorate input was required for reviewing the user requirements on usable floor area, ancillary facilities, building services, security and information technology requirements, etc. based on the updated information submitted by various parties concerned (i.e. government bureaux/departments and the LegCo Commission) to take into account the changes in the last two years. Given the scope, complexity and timeframe of the project, the Administration proposed to create a supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2), designated as Assistant Director of Administration (Tamar Development) (ADA(TD)), with immediate effect up to 31 March 2008 to head the dedicated project team for coordinating the implementation work. DD of Adm reiterated that in accordance with the schedule of implementation of the project, the Administration would brief the PLW Panel on the project details and seek funding approval of FC around mid 2006. DD of Adm however pointed out that given the tight timeframe for implementation of the project, the Administration had

to carry out the preparatory work in the mean time and looked forward to members' support to the current staffing proposal.

30. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that while Members of DP supported the development of CGC and LCC at the Tamar site, they were of the view that the development of the site and the planning for the Central waterfront area should be considered in a holistic manner, having regard to factors such as land use planning and transport facilities. Moreover, they considered it necessary to further examine and deliberate on the proportion of land use among CGC, LCC and the Civic Place at the Tamar site. As such, Members of DP would not support the creation of a supernumerary directorate post to head the project team for the Tamar development project at the present stage before a decision was made on the future development of the Central waterfront (including the Tamar site).

31. While indicating the support of Members of LP to the current staffing proposal, Mr James TIEN asked whether the preparatory work to be coordinated by the supernumerary AOSGC post could be completed by 31 March 2008 and if not, whether the Administration would seek approval for extension of the post nearer the time. Mr Howard YOUNG expressed similar concern. In reply, DD of Adm said that the Administration estimated that the ADA(TD) post would be required for two years to complete the major tasks of the project. She assured members that the Administration would monitor the operational need for the post and seek LegCo's approval for extension of the post, only if necessary.

32. Mr Abraham SHEK said that Members of the Alliance supported the Administration's staffing proposal. Noting that CE had stated in his Policy Address that the Tamar development project would create some 2 700 employment opportunities, Mr SHEK urged members to support the early implementation of the project so as to reduce the high unemployment rate in the building and construction industry. Mr SHEK pointed out that the Tamar site was not part of the Central reclamation proposal currently being considered but was a site readily available for development. Moreover, the LegCo Commission had endorsed the Tamar project for the construction of CGC and LCC backed in 2003. While alternative site options (such as Kai Tak) for reprovisioning CGC and LCC had been proposed by some LegCo Members, Mr SHEK hoped that members would support the Tamar project to facilitate its early implementation. Noting that the Administration expected that the contract for the Tamar development project would be awarded in early 2007, Mr SHEK was disappointed with the prolonged process required and urged the Administration to expedite the process so that the employment opportunities for the building and construction industry would be available as soon as possible.

33. DD of Adm appreciated Mr SHEK's concern on the schedule of implementation of the Tamar development project. In this connection, she explained the procedures involved in the prequalification and tendering stages of the project before the award of contract. She pointed out that while the Administration would try its best to expedite project implementation, for example, through utilizing limited resources available to take forward the preparatory work, considerable lead

time would inevitably be required for the established procedures for seeking funding approval and tendering.

34. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was of the view that apart from the Tamar development project, the Administration could create employment opportunities for the building and construction industry through expediting the implementation of other projects, such as the outstanding leisure and cultural services projects of the former Municipal Councils. Dr KWOK reiterated his view that approval of the current staffing proposal before the Tamar development project had obtained the funding approval of LegCo would set a bad precedent. He called upon members to be mindful of the implications of supporting the current proposal, including the implications on the interests of the LegCo and the community at large.

35. Mr KWONG Chi-kin spoke from the angle of workers' interests and expressed support to the current staffing proposal but pointed out that the Administration should not take this approval as a guarantee for LegCo's approval on the funding of the Tamar development project. Mr KWONG was of the view that before a decision was made on the Tamar development project, the Administration should be given a chance to carry out the preparatory work in the mean time so that it would have the necessary staffing resources to work out details of the project to address concerns of the LegCo and the public.

