

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1916/06-07
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/PS/1

Panel on Public Service

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 21 May 2007 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Margaret NG
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon KWONG Chi-kin
- Members attending** : Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Member absent** : Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
- Public officers attending** : **Agenda items IV to VI**
Miss Denise YUE, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Andrew H Y WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr K S SO, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Mr Noel SUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)4

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1588/06-07 -- Minutes of meeting on 16 April 2007)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2007 were confirmed.

II Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 25 June 2007
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1600/06-07(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion
LC Paper No. CB(1)1600/06-07(02) — List of follow-up actions)

3. The Deputy Chairman said that she had raised a written question on "Long-term acting appointments of government employees" at the Legislative Council meeting on 16 May 2007 and considered that the Administration's written reply had not fully addressed her concern. She suggested that an item on "Acting appointments in the civil service" should be included in the agenda for the next Panel meeting for discussion of the issue. Members agreed that the following items should be discussed at the next meeting scheduled for 25 June 2007 –

- (a) Progress update on the development of an improved pay adjustment mechanism for the civil service;
- (b) Acting appointments in the civil service; and
- (c) Updated overview of civil service conduct and discipline.

IV Development of an improved civil service pay adjustment mechanism - Pay Level Survey

(File Ref : CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/37 — Legislative Council Brief)

Briefing by the Administration

4. The Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS) briefed the meeting on the outcome of the 2006 Pay Level Survey (PLS) and the Executive Council's decision on the application of the PLS results by highlighting the salient points in the Legislative Council Brief.

Discussion

5. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that in view of the impending completion of the 2007 Pay Trend Survey (PTS), he was concerned how the PTS results would be applied to the civil service. He was especially concerned that if the pay trend indicator (PTI) for the lower salary band was below that for the middle salary band, whether the pay adjustment for the lower salary band would be brought up to the same level as the middle salary band.

6. SCS said that the findings of the 2007 PTS would only be one of the factors to be taken into account in determining whether there would be any pay adjustment for the civil service. Other factors to be considered included the state of the economy of Hong Kong, budgetary considerations, changes in the cost of living, the staff sides' pay claims and the morale of the civil service. If the 2007 PTS revealed that the PTI for the lower salary band was below that for the middle salary band, the Administration would consider all other relevant factors to determine whether the pay adjustment for the lower salary band should be brought up to the same level as the middle salary band.

7. The Chairman said that some people had expressed doubt on whether the findings of the 2006 PLS had been artificially worked out as the findings indicated that the civil service pay indicator for each of the five job levels fell within the plus/minus 5% range of the comparable market pay indicator, resulting in no adjustment to the civil service pay scales. He also said that some people had pointed out that while the salaries for some civil service jobs, e.g. drivers, were apparently higher than those in the private sector, the PLS did not reveal such disparity, and hence the methodology of the PLS might need to be refined to better reflect the differences in salaries of comparable jobs in the public and private sectors.

8. SCS responded that the PLS was conducted by a professional consultant and the data were collected from 97 selected private companies through a professionally designed methodology. The adoption of the plus/minus 5% as the acceptable range of difference between the public and private sector pay indicators had been agreed to by the staff sides and approved by the Executive Council, and it would be applicable to the current and future PLSs, having regard to the need to maintain the stability of the civil service. SCS also pointed out that the methodology for conducting the PLS was

recommended by a consultant after wide consultation and had been agreed to by all parties concerned. As recommended by the consultant, a broad comparability approach had been adopted for the PLS. Non-directorate civilian officers were categorized into five job levels and each job level covered a large number of civil service grades. It was impracticable, if not at all impossible, to compare the pay level of each of the 400-odd civil service grades with comparable jobs in the private sector, and thus a broad comparability approach had to be followed. Otherwise, the PLS might take years to complete and create an onerous burden of data provision on the companies which agreed to participate in the survey.

9. Miss TAM Heung-man stated that since the PLS would be carried out every six years, the methodology for conducting the PLS could be refined to enable more precise comparison of the pay levels of comparable jobs in the public and private sectors. She asked why the upper quartile (i.e. the 75th percentile, or P75), instead of the medium point, of the private sector total cash compensation was used as the basis for comparison.

