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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 4th meeting
held in Conference Room A of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 14 January 2009, at 8:30 am

Members present:

Dr Hon Margaret NG (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou

Member attending:

Hon James TO Kun-sun

Members absent:

Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon WONG Yuk-man

Public Officers attending:

Ms Bernadette LINN, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP Ms Elsie YUEN	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr CHENG Yan-chee, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)1
Ms Angelina KWAN	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services) 7
Ms Sally WONG Pik-yea, JP	Commissioner for Narcotics, Security Bureau
Mr Desmond CHENG Suen-lok Miss Margaret FONG, JP	Assistant Secretary for Security (Narcotics)1 Commissioner for Tourism, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Ms Ellen CHOY	Assistant Commissioner for Tourism (5), Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Mr YUNG Wai-hung, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1
Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP Mr CHENG Ting-ning, JP	Director of Highways Project Manager/HK-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge HK, Highways Department
Mr WAN Man-lung, JP	Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development, Highways Department
Mr LAM Tin-sing, JP Mr CHAI Sung-veng, JP	Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)2 Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Mr YIP Sai-chor, JP	Head of Civil Engineering Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr HEUNG Yuk-sai	Deputy Project Manager (Kowloon), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mrs MAK LOK Suet-ling, JP	Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)1
Miss YUEN Wai-yin	Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)2
Mr LING Kar-kan	Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)5

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Rosalind MA	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
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Staff in attendance:

Mrs Constance LI	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Noel SUNG	Senior Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

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Dr Margaret NG, the Deputy Chairman, chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr WONG Yung-kan, Subcommittee Chairman, who was unable to attend.

2. The Deputy Chairman drew members' attention to an information paper (ECI(2008-09)11) provided by the Administration, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002.

EC(2008-09)13 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (Financial Services Branch) of Government Secretariat for a period of two years with immediate effect to take timely follow-up actions in response to the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force

3. The Deputy Chairman informed members that the Panel on Financial Affairs (FA Panel) was consulted on the staffing proposal on 21 November 2008. Some Panel members considered that the workload relating to anti-money laundering (AML) and counter financing of terrorism (CFT) did not justify the creation of a supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) post for 24 months. A Panel member pointed out that when the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB) was in charge of the overall coordination for AML and CFT policies, the Principal Assistant Secretary (PAS) concerned had to undertake other duties in addition to the AML/CFT duties. A Panel member also queried why the existing directorate officers in the Financial Services Branch (FSB) of the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) could not absorb the additional work in question. The Chairman of FA Panel had requested the Administration to re-consider the staffing proposal having regard to members' views and concerns, before submitting the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) for consideration.

4. Noting that the responsibility for AML/CFT issues normally took up about 20% of the Commissioner for Narcotics (C for N)'s resources when ND was in charge of the overall coordination work, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong queried why a supernumerary AOSGC post would need to be created when the coordination work was transferred to FSB of FSTB. Mr CHEUNG said that Members belonging to the Democratic Party (DP) were not convinced of the need for the proposed D2 post, but would support the creation of a non-directorate post for the additional duties

transferred to FSB of FSTB

5. Mr James TO asked about the workload involved in implementing the AML/CFT policies. He was not convinced that two AOSGC posts would be required (i.e. one in FSTB under the current proposal and the other in SB under **EC(2008-2009)14**) upon the transfer of the coordination work from SB to FSTB. Mr TO opined that the Administration should consider his suggestion of creating one Assistant Secretary post each in SB and FSTB to underpin the existing directorate officers for implementing AML/CFT and anti-drug policies. If the Administration considered it necessary to have additional support at directorate level, only one supernumerary PAS post and one Assistant Secretary post should be created for the time-limited tasks related to AML/CFT and anti-drug policies.

6. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services)1 (DS(FS)1) explained that while the responsibility for AML/CFT issues took up about 20% of C for N's resources in a normal year, more resources would be required in the coming two years for following up the recommendations of the mutual evaluation (ME) on Hong Kong conducted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The ME Report on Hong Kong published in July 2008 had identified certain areas for improvement in Hong Kong's AML/CFT regime and put forward a number of recommendations in this regard. To follow up the recommendations, FSTB would formulate legislative proposals to regulate remittance agents and money changers and to incorporate the customer due diligence and record keeping requirements for financial institutions into the law. These were new tasks in addition to the routine coordination work in a normal year. In preparing for the legislative proposals, FSTB had to coordinate consultation with the stakeholders in the relevant financial sectors (including banking, securities, insurance, remittance agents and money changers), which involved nearly 4 000 business entities. Hong Kong was required to submit its first progress report to FATF in June 2010, setting out the follow-up actions in rectifying the deficiencies identified in the ME Report. In view of the range, complexity and sensitivity of the duties as well as the need for accomplishing the tasks within a pressing timeframe, there was a need for a full-time dedicated AOSGC post to oversee the AML/CFT portfolio in the next two years. DS(FS)1 stressed that upon completion of the time-limited tasks for enhancement of the AML/CFT regime, the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post would lapse.

