立法會 Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1992/16-17 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB2/BC/1/16

Bills Committee on Private Columbaria Bill

Minutes of the seventh meeting held on Monday, 27 February 2017, from 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members: Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP (Chairman)

present Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP

Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP

Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP

Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP

Hon CHAN Chi-chuen

Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung

Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP

Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP

Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP

Hon CHU Hoi-dick

Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding

Hon SHIU Ka-chun

Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH

Hon YUNG Hoi-yan

Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung Members absent : Hon Tanya CHAN (Deputy Chairman) Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP

Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP

Hon HO Kai-ming Hon LUK Chung-hung Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH

Dr Hon LAU Siu-lai

[According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.]

Public Officers: <u>Item I</u> **attending**

Mr Daniel CHENG, JP

Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Food and Health Bureau

Miss Diane WONG

Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health

(Food) 2

Food and Health Bureau

Mr Peter SZE Senior Government Counsel Department of Justice

Miss Cindy CHEUK Senior Government Counsel Department of Justice

Mr CHIU Yu-chow Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr Thomas LEUNG Assistant Director/New Buildings 1

Buildings Department

Ms Doris CHOW
Assistant Director (Estate Management) (Lands
Administration Office/ Headquarters)
Lands Department

Ms Christine TSE Assistant Director of Planning/Special Duties Planning Department

Clerk in : Mr Colin CHUI

attendance Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in : Ms Wendy KAN

attendance Assistant Legal Adviser 6

Ms Catherina YU

Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Meisy KWOK

Legislative Assistant (2) 6

I. Meeting with the Administration

[File Ref.: FH CR 2/3751/07; LC Paper Nos. CB(3)113/16-17, LS10/16-17, CB(2)345/16-17(01) and (02) and CB(2)862/16-17(01)]

The Bills Committee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

- 2. <u>The Bills Committee</u> requested the Administration to:
 - (a) review the use of the words "必需" in the Chinese text of sections 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Schedule 5; and
 - (b) consider making available the information mentioned in sections 10, 12(3) and 13 of Schedule 5 as much as practicable for public access in a convenient way.

II. Date of next meeting

3. <u>The Chairman</u> said that members would be informed of the date of the next meeting in due course.

(*Post-meeting note*: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)908/16-17 on 1 March 2017 that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 16 March 2017 at 2:30 p.m.)

III. Any other business

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:39 pm.

Council Business Division 2 <u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u> 2 August 2017

Proceedings of the seventh meeting of the Bills Committee on Private Columbaria Bill on Monday, 27 February 2017, from 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
Agenda item I – Me	eeting with the Administr	ation	
000522 - 001000	Chairman Administration	Discussion about the Administration's paper entitled "Supplementary Information Requested by Members at Previous Meetings" (LC Paper No. CB(2)862/16-17(01)).	
Clause-by-clause e	xamination		
001001 - 001311	Chairman Administration	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 6	
001312 - 001852	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 7 ALA6's advice that under section 7(2)(b) of Schedule 5, an ash handler was required to deliver to the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene ("DFEH") the ashes that were not returned to an eligible claimant in a manner specified by DFEH. Such requirement would not be provided for in subsidiary legislation and therefore would not be subject to amendment by the Legislative Council ("LegCo"). Non-compliance with the requirement might be punishable with a fine and imprisonment under clause 72. She informed members that the former Bills Committee on Private Columbaria Bill ("the former Bills Committee") had expressed concern about the serious consequence (i.e. criminal sanction) for non-compliance given that the requirement so imposed could not be amended by LegCo Members of the former Bills Committee were, however, also aware that criminal sanction was necessary in order to have sufficient deterrent effect. They considered that as non-compliance cases would be handled by the court, it could play the role of "gatekeeper" in deciding the penalty to be imposed on the offenders concerned. Taking into account the above factors, the former Bills Committee accepted the proposed requirement and suggested that its concerns, factors for consideration and acceptance of the requirement concerned should be covered in the speech of the Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") for resumption of the Second Reading debate on the former Private	