10. SCS responded that while there was always room for improvement, the methodology for conducting the 2006 PLS was developed after extensive consultation and detailed discussion within and outside the civil service. A consultation paper was issued in 2004 to consult the public on the methodology for conducting the PLS. The relevant advisory bodies had also been consulted. Having said that, the Administration would consider the feedback from the public and consult the staff sides and the relevant advisory bodies on ways to further improve the methodology for conducting the PLS in future. SCS further explained that the P75 of the private sector total cash compensation was used as the basis for comparison in the PLS mainly because the Government's established pay policy was to offer sufficient remuneration to attract, retain and motivate staff of a suitable caliber to provide the public with an effective and efficient service, and to ensure that civil service remuneration was regarded as fair by both civil servants and the public they served. The demand on the integrity of civil servants was extremely high. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government needed to set an example as a good employer. SCS stressed that the P75 had been used in previous pay level and starting salaries surveys since the 1970s and had been accepted by the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (hereafter referred to as "Standing Commission"), the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service, and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service.

Pay adjustment for NCSC staff

11. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether the salaries of non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff would be adjusted according to the PTS findings.

12. SCS responded that civil service appointments and NCSC appointments were two distinct types of employment. Civil Service Bureau (CSB) had issued guidelines to heads of bureaux/departments/offices (hereafter referred to as "HoDs") on the employment conditions for NCSC staff. In determining the employment package for

NCSC staff, HoDs had to comply with two guiding principles, namely, that the terms and conditions of service for NCSC staff should be no less favourable than those provided for under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57); and that the terms should be no more favourable than those applicable to civil servants in comparable civil service ranks of comparable levels of responsibilities. The remuneration offered to NCSC staff was an all-inclusive pay package which HoDs had the authority to determine as appropriate, having regard to the situation of the employment market, management and operational considerations of the department, the pay levels in the market for similar jobs and the pay offered to civil servants of comparable level of responsibilities. HoDs might regularly review, and adjust where appropriate, the salaries of NCSC staff, but any such review had no direct relationship with the pay reviews for civil servants.

13. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that when the Panel discussed the application of the PTS findings to the civil service, the arrangement for salary adjustment for NCSC staff should also be discussed as it would be unfair to the NCSC staff if they were excluded from any civil service pay adjustment despite the fact that they were working together with other civil servants in the civil service.

14. The Chairman remarked that the pay adjustment arrangements for NCSC staff could be included as an item in the outstanding list for discussion at a future Panel meeting.

Alignment of PLS and PTS methodology

15. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the steps to be taken and the time schedule for reviewing the need to align the methodologies for the PLS and the PTS, and whether the staff sides would be consulted on the matter. She also asked whether the Administration had formed a view on the matter.

16. SCS responded that the Administration would consult and discuss with the staff sides regarding the need for the alignment of the methodologies for the PLS and the PTS, with a view to reaching an agreed approach for conducting the next PLS in 2012. Given the work commitments of CSB, the review would probably commence in 2010 but efforts would be made to start the review as soon as possible. SCS stressed that the Administration had no pre-conceived view on the matter, and would critically assess whether such an alignment was desirable, taking into account the different purposes and parameters of the two surveys.

V 2006 Starting Salaries Survey findings and application to the civil service
(File Ref: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/46-2 — Legislative Council Brief)

17. Ir Dr Raymond HO was concerned that the implementation of the 2006 Starting Salaries Survey (SSS) findings would adversely affect the stability of the civil service. Quoting the Engineer grade as an example, Ir Dr Ho said that under the proposed conversion arrangement, an engineer who had worked in the civil service for five years would receive the same salary as a new recruit joining the civil service after the

proposed new starting salaries took effect. Even worse was that an Engineer with post qualification experience (PQE) of five years joining the civil service after the proposed new starting salaries took effect would be offered five salary points higher than an Engineer with the same qualification and experience who joined the civil service five years ago. He opined that the arrangements were divisive and unfair to the civil servants concerned. He also pointed out that the starting salary for an Engineering Graduate had previously been revised downwards from about \$16,000 to \$10,700, which was lower than the market rate and should be reviewed.