36. While agreeing with Dr KWOK Ka-ki that employment opportunities could be created by expediting other capital works projects, Mr Abraham SHEK remained concern that the creation of some 2 000 job opportunities with the implementation of the Tamar development project should not be delayed. Mr SHEK did not think that the Administration was attempting to bypass the LegCo in putting forward the current staffing proposal. He was of the view that members should consider every proposal from the Administration on its own merits and give support to proposals which were in the interest of the community. Mr James TIEN expressed similar views. Mr TIEN opined that the propriety or otherwise of the Tamar development project should not be deliberated at the meeting today as this would be further examined in other forums.

Admin 37. The item was voted on and endorsed. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

**EC(2005-06)13 Proposed creation of one permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Central Policy Unit under the Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary of Government Secretariat with immediate effect, designated as Assistant Secretary to the Commission on Strategic Development (CSD) to strengthen the CSD Secretariat**

38. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Public Service (PS Panel) was consulted on the proposal at the meeting on 16 January 2006.

39. Ir Dr Raymond HO was of the view that given the work nature of the Secretariat of the Commission on Strategic Development (the Commission) which mainly involved organizing logistics of the four committees for their bimonthly meetings, its existing staffing support (including an AOSGB (D3), a Government Town Planner (D2) and five non-directorate supporting staff) would be able to cope with the workload arising from the expanded Commission. Ir Dr HO did not consider the current staffing proposal justified and requested the Administration to provide further justifications for creation of an additional permanent directorate AOSGC (D2) post as the Assistant Secretary to the Commission.

40. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong also queried the operational need for the creation of an additional directorate post to provide support for the Commission. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that Members of DP opposed to the current staffing proposal on the basis of financial and establishment considerations. Pointing out that the Commission Secretariat would only be required to service 24 meetings each year, Mr CHEUNG opined that its existing level of directorate support should be able to cope with the increased workload of the expanded Commission. He therefore disagreed with the Administration's claim that the provision of three directorate posts to service the expanded Commission was a modest provision. Mr CHEUNG further opined that the Commission Secretariat already had excessive directorate support taking into account that in some government departments, directorate officers ranked at D4 level were serving as Heads of Departments and responsible for a full range of complex duties. Mr CHEUNG said that Members of DP would only accept provision of additional manpower resources to the Commission Secretariat at the non-directorate level. They considered the current proposal a waste of resources and requested the Administration to withdraw the proposal.

41. In reply, the Deputy Head, Central Policy Unit (DH, CPU) explained that the workload of the Commission Secretariat had increased considerably with the expansion in membership of the Commission and the setting up of the four committees each comprised of over 40 members. DH, CPU advised that apart from organizing logistics and preparing documents for the committee meetings, the Commission Secretariat undertook other responsibilities in servicing the Commission, such as maintaining close communication with members and conducting research. The Secretariat was also involved in a wide range of activities for the Commission, other than the committee meetings, throughout the years. Referring to the preparatory work for the previous meeting of the Committee on Governance and Political Development as an example, DH, CPU pointed out that the Secretariat had liaised with each committee member before the meeting to solicit their input for the items for discussion and more than half of the committee members had provided written views to the Secretariat for follow up actions. On the level of directorate support to advisory committees, DH, CPU advised that in general, the secretariat of advisory committees with about 40 members would be supported by one officer at the directorate level. In response to Ir Dr Raymond HO's comment about the absence of talents of some professional sectors in the current membership of the Commission, DH, CPU noted Ir Dr HO's concern and advised that the

Administration would take this into consideration in the appointment of members to the Commission.

42. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that LegCo Members had monitored closely the directorate establishment of the civil service in the recent years. Despite that Members had agreed to consider the creation of directorate posts without offsetting arrangements in the 2005-06 legislative session, Mr CHEUNG stressed that all staffing proposals would be considered on the basis of individual merits.

43. In reply, DH, CPU assured members that the Administration had critically examined the operational requirements of the Commission Secretariat in putting forward the current staffing proposal. As explained at the meeting of the PS Panel held on 16 January 2006, the staffing proposal had gone through strict internal scrutiny by the relevant government bureaux before submitting to the LegCo for consideration.

44. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was not satisfied with the Administration's justifications for providing the Commission Secretariat with support of three directorate staff. Given the mandate of the Commission to give advice to the Government on a wide range of policies significant to the long-term development of Hong Kong, Dr KWOK was of the view that the Commission should not be involved in actual implementation of policies. He queried whether the current proposal to provide additional directorate support to the Commission Secretariat would in fact be an attempt to provide additional manpower resource to assist CE in overseeing the work of policy bureaux, thereby taking up the functions of coordinating the work of policy bureaux from the CE's Office.

45. In reply, DH, CPU clarified that the current proposal was not in any way seeking to provide support to CE in overseeing the work of policy bureaux. Indeed, the expanded Commission would provide a platform for all sectors of the community to explore with the Administration major issues pertaining to the long-term development of Hong Kong. The Government would be able to gauge a wide range of community views through the Commission, thereby laying the foundation for formulating specific policies, and making the process more scientific and transparent. Enhanced public participation and acceptance would be the result. In practice, the views and concerns expressed by members of the Commission would be conveyed to relevant bureaux/departments as well as advisory bodies for information and/or follow-up.

46. Mr James TIEN said that Members of LP would be prepared to consider staffing proposals included in the paper provided by the Administration to ESC in November 2005 (ECI(2005-06)6). Nevertheless, each staffing proposal would be examined on its own merits and Members of LP would not give their support to any proposal which was not justified. Mr TIEN noted from the information provided by the Administration that the current proposal had not got members' support when the Administration consulted the PS Panel on 16 January 2006. Mr TIEN shared the concern of members of the PS Panel that as the functions of the Commission

might change after the expiry of the current term of office of CE and members of the Commission on 30 June 2007, it was not justified to create at this stage additional posts on a permanent basis. In this connection, Mr TIEN sought confirmation from the Administration whether the Commission would exist on a permanent basis, and if not, why the Administration did not propose the creation of a supernumerary post for a period up to 30 June 2007.

47. In response, DH, CPU explained that he could not rule out the possibilities of changes to the Commission in 2007 and was unable to confirm that it would operate on a permanent basis. He drew members' attention to CE's Policy Address on 12 October 2005 saying that the Commission was the Government's most important advisory body. Under normal circumstances, permanent staffing support would be provided to the secretariats of advisory bodies to assure continuity of service. He told members that staffing needs of the Commission Secretariat would be monitored closely and the Administration would revert to the LegCo if there were changes of staffing needs as a result of changes in the work of the Commission in any significant manner in future.

48. Mr KWONG Chi-kin was astonished to note that the Administration could not confirm that the Commission would operate on a permanent basis. Mr KWONG appreciated the importance of the Commission and looked forward to its contributions to the strategies and policy-formulation for the long-term development of Hong Kong. As such, he would support the proposal of strengthening the manpower support to the Commission Secretariat. Nevertheless, Mr KWONG was concerned that in the event that the Administration was uncertain about the status of the Commission in the long run, it should consider the creation of a supernumerary post instead. In this connection, Mr KWONG asked the Administration to withdraw the current staffing proposal and re-submit its proposal with adequate justifications on operational need and workload of the Commission Secretariat to address members' concerns.

49. Noting members' concerns about the current proposal and in response to members' request, DH, CPU agreed to withdraw the proposal to re-examine it as a supernumerary directorate post to provide support to the Commission Secretariat.

Admin

50. The item was withdrawn by the Administration.

**EC(2005-06)11 Proposed deletion of six permanent posts of one Commissioner of Banking (D6), two Deputy Commissioner of Banking (D3), one Deputy Secretary (Monetary Affairs) (D3) and two Assistant Commissioner of Banking (D2) in the Hong Kong Monetary Authority with immediate effect**

51. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Financial Affairs was informed of the present proposal vide an information paper issued on 12 May 2005.

52. Mr James TIEN appreciated the Administration's effort in reducing the size of the directorate establishment by proposing the deletion of six permanent directorate posts in the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. He said that Members of LP supported the proposal as it would bring about savings. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong echoed Mr TIEN's view and said that Members of DP also supported the proposal.

53. The item was voted on and endorsed.

54. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 10:25 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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