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Panel on Manpower

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 17 July 2014**

One-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the discussions of the Panel on Manpower ("the Panel") on the setting up of a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai.

Background

2. In the 2009-2010 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Administration would set up a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai. This initiative, which took forward one of the major recommendations of the former Commission on Poverty, aimed at streamlining, integrating and enhancing the existing employment and training or retraining services provided by the Labour Department ("LD"), Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and Employees Retraining Board ("ERB"). LD is responsible for setting up the centre, which was later named as Employment in One-stop ("EOS"), and its operation and coordinating the provision of employment and training or retraining services in one stop.

3. Merging with the Yuen Long Job Centre ("YLJC"), EOS has commenced operation from 28 December 2011. It is housed on the fourth floor of the Tin Ching Amenity and Community Building ("ACB") at Tin Ching Estate in Tin Shui Wai. With a total floor area of 1 082 square metres, EOS is about two to three times the size of a Job Centre of LD. Besides, an ERB Service Centre ("the Centre") has been set up on the third floor of the same building.

Deliberations of the Panel

Employment support services provided by EOS

4. Expressing support for the establishment of EOS, members expressed concern about how the personalized and customized employment services would be provided by EOS to targeted clients. Concern was also raised whether such services were restricted to 500 unemployed able-bodied Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") recipients living in Tin Shui Wai.

5. The Administration advised that EOS adopted a brand new mode of operation and services. It was set up in Tin Shui Wai on a pioneer basis aimed at enhancing employment support for vulnerable groups in the district. Apart from making available at EOS a full range of self-help job search facilities and employment services currently available at the Job Centres of LD, EOS would provide on a trial basis case management and intensive employment support services respectively to 500 and 750 unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients in Tin Shui Wai in its first and second years of operation, with a view to helping them secure employment and become self-reliant. Case managers of EOS would provide these job-seekers with intensive and customized employment support services. SWD would refer fresh CSSA recipients to EOS as existing CSSA recipients were already receiving assistance under the employment assistance programmes operated by SWD. In addition to those unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients, the enhanced employment services would also be provided to 50 other job seekers with special employment difficulties each year during its first two years of operation. EOS would also serve other job-seekers in need of employment assistance in a way similar to those offered by the existing Job Centres of LD. The Administration expected that EOS could serve about 10 000 job seekers a year.

6. Some members raised concern about the anticipated heavy caseload of case managers and registered social workers in EOS. The Administration advised that the ratio of case managers to job seekers would be 1 to 70. As the registered social workers would mainly provide employment assistance to the job seekers rather than intensive case services, the ratio was considered appropriate. The Administration would keep in review the actual staff requirement following the operation of EOS.

Location and operation of EOS and the Centre

7. Given the remote location of EOS, some members enquired about the rationale for setting up EOS in Tin Shui Wai and whether the merging of EOS

with YLJC was due to resource constraints.

8. According to the Administration, Tin Shui Wai, densely populated with needy job seekers including unemployed CSSA recipients and new arrivals, had the second highest unemployment rate in Hong Kong. EOS would provide residents of Tin Shui Wai with enhanced employment services and the Tin Ching ACB could provide additional space for the operation of EOS. Moreover, given that it would be easily accessible by various transportation means and it was only 15 minutes away by public transport from Yuen Long town centre, the merging of EOS and YLJC would facilitate better utilization of resources.

9. Members were given to understand that the co-location of EOS and the Centre in practice facilitated job-seekers in obtaining employment and training or retraining services in one stop. LD and ERB had jointly formulated a referral mechanism under which EOS case managers could refer job seekers with training or retraining needs to the Centre for further assessment or admission to suitable courses or offer of other training support services to enhance their employability.

Review on effectiveness of EOS and extension of service model

10. Some members were concerned about when the Administration would evaluate the effectiveness of EOS and criteria for the review. Some members also expressed concern whether the Administration would extend the new service model by establishing EOS in other districts or give consideration to replacing existing Job Centres of LD with EOS. Notably, some members expressed support for the establishment of EOS in Tin Shui Wai which offered coordinated employment support and services to job-seekers in the district, and would save them the time and trouble of travelling between LD's job centres and ERB's training centres in the job-searching and training process. They held the view that similar one-stop employment and training centres should be set up in more districts as early as possible, particularly in the new towns.

11. Members were advised that the Administration planned to review the operation of EOS two years after it had commenced operation. Its effectiveness would be evaluated in quantitative terms including the number of job seekers registered, vacancies canvassed, job referrals made, placements achieved, case management services received, usage of facilities in EOS as well as recruitment activities organized and users' satisfaction with the provision of services.

12. As regards the extension of the service model to other districts, the Administration advised that since EOS would operate on a new service model

which aimed at integrating and streamlining existing employment, training and retraining services of LD, SWD and ERB, the Administration would assess the suitability of extending the service model to other districts in the light of operational experience. EOS would be extended to other districts if the pilot EOS was proved to be successful in the provision of employment assistance and the services of EOS were found suitable for other districts having regard to their unique socio-economic characteristics. Yet, members were given to understand that a major challenge would be the availability of suitable premises with sufficient space.

Relevant papers

13. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 July 2014

**Relevant papers on
The progress of the setting up of a pioneer one-stop employment and
training centre in Tin Shui Wai**

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Panel on Manpower | 21.10.2010 (Item II) | <u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> |
| Panel on Manpower | 18.11.2010 (Item III) | <u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> |
| Panel on Manpower | 20.10.2011 (Item II) | <u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> |
| Panel on Manpower | 15.12.2011 (Item VI) | <u>Agenda</u> <u>Minutes</u> |

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