18. SCS responded that there was a general misconception that the Government would award additional incremental salary points automatically to new appointees with PQE. In fact, the Government would do so only if there was recruitment difficulty to fill the vacancies in the ranks concerned. SCS explained that the normal conversion arrangement would be adopted for adjusting the salaries of civil servants appointed to entry ranks on or after 1 April 2000 and were still serving in entry ranks in those qualification groups with a new, higher benchmark (hereafter referred to as "affected serving civil servants") mainly because in future the SSS would be carried out at three-yearly intervals and it was possible that the starting salaries for civil servants might be adjusted upwards or downwards as a result of future SSSs. The Government's established policy was that even if the starting salary for a particular entry rank would be adjusted downwards as a result of a SSS, the salaries of serving civil servants would not be adjusted downwards correspondingly. It was therefore inappropriate to adopt a point-to-point conversion arrangement to adjust upwards the salaries of affected serving civil servants. Otherwise there would be a public conception that civil servants attempted to maximize benefits in the case of a SSS resulting in upward adjustment of starting salaries but refused to bear any pay cut in the opposite scenario. The normal conversion arrangement had been recommended by the Standing Commission since its inception in 1979. The Standing Commission considered that a point-to-point conversion should not be adopted as it was an "over-generous" arrangement. The Standing Commission had re-affirmed its recommendation to adopt the normal conversion arrangement for affected serving civil servants in the current exercise.

19. Mr WONG Kwok-hing referred to Annex B of the paper and noted that there was no upward adjustment to the entry salary points for officers in the Model Scale I grades, and Technician Supervisory and Related Grades (Group I and II). He opined that the salaries for comparable jobs in the private sector had been unreasonably low for two main reasons, namely that the Government had outsourced a considerable amount of the relevant services to private operators who paid unreasonably low salaries to their workers; and that the Government had used NCSC staff and paid them a salary lower than that of civil servants. He opined that the Administration should take into consideration such a situation and review the entry salary points for the officers concerned. Mr WONG also shared Ir Dr Raymond HO's concern that under the normal conversion arrangement, new appointees would receive a salary equivalent to or even higher than affected serving civil servants.

20. SCS stressed that the SSS was conducted by a professional consultant and the entry pay data collected from the private sector showed that no adjustment was required

for the entry pay for the three qualification groups referred to by Mr WONG. The outsourcing arrangement was implemented under the "Big market, small government" principle. SCS pointed out that in order to avoid a new appointee receiving a salary higher than a serving officer of the same rank, the salary of affected serving civil servants would be brought up to the revised higher entry pay point or to the next higher pay point.

21. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that whilst he supported the revision of the starting salaries for civil servants, he was not satisfied with the arrangements for conversion of the salaries for affected serving civil servants. He pointed out that the normal conversion arrangement was based on the 1979 Standing Commission report. However, according to paragraph 55 of the Standing Commission report, special arrangements should be made for special circumstances. Quoting the Graduate Master/Mistress (GM) rank as an example, Mr CHEUNG said that based on the proposed conversion arrangement, serving GM with one year's service would receive an upward adjustment of four salary points, whereas a serving GM with five years' service would only receive one additional salary point. Mr CHEUNG opined that such an arrangement was unfair to serving GMs and the same situation applied to serving Certificated Masters/Mistresses. Mr CHEUNG pointed out that the Standing Commission report had stated that the recommended conversion arrangements should be applied generally but special arrangements should be made in order to meet the requirements of special circumstances. He cautioned that the adoption of the normal conversion arrangement would create a divisive effect which would adversely affect the stability of the civil service. He requested that the Administration should handle the salary conversion in a more flexible and sensible manner.

22. SCS responded that the award of incremental salary points was only one of the ways to recognize the in-service experience of an officer. In considering acting appointments and promotion, an officer's seniority in the civil service and his past duty performance would be taken into account. The Government's contribution to the provident fund for civil servants recruited since 2000 would also increase in accordance with their years of service. SCS pointed out that the Government had considered whether there were special circumstances as referred to in the 1979 Standing Commission report. For instance, when the entry salary points for new appointees were adjusted downwards as a result of the 1999 SSS, serving civil servants were not affected. Hence if there was any downward adjustment on the entry salary points arising from a future SSS, it was unlikely that serving civil servants would accept a downward adjustment to their salaries correspondingly. On that basis, the Government and the Standing Commission considered that the adoption of the normal conversion arrangement was appropriate. It would also prevent a public perception that civil servants attempted to amass the maximum benefits from SSSs on a no-loss basis.

23. Miss TAM Heung-man also expressed concern about the adoption of the normal conversion arrangement for affected serving civil servants. She enquired about the funding arrangements for those subvented organizations which were subvented on a lump sum basis but the salary structures for their staff had been linked to civil service pay scales. She also enquired about the time schedule for the review of the subvention for these organizations.