7. Mr James TO maintained his view that the workload involved in the follow-up of the ME Report did not justify the creation of a dedicated directorate post. He pointed out DP Members had no objection to enhancing AML/CFT and anti-drug initiatives through providing more resources to the respective policy bureaux. However, the proposed creation of one AOSGC post each in FSTB and SB would be too excessive, and he called on the two bureaux to examine critically the division of work to avoid overlapping of responsibilities.

8. DS(FS)1 explained that there was currently no designated D2 officer at FSTB or SB to take care of the AML/CFT policies. It was necessary to follow up the recommendations in the ME Report within a tight timeframe, which included the

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preparation of legislation for developing an AML/CFT regulatory framework for remittance agents and money changers, and providing statutory backing for customer due diligence and record keeping requirements for financial institutions. Given the complexity of the work involved and the need for consultation with a large number of stakeholders, the proposed creation of a supernumerary AOSGC post for a period of 24 months was considered appropriate. DS(FS)1 said that as far as he recalled, supernumerary posts had been created under ND to deal with upsurges in workload concerning AML/CFT policies. C for N confirmed that supernumerary AOSGC posts had been created in ND in the past to deal with sudden increases in workload, such as during the ME on Hong Kong in 2007-2008, to coordinate efforts both within and outside Government for this particular exercise.

9. DS(FS)1 further advised that the Administration had critically examined the feasibility of whether any of the existing PASs in FSB of FSTB to absorb the new AML/CFT portfolio. As the existing PASs were already fully engaged in their own schedule of work and were involved one way or the other in the reviews and follow-up actions arising from the global financial crisis, it was operationally not possible for them to take up the new AML/CFT portfolio without adversely affecting the discharge of their current duties. DS(FS)1 pointed out that the Administration had been prudent in planning and deployment of manpower resources. Any changes to manpower structure were made after thorough review of the work commitments and priorities as well as operational requirements. Proposals of reduction or downgrading of manpower resources would be put forward as and when needed. In this regard, FSB of FSTB had put forward a proposal for downgrading a directorate post in the Official Receiver's Office, which had been discussed at the meeting of the FA Panel on 5 January 2009.

10. Referring to Footnote 2 of **EC(2008-09)13**, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that supernumerary AOSGC posts of short duration lasting from four to six months had been created in ND in 2007-2008 to take up additional tasks relating to the AML/CFT portfolio. Mr CHEUNG maintained his view that a supernumerary AOSGC post for 24 months to undertake the AML/CFT duties was not justified. He considered that the Administration should propose a supernumerary post of a lower rank and of shorter duration.

11. Mr LAU Kong-wah opined that members should examine the proposal with regard to the significance of enhancing the AML/CFT regime of Hong Kong, which was part of Hong Kong's international obligations and was crucial to maintaining Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre. In view of the range and complexity of the work involved as well as the tight timeframe, Mr LAU appreciated that there should be a dedicated directorate officer for the tasks. Noting that some members were concerned about the justification for creating the post at AOSGC level, Mr LAU asked the Administration to explain why the duties could not be taken up by a directorate officer of a lower rank.

12. DS(FS)1 advised that apart from coordinating the preparation for the new AML/CFT legislation and coordinating consultation with stakeholders, the incumbent of the proposed post would represent Hong Kong at international forums

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on AML/CFT policies. He/she would also coordinate inputs of relevant bureaux/departments for the progress reports to be provided to the FATF, and provide support to the Central Coordinating Committee on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism. Having considered the nature of the work as well as the skills and experience required for the tasks involved, the Administration considered that it was more appropriate for a directorate officer of the AO grade to take up the new tasks. As the AO grade did not have a rank at D1 level, the proposed AOSGC post at D2 level was the lowest directorate rank in the grade.

