

LC Paper No. CB(2)1187/09-10(01)**Press Releases**

Designated display spots for candidates in 2010 Legislative Council by-election

The Government will allow incumbent Legislative Council (LegCo) and District Council (DC) members who intend to use the public display spots already allocated to them to continue to use the spots to communicate with the public during the LegCo by-election period. To ensure the fairness of the by-election, such spots should not be used for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the election of any candidate in the by-election.

Under paragraph 8(d) of the Management Scheme for the Display of Roadside Non-commercial Publicity Materials Implementation Guidelines, applications and approvals for designated spots for the display of roadside non-commercial publicity materials will be temporarily revoked during election periods (the removal arrangement).

Some LegCo and DC members and political parties have raised concerns over the removal arrangement. They consider that the arrangement would seriously affect the normal work of the incumbent LegCo and DC members. The removal and subsequent reinstatement of the publicity materials would also lead to a waste of resources.

"In view of the concerns raised, we see a need to review the existing arrangement," a Government spokesman said today (March 26).

In reviewing the removal arrangement, the Government ensures that the following policy objectives are upheld:

- (a) no candidate should have any unfair advantage;
- (b) there should be a clear message of the election during the by-election period;
- (c) there should be adequate designated display spots for publicity by the candidates;
- (d) the public display spots, as a limited public resource, should be utilised reasonably and in line with public interest; and
- (e) interruptions and nuisance to normal service to the public should be minimised as far as possible.

The Government recognises the incumbent members' need to continue their normal service to the public and to communicate with them during the by-election period. However, to safeguard the fairness of the election, it is necessary to ensure that no candidate in the by-election will have any unfair advantage over others in publicity through the display spots. The Government will continue to suspend the temporary revocation of approval for incumbent LegCo and DC members who intend to retain their allocated public display spots on the condition that such public display spots will not be used for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the candidacy of any candidate in the by-election

(i.e. no election advertisements can be displayed at the public display spots). If a public display spot of an incumbent member is used for the purpose of promoting or prejudicing the candidacy of any candidate in the by-election, approval of that display spot will be immediately revoked until May 31, 2010. The relevant materials shall be removed without prior notice with the costs of removal to be claimed from the member concerned. Members who intend to retain the public display spots allocated to them during the by-election period have to inform the Government no later than April 1, 2010, of their intention. If members do not inform the Government of their intention, any materials remaining on the public display spots after April 7, 2010, will be removed by the Government and the costs of removal will be recovered from the members concerned.

Furthermore, to ensure the fairness of the by-election, if an incumbent DC member stands for the by-election in the LegCo geographical constituency in which the DC is situated, the approval in respect of all the public display spots allocated in his/her capacity as an incumbent DC member shall be immediately revoked upon his/her submission of the nomination form to the Returning Officer until May 31, 2010. All publicity materials at such public display spots must be cleared within two days from the date of submission of such nomination form or by April 8, 2010, whichever date is earlier. Failing this, such materials will be removed by the Government without prior notice with costs of removal to be recovered from the member concerned.

Ends/Friday, March 26, 2010
Issued at HKT 19:29

NNNN