24. SCS responded that the four central consultative councils and the four major civil service staff associations had been consulted and all of them accepted the normal conversion arrangement. For subvented organizations whose subventions had been reduced in connection with the downward revision of starting salaries for the civil service in 2000, an appropriate upward adjustment of their subvention would be considered upon the implementation of the new starting salaries in the civil service. The relevant bureaux, namely the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau and the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, would review the funding arrangements for subvented organizations in connection with the SSS.

25. In reply to Miss TAM's enquiry on whether the Administration would review the establishment of individual bureaux/departments to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness, SCS said that HoDs would regularly review the establishment of their respective bureaux and departments with a view to maintaining the appropriate manpower resources to meet operational and service needs.

26. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan stated that while the upward adjustment of the starting salaries for the civil service was welcomed, there was feedback from affected serving civil servants that the normal conversion arrangement was unfair to them, as their salaries would only be revised to a level equivalent to or slightly higher than new appointees, especially when the civil service welfare benefits were linked to the salary point of an officer. Such a conversion arrangement ignored the length of service of affected serving civil servants. Mr LEE requested that the Administration should review the conversion arrangement and allow a reasonable difference between the salaries for new appointees and those for affected serving civil servants (including teachers in aided schools). Otherwise staff morale would be undermined.

27. SCS reiterated that since the salaries of serving civil servants would not be affected by any downward adjustment of salaries arising from future SSSs, the normal conversion arrangement, rather than the point-to-point conversion arrangement, should be the most appropriate conversion arrangement in the application of the SSS findings. The arrangement had been agreed to by the staff sides.

28. With reference to the submission from the Local Government Counsel Association (LGCA), Ms Margaret NG pointed out that under the normal conversion arrangement, Government Counsels with the same years of PQE would receive different salaries. As set out in the table of the submission, the difference in salaries between a new appointee and a serving Government Counsel with the same years of PQE could range from about \$5,000 to over \$17,000. Such a disparity would seriously undermine staff morale, particularly in view of the heavy workload of Government Counsels.

Notwithstanding that the Government's policy was to offer incremental salary credits to new appointees only when there was recruitment difficulty, since 1990, the Department of Justice (DoJ) had never departed from its established arrangement of recognizing new appointees' PQE by offering incremental salary credits commensurate with the level of PQE. Ms NG pointed out that there was already a succession problem in DoJ and if more Government Counsels left the department as a result of the unfair conversion arrangement, the succession problem would be aggravated. She enquired whether the Secretary for Justice had been consulted on the salary conversion arrangement.

29. SCS responded that the contribution of serving civil servants was well treasured by the Government and it would be regrettable if any serving civil servants left the civil service simply because of the salary conversion arrangement arising from the SSS. The value of the experience of serving civil servants whose experience could not be found in the private sector, such as Government Counsels and disciplined services officers, was well recognized by the Government. SCS stressed that the Government's policy on awarding incremental salary credits to new appointees was that such credits should be awarded only when there was recruitment difficulty for the relevant entry rank. SCS pointed out that a major consideration for making acting appointments and promotion in the civil service was the seniority of the officers concerned. In view of the demand for lawyers in the market, the Standing Commission had agreed to the Government's proposal to conduct a review of the Government Counsel grade within the next six months, covering the areas of responsibilities of the grade, the relevant salary scales, etc. SCS said that the Secretary for Justice had been consulted on the salary conversion arrangements for affected serving civil servants.

30. Ms Margaret NG was concerned that the review on the salary structure for Government Counsels would take half a year to complete and another half a year to implement. Meanwhile, new appointees to the Government Counsel grade would receive a salary higher than serving Government Counsels who possessed the same qualifications and same years of PQE, as since 1990, the DoJ had never departed from its established arrangement of recognizing an appointee's PQE by paying the appointee a salary fully commensurate with his level of PQE. Such an arrangement would also affect the welfare benefits and pensions of the officers concerned. She opined that CSB should liaise with the Secretary for Justice to work out some immediate measures to redress the grievances and maintain the morale of serving Government Counsels.

31. SCS reiterated that the Government's established policy was to grant incremental salary credits to new appointees only when there was recruitment difficulty in a particular recruitment exercise.