13. Mrs Regina IP said that the proposal of putting in place a proper regulatory regime for remittance agents and money changers was made years ago. She considered it necessary to provide staffing support to enable timely follow-up on the recommendations of the ME Report. Mrs IP considered it appropriate for FSTB to take over the overall coordination of AML/CFT policies from SB, in view of the rapid changes in the trends and typologies of money laundering and terrorist financing activities in recent years. She pointed out that the modern financial systems were facing increasing threats of being abused by criminals for money laundering and other illicit purposes. As the gold and jewelry trade might also be used for money laundering, Mrs IP asked whether the Administration had plans to extend the regulatory requirements under the AML/CFT regime to the gold and jewelry trade as well.

14. DS(FS)1 said that the Administration would focus on developing an AML/CFT regulatory framework for remittance agents and money changers in the next two years. Consideration would be given as to how AML/CFT regulation for other trades should be put in place at a later stage. Responding to Mrs Regina IP's further enquiry, DS(FS)1 said that in formulating the regulatory framework for remittance agents and money exchangers, thorough consultation with the industry would be conducted in the process.

15. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2008-09)14 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in Narcotics Division of Security Bureau of Government Secretariat for a period of three years with immediate effect to take forward anti-drug work and the recommendations of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse

16. The Deputy Chairman informed members that the Panel on Security (Security Panel) was consulted on the staffing proposal on 2 December 2008.

17. Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of the Security Panel, said that a Panel member queried the need for a AOSGC post in ND and expressed concern about the possible overlapping of duties and responsibilities between the proposed post in SB and that in FSTB under **EC(2008-09)13**.

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18. Mr James TO said that while he objected to the proposed AOSGC post in FSTB under **EC(2008-09)13**, he would support the creation of a supernumerary AOSGC post in ND to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse. However, he could hardly find any new initiatives, except the recommendation on drug testing, in the report of the Task Force, as the majority of the recommendations therein had been raised and discussed since the 1990s.

19. C for N advised that the report of the Task Force published on 11 November 2008 contained over 70 recommendations, which signified a reinvigorated comprehensive and long-term strategy to tackle the drug abuse problem focusing on youth. Though some of the recommendations might be related to the existing five-pronged approach, measures under each of the five prongs would be reinforced and co-ordination among the prongs enhanced. ND would play a central role in coordinating efforts of bureaux, departments, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in the community. For example, in the school sector, not only would preventive education be stepped up but support and training to teachers would also be enhanced for early identification of at-risk students and handling of suspected drug abuse cases. The critical role of ND in strategy formulation and coordination would require additional staffing support at directorate level given the range and complexity of the issues to be addressed.

20. Mr James TO opined that the recommendations of the Task Force to strengthen the anti-drug work had revealed that inadequate efforts had been made in tackling the problem of drug abuse in the past years, in particular the problem amongst youngsters. He doubted whether the creation of one directorate post in ND could bring about significant improvement to the anti-drug work. In response, C for N stressed that ND had made the best endeavour to take forward the initiatives for tackling the problem of drug abuse. Pointing out that the coordination and collaboration between bureaux/departments and NGOs had improved since a supernumerary AOSGC post was created in September 2007 to assist C for N in anti-drug work, C for N believed that the additional directorate staffing support under the current proposal would help the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force.

21. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about the serious and increasing trend of youth drug abuse in Hong Kong. Referring to his observation during a recent visit to a special school for young drug abusers that even Band 1 students were not free from the risk of drug abuse, Mr CHEUNG pointed out that there was insufficient drug awareness and knowledge of the youth drug problem in the school sector. Mr CHEUNG said that he supported the staffing proposal for enhanced directorate support in combating the problem of youth drug abuse, but considered it necessary to review the effectiveness of the work of the supernumerary AOSGC post after three years. Mr WONG Sing-chi shared Mr CHEUNG' view and enquired the concrete measures to ensure that the additional directorate post would enhance the coordination and collaboration of bureaux/departments, NGOs, and other sectors of the community for effective implementation of the anti-drug initiatives. Mr WONG pointed out to tackle the youth drug abuse problem

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effectively, the Administration had to formulate strategies to overcome the difficulties for law enforcement agencies to identify "hidden" drug abusers, notably with the tendency for youth drug abusers to take drugs at home.

