

For information on
18 November 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Manpower

Progress of Setting up a Pioneer One-stop Employment and Training Centre in Tin Shui Wai

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress in setting up the proposed pioneer one-stop employment and training centre (OSS) in Tin Shui Wai.

Background

2. In the 2009-2010 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that, to enhance support to job seekers, the Government would set up a pioneer OSS in Tin Shui Wai. This initiative, which takes forward one of the major recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty, aims at streamlining, integrating and enhancing the existing employment and training/retraining services provided by the Labour Department (LD), Social Welfare Department (SWD) and Employees Retraining Board (ERB). LD is responsible for setting up the OSS and its operations and coordinating the provision of employment and training/retraining services in one stop.

3. OSS will be housed on the fourth floor of the new Amenity and Community Building (ACB) at Tin Ching Estate in Tin Shui Wai. This will have an office area of 1 050 square metres, which is about two to three times the size of a Job Centre of LD. Apart from providing a wide array of employment services and programmes, various enhanced features will be introduced. Besides, there will also be an ERB Service Centre on the third floor of the ACB. The co-location of OSS and ERB Service Centre will in practice facilitate job-seekers in obtaining employment and training/retraining services in one stop. A referral mechanism will be devised such that job-seekers assessed by LD as requiring training/retraining will be readily accepted by ERB Service Centre for further assessment or admission to suitable courses.

4. To enable the best use of resources, the existing Yuen Long Job Centre will merge with OSS to serve all the job seekers of Yuen Long District, when OSS starts operation. Moreover, in its first year of operation, it will provide personalised and customised employment services to 500 unemployed

able-bodied Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients in Tin Shui Wai, with a view to helping them secure employment and become self-reliant. As experience gathers, it will cater for more unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients in the District.

5. To support the integrated service, an information technology (IT) system is being developed to enhance data-sharing among LD, SWD and ERB. With the installation of case management and related functions for designated users to keep track of job-seekers' progress in training/retraining and job search, the system will help enhance operational efficiency and enable better collaboration and coordination among the parties, having regard to the experience of the job-seekers concerned.

Facilities and Employment Services of OSS

6. A full range of facilities and services that can assist job-seekers in their job search provided in a job centre will be made available and strengthened at OSS. Job-seekers will find the most updated vacancy information. The easy-to-use touch-screen vacancy search terminals connected to LD's substantial vacancy database will be installed to facilitate job-seekers to search and short-list vacancies that suit their preferences, qualifications and skills at their fingertips. Computers with résumé-building software and facilities such as telephone, fax and computer with internet connection will be put in place, enabling the completion of the whole job-hunting process in one go. Reference books and magazines providing information on the employment market and industries, and self-learning packages on job search skills, will be available for easy reference.

7. Resource corners will be set up for target groups, including the new arrivals and ethnic minorities, to provide them with information on the employment market and resources available in the community. Talks and briefings will also be arranged regularly to enrich job-seekers' knowledge of the current employment market and facilitate their acquisition of the necessary skills for job search.

8. Placement officers will help job-seekers evaluate their academic qualifications, job skills, work experience and job preferences, and provide them with career advice. For job-seekers who are not yet certain of their career choices, placement officers will encourage them to use our tailor-made computer-aided career assessment test, so that they can gain a better understanding of their own aptitudes, capabilities and personalities for more effective career planning.

9. Various employment programmes, viz. the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged, the Work Trial Scheme, and the Employment Navigator Programme will be administered to address the specific needs of target groups. Similarly, eligible young job-seekers can also enrol in the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme.

10. We will strive to establish and maintain close liaison with employers both outside and inside the District. Job fairs will be staged from time to time to expedite dissemination of employment information to local residents. OSS can also provide a convenient platform for job-seekers to meet different recruiting employers. Tailor-made recruitment arrangements, such as on-the-spot job interviews, will be provided to employers with bulk vacancies and urgent recruitment needs.

Enhanced Employment Services at OSS

11. In addition to the above, OSS will be equipped with enhanced features to provide needy job-seekers with highly personalised and customised employment assistance. From our operational experience, different job-seekers require different levels of employment assistance. There are job-seekers capable of helping themselves or who may require only minimum level of support in finding jobs. On the other hand, there are also job-seekers who require much more intensive employment support. In addition to training and job-search assistance, in-depth psychological counselling to gauge the crux of certain job-seekers' inability to secure a job on a sustainable basis and case management to closely follow up their progress are very important in helping needy job-seekers overcome their respective barriers to employment. They may also need a work trial period with mentors to rebuild their confidence and adapt to the working environment, or a longer period of post-placement support to help them retain their jobs. Other needs may also include referral to relevant agencies for social services to help resolve their personal/family problems that impede their sustained employment.

12. OSS will adopt a needs assessment tool developed by renowned academics from a local university to analyse the employment needs of individual job-seekers with reference to their qualifications, skills, experiences, motivation, interests, job preferences, personalities, attitudes and aptitudes for work. Based on the assessment results, registered social workers will provide customised services to job-seekers requiring intensive employment support. Job-seekers will be counselled throughout their pathway to employment, and provided with personalised/group counselling, training/retraining, employment,

and post-placement support services. Moreover, tailor-made employment programmes will be designed and where appropriate, job-seekers with specific employment difficulties would be enrolled in these programmes for enhancing their employability.

13. The ERB Service Centre will provide a full range of training support services to trainees and job-seekers. They include the introduction of a personalised “training consultancy service” to users requiring more intensive support and advice on ERB courses; enrolment service for ERB courses offered by training bodies in the region; and provision of self-help mock interview facilities at the Centre. Workshops to instil positive work attitudes among trainees and job-seekers and seminars on career prospects of different industries and related ERB courses will also be organised from time to time.

Progress of Setting up the OSS

14. ACB is still under construction and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2011. OSS will commence operation once decorated and furnished. Meanwhile, preparatory work for setting up the OSS is in full swing. The career assessment kit has already been developed. Procurement of various equipment and facilities is underway. We have also completed the design of the needs assessment tool for analysing the employment needs of individual job-seekers, while the development of the IT system for data-sharing and the computer programme for administering the needs assessment tool is in good progress. Preparation for engaging a non-government organisation for the provision of professional employment counselling services at OSS has also started. The opening of ERB Service Centre will also tie in with the OSS.

Manpower for Manning the OSS

15. Apart from deploying all the officers currently working at Yuen Long Job Centre to man OSS, additional manpower resources would be available and registered social workers will be engaged to provide case management services to job-seekers. It is expected that altogether some 30 officers will be serving at OSS. We will keep the manpower requirements of OSS under review to ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide quality services. As for the ERB Service Centre, ERB will engage the service of a training body to oversee the day-to-day activities of the Centre. It is estimated that some 20 officers, including training consultants seconded from ERB, will be serving at the Centre.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note and give views on this initiative.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Labour Department
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