32. Having noted that serving civil servants, particularly those joining the civil service after 1 April 2000, had expressed dissatisfaction regarding the normal conversion arrangement, and that the Administration had consulted the staff sides on the application of the findings of the SSS to the civil service, Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that the Administration should consider ways to improve the conversion arrangements for serving civil servants.

33. Ms LI Fung-ying opined that since the number of affected serving civil servants was relatively small, the Administration should re-consider the salary conversion arrangement for them so as to reasonably reflect the difference in experience in the civil service between affected serving civil servants and new appointees. Ms LI was also concerned that there was no upward adjustment on the starting salaries for the lower ranking officers, and she opined that this might lead to polarization in salary between high ranking and low ranking officers.

34. SCS responded that the SSS was carried out based on an objective methodology and the data were collected from the private sector. The starting salaries for civil servants should be in line with the pay levels in the market. The annual expenditure on personal emolument would increase by \$380 million based on the normal conversion arrangement and \$780 million based on the point-to-point conversion arrangement. While the previous two SSSs were conducted in 1989 and 1999, the Government recognized the need to regularly review the starting salaries of civil servants and hence had decided to conduct SSSs at three-year intervals in future.

35. Mr KWONG Chi-kin pointed out that the normal conversion arrangement failed to recognize the experience gained by serving civil servants in the civil service. Particularly, in the case of professional grades with recruitment difficulties, the PQE of new appointees gained outside the civil service was recognized by awarding them with corresponding salary incremental credits. Such an arrangement was grossly unfair to affected serving civil servants. Mr KWONG further pointed that the normal conversion arrangement might encourage serving civil servants working in the grades which had recruitment difficulties to leave the civil service and rejoin it in order to receive a higher salary based on the new starting salaries plus incremental salary credits for PQE. As a consequence, the stability of the civil service would be undermined.

36. SCS responded that based on the 2006 SSS, the starting salaries for some civil service grades, e.g. the Accounting Officer grade, would be adjusted upwards for four to five salary points, and it was doubtful whether those grades would still had recruitment difficulty after the revision of the entry salary point. Hence a new appointee with PQE might not be offered additional salary credits. A resigned civil servant who wanted to rejoin the civil service would have to go through a competitive selection process. Even if a resigned civil servant were successful in obtaining appointment after an open recruitment exercise, he might not be awarded additional salary credits if there was no recruitment difficulty during that exercise. Moreover, a resigned civil servant who rejoined the civil service would lose his seniority and this would affect his claim for acting appointment or promotion, his benefits under the civil service provident fund scheme and his entitlement for a staff quarter if he belonged to the disciplined grades, etc.

37. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was of the view that the normal conversion arrangement was unfair to affected serving civil servants. Referring to paragraph 23 of the paper, Dr KWOK enquired about the application of the findings of the SSS to the staff serving in subvented organizations, e.g. the Hospital Authority (HA).

38. SCS responded that as far as the teachers in aided schools were concerned, their salary structure was linked to the civil service salary scale and their remuneration was paid by the Education and Manpower Bureau. The salary structures of the staff in HA were, however, delinked from the civil service pay scales, and their pay scales and terms of employment were determined by HA. Referring to paragraph 23 of the paper, SCS said that since the government subventions to some organizations had been reduced in connection with the downward revision of starting salaries for the civil service in April 2000, the Government would consider adjusting, where appropriate, the relevant organizations' subventions in the context of the current SSS. However, the organizations had the discretion to determine whether they would make use of the adjusted subvention to revise the starting salaries scales of their staff. She reiterated that the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau and the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau were considering the impact of the SSS on the subvented organizations in the medical and welfare sectors and the need to adjust the subventions to these organizations arising from the findings of the SSS.

39. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that the starting salaries for various jobs had changed considerably since the last SSS conducted in 1999, and the application of the normal conversion arrangement for affected serving civil servants was unfair to them and would be divisive among civil servants. He requested that the Administration should adopt the recommendation of the Standing Commission in paragraph 55 of its 1979 report, i.e. making special arrangements in implementing the findings of the SSS in view of special circumstances. He opined that a more balanced approach should be adopted in applying the findings of the SSS so that the morale of serving civil servants could be maintained.

40. SCS reiterated that the Administration had considered all relevant factors in deciding to adopt the normal conversion arrangement.

41. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that the Administration had not given due consideration to the interests of affected serving civil servants. He opined that a way should be found to balance the need for maintaining the morale of serving civil servants and the financial consideration of incurring additional expenditure to cover warranted increase in salaries to compensate the serving officers.