22. C for N advised that while it was not possible to resolve all the complicated issues involved in the problem of youth drug abuse with the creation of a directorate post in ND, the additional directorate support would help coordinate the efforts of relevant bureaux/departments, NGOs and the community to achieve the synergy effect of anti-drug initiatives. During the work of the Task Force in the past year, goodwill had been generated in the society and the general understanding about anti-drug work in the community had increased. It was therefore opportune for ND to build on the support of the community to take forward and see through the various initiatives to tackle the drug abuse problem, and additional directorate support would be crucial for the work. The Administration would examine the effectiveness and continued need for the proposed post upon the end of the three year period. As to Mr WONG Sing-chi's concern about the monitoring of the progress of implementation of the Task Force's recommendations, C for N said that an inter-departmental working group chaired by her would develop the comprehensive strategies recommended by the Task Force on a sustained and long-term basis, and address the complex issues straddling policy, legal, resource and other areas. ND would report the progress of anti-drug work to the Fight Crime Committee, the Action Committee Against Narcotics, the Drug Liaison Committee and the Security Panel.

23. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that he supported the staffing proposal as it was essential that concerted efforts would be made to combat the problem of youth drug abuse. He noted that some of the recommendations of the Task Force, such as compulsory drug testing, were controversial requiring consultation and consensus within the community before proceeding. Given the complexity and range of issues involved in such work, additional directorate support to C for N was necessary. Mr LAU also appreciated the Task Force's recommendation to change the nomenclature to better reflect the harmfulness of psychotropic substance abuse. He considered that with significant progress in the anti-drug strategy, it would increase the awareness of the community of the harmfulness of drugs. Mr LAU stressed that as the number of youth drug abusers had recorded a two-fold increase in the past decade, the Government must step up its efforts in combating the youth drug abuse problem for the well-being of the next generation. As many young drug abusers took drugs across the border, he called on the Administration to also devise suitable anti-drug strategy to tackle this problem. As regards the evaluation of the continued need of the proposed AOSGC post after three years, Mr LAU asked whether the performance indicators had been devised for assessing the effectiveness of ND's anti-drug work with the additional directorate support.

24. Ms LI Fung-ying expressed support for the staffing proposal. She considered preventive education and publicity crucial in combating the problem of youth drug abuse. This would help the next generation to live a healthy life, and reduce the significant social costs associated with the aggravated problem of drug abuse. She called on the Administration to take forward the recommendations of

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the Task Force in full, even though certain recommendations might be controversial and needed time to achieve a consensus in the community. Ms LI shared Mr LAU Kong-wah's view that objective performance indicators should be devised to assess the effectiveness of the anti-drug work.

25. Mr IP Wai-ming said that Members belonging to the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions supported the staffing proposal in view of the gravity of the youth drug abuse problem. He shared the view that Administration should provide information on the performance indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the anti-drug initiatives following the creation of the supernumerary post.

26. In response, C for N advised that effectiveness of Government's anti-drug work could not be assessed merely by the reported number of drug abuse. Although the overall reported numbers had reduced in the past decade, young drug abusers had been increasing, and there were more and more "hidden" cases, which might be identified after the efforts on the anti-drug work were stepped up following the vigorous implementation of the Task Force's recommendations. She said that in evaluating the effectiveness of the anti-drug work, reference could be made to a basket of indicators related to the drug abuse problem, such as regular surveys on students, user profiles provided by drug treatment and rehabilitation service agencies, and Police arrests. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, C for N agreed to provide further information on the performance indicators, preferably before the relevant meeting of the Finance Committee, and to the Security Panel for follow-up.

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27. Mrs Regina IP noted from paragraph 10 of **EC(2008-09)14** that there was at present only one permanent directorate post in ND, namely C for N. She recalled that C for N was previously underpinned by a PAS, and enquired whether the PAS post had been deleted.

28. In response, C for N said that the PAS post in ND had been deleted in 2003 in view of the reduction in the reported number of drug abusers at the time, and with the completion of time-limited tasks such as Hong Kong's turn for presidency of FATF and legislation on the licensing scheme for voluntary residential drug treatment and rehabilitation centres. However, there was a shift in the drug abuse pattern in recent years from traditional drugs such as heroin to psychotropic substances, and the number of "hidden" cases were on the rise and the age of abuse was dropping. To meet the increasing needs of psychotropic substance abusers, ND had to closely monitor the re-engineering pace of the drug treatment and rehabilitation programmes and ensure that the anti-drug resource allocation would meet the changing demand. ND also had to devise suitable anti-drug strategy to tackle the complicated and underlying social and family factors giving rise to the youth drug abuse problem, by means such as promoting a caring culture for the youth in the community. It was therefore necessary to provide an AOSGC post to support C for N in such work.