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		Columbaria Bill. The Administration had made an undertaking that guidelines would be promulgated for the purpose of providing greater clarity on the proper disposal of ashes. She invited members to consider whether the proposed arrangement in section 7(2)(b) of Schedule 5 was acceptable.	
		The Chairman said that the Administration should include members' concerns, factors for consideration and acceptance of the requirement concerned in SFH's speech for resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill and provide the aforesaid guidelines to the parties concerned. Members raised no objection in this regard.	
001853 - 002345	Chairman Administration	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 8	
	Mr CHAN Chi-chuen ALA6	The Administration's response to Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's enquiry that the Administration would relay to the future Private Columbaria Licensing Board ("Licensing Board") the request for publishing commencement of ash disposal notices on the relevant websites.	
		ALA6's advice that the particulars to be contained in a commencement of ash disposal notice as required in section 8(4)(b)(iii) of Schedule 5 were not exhaustive and failure to provide these particulars might be punishable with a fine and imprisonment. She informed members that the former Bills Committee had discussed the issue and accepted the Administration's proposal. She reiterated the concerns and requests of the former Bills Committee mentioned earlier (time marker: 001312-001852) and invited members to consider whether the proposed arrangement under section 8(4)(b)(iii) of Schedule 5 was acceptable.	
		The Chairman's advice that the Administration should handle section 8(4)(b)(iii) of Schedule 5 in the same manner as that for section 7(2)(b) of Schedule 5. Members agreed.	
002346 - 003844	Chairman Administration Mr CHAN Chi-chuen ALA6	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 9 Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the priority of claiming for the return of ashes among relatives of the deceased person and that of the same-sex partner (who was not a prescribed claimant) of the deceased person.	

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		Mr CHAN's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding claim for the return of the ashes by the same-sex partner (who was not a prescribed claimant) of a deceased person in the event that there was no claim or competing claim for the return of ashes by prescribed claimants. The Administration's advice that DFEH might exercise discretion in disposing of ashes only after the on-site claim period stipulated in the Bill had expired.	
		Mr CHAN took the view that the proposed arrangements for claiming for the return of ashes by the same-sex partner of a deceased person were undesirable. He hoped that the Administration would brief members early on its proposed amendments to the Bill to facilitate related persons' claim for the return of ashes as far as ash disposal was concerned.	
		ALA6 drew members' attention to the legal effect of section 9(8)(a)(ii) and (b) of Schedule 5 and the implication on the responsibilities of an ash handler after the expiry of the on-site claim period. She informed members that the former Bills Committee had discussed the issue and accepted the provisions. Members raised no objection to the relevant provisions.	
003845 - 004214	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 10 ALA6's advice that the requirements imposed by the Licensing Board under section 10(1)(b) of Schedule 5 (i.e. the information to be contained in a record of the steps that an ash handler had taken to carry out the prescribed ash disposal procedures) would not be provided for in subsidiary legislation and therefore would not be subject to amendment by LegCo. Non-compliance with the Licensing Board's requirements might be punishable with a fine and imprisonment.	
		[Post-meeting note: According to the Administration, with Committee stage amendment ("CSA") to be moved by the Government, the "Licensing Board" under section 10(1)(b) had been substituted with the "Director" (i.e. DFEH).]	
		She informed members that the former Bills Committee had discussed the issue and accepted the Administration's proposal. In addition to the concerns and requests of the former Bills Committee mentioned earlier (time-marker:	

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		001312-001852), the former Bills Committee had requested the Administration to brief the relevant Panel of the Sixth LegCo after the implementation of the Private Columbaria Ordinance ("the Ordinance") on the difficulties encountered, if any, in enforcing that section and on the information referred to therein. The Administration had undertaken to do so and agreed that such undertaking would be covered in the SFH's speech. She invited members to consider whether the proposed arrangement in section 10(1)(b) of Schedule 5 was acceptable. The Chairman's advice that the Administration should handle section 10(1)(b) of Schedule 5 in the same manner as that for section 7(2)(b) of Schedule 5. The Administration should also brief the relevant Panel as requested by the former Bills Committee. Members agreed.	
004215 - 004443	Chairman Administration ALA6 Dr Helena WONG	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 11 ALA6 drew members' attention that DFEH or an authorized officer was empowered under section 11 of Schedule 5 to require an ash handler to take any steps that DFEH considered necessary to facilitate the return of ashes, etc. Such requirement would not be provided for in subsidiary legislation and therefore would not be subject to amendment by LegCo. Non-compliance with the requirement might be punishable with a fine and imprisonment. She informed members that the former Bills Committee had discussed the issue and accepted the Administration's proposal. She reiterated the concerns and requests of the former Bills Committee mentioned earlier (time-marker: 001312-001852) and invited members to consider whether the provision was acceptable. The Chairman's advice that the Administration should handle section 11 of Schedule 5 in the same manner as that for section 7(2)(b) of Schedule 5. Members raised no objection in this regard. Dr Helena WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the reasons for using the words "必需" but not "必須" in the Chinese text of section 11 of Schedule 5.	
004444 – 005059	Chairman Administration Dr Priscilla LEUNG ALA6	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 12 Dr Priscilla LEUNG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the use of	