42. SCS stressed that the Government had consulted the staff sides, through the central consultative councils and the four service-wide staff unions, on the salary conversion arrangements for affected serving civil servants in effecting the new starting salaries.

43. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was of the view that the Administration should further review the starting salaries for the three qualification groups which would not receive any upward adjustment as a result of the SSS, and improve the salary conversion arrangements for affected serving civil servants in order to redress their grievances.

44. SCS pointed out that the SSS was conducted based on an established methodology, e.g. categorization of qualification groups. The findings should not be altered artificially as it would damage the credibility of the whole exercise.

Motion

45. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan moved the following motion, which was seconded by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong; a copy of the motion was tabled at the meeting:

"本委員會不反對12個資歷組別新基準，同時認為政府對於2000年4月1日或之後受聘的公務員及資助學校教師的換算安排既不公平又不合理，並促請政府以充份尊重舊入職公務員的年資經驗為原則重新檢討以上安排。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel does not object to the new benchmarks for the 12 qualification groups, and considering that the conversion arrangements for the civil servants and teachers of aided schools employed on or after 1 April 2000 are neither fair nor reasonable, this Panel urges the Government to review the above arrangements afresh on the basis of the principle that full regard should be given to the length of service and experience of the existing civil servants."

46. Mr WONG Kwok-hing moved the following amendment –

To replace "不反對" with "建議進一步完善"。

47. The Chairman considered that the motion moved by Mr LEE and the amendment moved by Mr WONG were directly related to the agenda item under discussion and that it was appropriate for the Panel to deal with them. The Chairman put the amendment moved by Mr WONG to vote. Six members voted for and the Chairman voted against. The Chairman declared the amendment was passed. The Chairman then put Mr LEE's motion as amended by Mr WONG to vote. Seven members voted for and the Chairman voted against. The Chairman declared that the motion moved by Mr LEE as amended by Mr WONG was passed.

Submission of the paper to the Establishment Subcommittee

48. SCS informed members that to effect the proposed new starting salaries, the Administration planned to submit the relevant proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for its meeting on 13 June 2007 and thereafter to the Finance Committee.

Members supported the submission of the relevant proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration.

Suggestion of holding a joint Panel meeting

49. Noting that some members had expressed concern on the implications of the SSS on subvented organizations, in particular those in the medical and welfare sectors, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that a joint meeting with the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Welfare Services should be convened to discuss the matter, and the Administration's response to the motion just passed by this Panel. The Chairman said that he would discuss the matter with the Deputy Chairman.

(Post-meeting note: After discussion with the Deputy Chairman, the Chairman advised that it would be more appropriate for the Panel on Health Services and the Panel on Welfare Services to take up the matter as they considered appropriate. As such, the matter was referred to the two Panels accordingly.)

VI Implementation of five-day week in the Government (Final Phase)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1600/06-07(03) — Information paper provided by the Administration)

50. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was of the view that the final phase should not be the end of the five-day week initiative as many civil servants who were not included in the programme would like to migrate to five-day week. The Administration should continue to liaise with the staff sides with a view to enabling more civil servants to work on a five-day week basis.

51. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan remarked that many frontline and disciplined service staff in the civil service could not migrate to a five-day week mainly because they had longer conditioned working hours. He said that the Administration should review the conditioned working hours of frontline and disciplined service officers with a view to allowing them to migrate to a five-day week and setting uniform working hours for all civil servants.

52. The Deputy Chairman said that the public was concerned about the impact of the five-day week arrangement on provision of service to them by government departments. Some civil servants also experienced health problems working extended hours during the working days as a result of the implementation of the five-day week. She said that the Administration should continue to work closely with the staff sides to further improve the five-day week arrangement.

53. SCS responded that upon the implementation of the final phase of the five-day week, the Administration would review the overall arrangements of the five-day week initiative, taking into consideration the health and occupational safety of civil servants. She said that the conditioned working hours were part of the working conditions for consideration of the pay package for particular grades of officers in the civil service. It

would not be possible to review merely the conditioned working hours of particular grades of officers without considering the other working conditions and the resultant pay package. With reference to paragraph 15 of the paper, SCS pointed out that departments might continue to explore the feasibility of allowing more frontline staff to work according to a "five-day work, two-day-off" schedule, provided that public service interface remained unaffected.

VII Any other business

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 June 2007