29. Mrs Regina IP asked whether a AOSGC post of three-year duration could adequately take forward the anti-drug initiatives. C for N said that formulation and implementation of anti-drug policies and programmes would be a long-term task.

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Given some Members' concern about the creation of 24 directorate posts in various bureaux and departments, the Administration had revised its proposal to a time-limited one. With the creation of such a post, there would be immediate directorate support to follow up the Task Force recommendations. The Administration would review the continued need of the post after three years having regard to the progress of the various initiatives and prevailing drug trend.

30. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2008-09)15 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in Tourism Commission under Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Commerce, Industry and Tourism Branch) of Government Secretariat for a period of nine months from 16 February 2009 to 15 November 2009 to support Government's discussions with The Walt Disney Company on a proposed expansion plan for Hong Kong Disneyland and possible capital realignment of the Hongkong International Theme Parks Limited

31. The Deputy Chairman informed members that the Panel on Economic Development (EDev Panel) was consulted on the proposal at the meeting on 16 December 2008. The Deputy Chairman apprised the meeting that while the EDev Panel supported the proposal in principle, some Panel members called on the Government to exercise prudence in discussing the expansion plan for the Hong Kong Disneyland (HKD) with The Walt Disney Company (TWDC), especially on the percentage of shareholding by the Government after the capital realignment of the Hongkong International Theme Parks Limited. Panel members also noted the Administration's advice that while a timeframe had not been set for the discussions with TWDC, the proposed period of nine months for the AOSGC post was based on past experience on similar discussions, and the time required for taking follow-up actions.

32. Mrs Regina IP declared that she held shares of TWDC.

33. Noting that the Administration had not set a timetable for the discussions with TWDC, Ms LI Fung-ying enquired how the nine-month duration for the proposed AOSGC post was worked out and whether extension of the post would be necessary if the discussions could not be completed at the end of the nine-month period. As there were already four Assistant Commissioner for Tourism (AC for T) posts in the Tourism Commission, Ms LI queried the need for creating dedicated supernumerary post for specific tasks (such as discussions with TWDC) especially in the midst of economic downturn. She urged FSTB and the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) to ensure that bureaux and departments would exercise due restraint in proposing extra staffing.

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34. The Commissioner for Tourism (C for T) explained that a timetable had not been set for the discussions with TWDC, in order not to compromise Government's bargaining position in the negotiation process. The proposed nine-month period was worked out on the basis of past experience and represented the Administration's broad assessment of the time required to conclude the discussions and to coordinate the immediate follow-up work. C for T further advised that the Administration had examined the feasibility of deploying the existing four ACs for T to take up the discussions with TWDC. As explained in paragraphs 12 and 13 of **EC(2008-09)15**, one of the AC for T posts was a supernumerary post created for the cruise terminal project, and the other three AC for T posts were currently fully engaged with their respective portfolios. All of them played a key role in steering their respective tourism policies and projects, and in engaging the tourism trade to achieve the agreed policy objectives. At a time of global economic downturn, the existing ACs for T were expected to make extra efforts to sustain and promote tourism development and to ensure timely delivery of various tourism projects. It was therefore impracticable for any of the ACs for T to absorb the additional workload in connection with the discussions with TWDC without seriously hampering the progress on other fronts.

35. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that Members belonging to DP would support the staffing proposal although they disagreed to the Administration's practice of creating dedicated directorate post for every specific project or task. He also highlighted these members' concern that the Administration should aim at concluding the discussions within nine months so as to take a decision on the expansion plan of HKD as soon as possible.

36. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2008-09)16 **Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of Chief Engineer (D1) in Highways Department with effect from 1 April 2009 for the planning and implementation of the proposed Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge project and the Shatin to Central Link railway project up to 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2016 respectively**

37. The Deputy Chairman informed the meeting that the Panel on Transport (Transport Panel) was consulted on the proposal on 19 December 2008. Panel members generally agreed that the proposal should be submitted to ESC for consideration. However, they also expressed concern about the exceptionally long duration of the proposed supernumerary posts and whether it was possible to redeploy existing staff resources to meet the extra workload. To address members' concerns, the Administration had provided information on the room for staff redeployment at directorate level, and the number of existing supernumerary directorate posts in the Highways Department. At the request of Mr Albert CHAN, the Research and Library Services Division of the LegCo Secretariat had also prepared a fact sheet for the Panel on "Directorate posts created for the Airport Core

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Programme and directorate posts created or planned to be created for the ten major infrastructure projects".

38. While supporting the staffing proposal, Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired the latest position of the earlier suggestions on the design of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), such as the provision of the Hin Keng Station, the walkway system enhancements at Tsz Wan Shan to strengthen the connectivity with the Diamond Hill Station, and the construction of a new subway crossing for connection between the Kowloon City area and SCL. On the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) project, Mr LAU enquired whether space had been reserved for provision of park-and-ride facilities near the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing to facilitate drivers' use of public transport after crossing the border.

39. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1 (DS(T)1) said that having considered the need to relieve the anticipated burden of passenger flow at the Tai Wai Station which would be brought by nearby new residential developments and for the convenience of residents and visitors of Hin Keng, the Hin Keng Station would be incorporated in the SCL scheme which would be gazetted later this year. As regards the walkway system enhancements at Tsz Wan Shan, after conducting feasibility study on the options put forward by the parties concerned, the Administration had worked out a preliminary proposal for comment by the local residents. After incorporating views of local residents, the proposal would be presented to the Wong Tai Sin District Council. On the provision of pedestrian facilities such as subway crossing for connection between SCL and the Kowloon City area, DS(T)1 said that options were being examined and the Administration would consult local residents on the preliminary option when this was available. DS(T)1 further said that the Administration was examining the preferred arrangement on the facilities for and regulation of cross-boundary vehicles after the commissioning of HZMB. The Administration would brief the Transport Panel on the subject at the meeting scheduled for late January 2009.

40. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for the staffing proposal but expressed concern about the exceptionally long durations of five and seven years for the two supernumerary Chief Engineer posts created to support the planning and implementation of the HZMB and SCL respectively. To ensure optimal utilization of directorate resources, Mr CHEUNG requested FSTB and CSB to monitor the overall directorate staffing position in the Highways Department in the coming years, so that redeployment would be arranged as and when any Chief Engineers in the department completed their existing projects.

41. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1 (DS(Tsy)1) advised that the Highways Department had examined its overall staffing position and any anticipated manpower resources in the coming years, and as a result the department managed to minimize the duration of the proposed posts and kept it shorter than the timeframe for completion of the projects in question. DS(Tsy)1 assured members that FSTB and CSB would ensure that bureaux/departments adopt a prudent approach in putting forward staffing proposals, and would continue to monitor the staffing positions in bureaux/departments to

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ensure that any spare staffing resources that might arise in coming years would be put to effective use.

42. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2008-09)17 Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of Chief Engineer (D1) in Civil Engineering and Development Department for a period of five years with effect from 1 April 2009 to oversee the administration, planning and implementation of the proposed infrastructure works for Kai Tak Development and Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point projects respectively

43. The Deputy Chairman informed the meeting that the Panel on Development was consulted on the staffing proposal on 8 December 2008. Some Panel members supported the proposal as it would expedite the projects for creation of job opportunities, while some other members expressed concern about the Administration's plan to create a total of eight permanent and 16 supernumerary directorate posts for different bureaux/departments in the current legislative session. These members were of the view that the Administration should review the overall staffing requirements and consider absorbing the workload through internal staff redeployment. In discussing the proposal, some Panel members called on the Administration to ensure that local workers could benefit from the jobs created under these projects, and that small and medium-sized contractors could participate in the tenders.

44. The item was voted on and endorsed.

EC(2008-09)18 Proposed creation of two permanent posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) and one Government Town Planner (D2) in Development Bureau (Planning and Lands Branch) of Government Secretariat with effect from 1 April 2009 to strengthen the policies on harbourfront enhancement initiatives and provide strategic and policy inputs on cross-boundary planning and development issues respectively

45. The Deputy Chairman informed members that the Panel on Development was consulted on the staffing proposal on 8 December 2008. Some Panel members supported the long-term work for implementing policies on harbourfront enhancement initiatives and providing strategic and policy inputs on cross-boundary planning and development issues. Some other Panel members opined that supernumerary posts, instead of permanent posts, should be created for such work, and they considered that the Administration should examine the overall staffing position in the relevant bureaux/departments before taking a decision on the additional staffing resources required.

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46. The item was voted on and endorsed.
47. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 10:10 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 February 2009