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Time market	Speaker(s)	the words "必需" in the Chinese text of section 12(2) and the word "須" in the Chinese text of section 14(1)(a) of Schedule 5. ALA6 drew members' attention that: (a) under section 12(2) of Schedule 5, DFEH might carry out the steps that she considered necessary for the disposal of ashes (to the extent that there were steps in the prescribed ash disposal procedures that had not been carried out and that under section 12(4) of Schedule 5, sections 7, 8 and 9 of Schedule 5 would apply to DFEH with necessary	required
		would apply to DFEH with necessary modifications for the purposes of disposal of ashes); and (b) while an operator of a private columbarium should be responsible for carrying out the prescribed ash disposal procedures as required in the Bill, DFEH could be invited to, under clause 73(4), and a specified officer might, under clause 74(1), carry out any steps that he/she considered necessary for disposal of ashes in respect of a columbarium.	
		She informed members that the former Bills Committee had discussed the issues and accepted these provisions. She invited members to consider whether such provisions were acceptable. Members raised no objection in this regard. Dr Priscilla LEUNG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the legal consequences of section 12(2) of Schedule 5. The Administration's advice that under section 12(2) of Schedule 5, DFEH had the discretion to decide the steps to be carried out for ash disposal.	
005100 - 005451	Chairman Administration Dr Priscilla LEUNG Mr CHAN Chi-chuen ALA6	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 13 Dr Priscilla LEUNG's view that the words "必需" in the Chinese text of sections 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Schedule 5 had a connotation of "必須(must)". The Administration's response that the phrase "considers necessary" was used in these sections to indicate DFEH's discretion. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's suggestion that the Administration should review the use of the words "必需" in the relevant provisions.	

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		The Chairman's request for the Administration to consider members' suggestion on the drafting of the relevant provisions. The Administration undertook to do so.	Admin (paragraph 2(a) of the minutes)
		ALA6's advice that pursuant to section 13(2) of Schedule 5, if DFEH knew, not because a person had informed her by written notice, that there were pending court proceedings in respect of the ashes in her possession, she might still dispose the ashes in any manner that she thought fit (including scattering cremains at gardens of remembrance and at sea). Members raised no objection in this regard.	
005452 - 010435	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 14 Dr Helena WONG's concern that the steps that DFEH considered necessary for disposal of ashes might incur high expenses. The Administration's advice on the major types of expenses to be incurred in carrying out the aforesaid steps and that such steps would be reasonable and appropriate.	
		Dr WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the recovery of the expenses that DFEH incurred in carrying out the steps for disposal of ashes. The Administration's advice that the ash handler rather than the descendant was liable to pay to DFEH the aforesaid expenses. Under section 14(9) of Schedule 5, the expenses due from a person to DFEH under section 14 of Schedule 5 were recoverable as a civil debt due to the Government.	
010436 – 011122	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG ALA6 Dr Priscilla LEUNG	Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 15 Dr Helena WONG's suggestion and the Administration's response in relation to making the information mentioned in section 15(1) of Schedule 5 available on its website.	
		ALA6 drew members' attention that how DFEH should handle the records and information relating to ash disposal mentioned in sections 10, 12(3) and 13 of Schedule 5 were not provided for in the Bill.	
		Dr WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding making public the records and information mentioned in sections 10, 12(3) and 13 of Schedule 5. Dr WONG's view that the Bill should provide for making public the records and information concerning ash disposal	

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011123 – 011554	Chairman Administration ALA6 Dr Helena WONG	unless such records and information contained personal data. The Administration advised that it had undertaken to keep in view the implementation of the Ordinance and propose amendments to the Ordinance as and when necessary. A review of the Ordinance would in any event be conducted around three years after enactment. While expressing support for enhancing transparency of the relevant information, Dr Priscilla LEUNG reminded the Administration to study carefully the information to be made public and the possible legal disputes arising from such public disclosure. Having regard to members' views, the Chairman said that the Administration should make available the aforesaid information as much as practicable for public access in a convenient way. The Administration undertook to consider members' views. Examination of Schedule 5 – Part 2, section 16 ALA6 drew members' attention that under section 16 of Schedule 5, unless DFEH decided otherwise, a person was required to carry out the prescribed ash disposal procedures pending the determination of an appeal against the decision to refuse an application made under section 16(2) of Schedule 5. She also informed members that	
011555 – 012035	Chairman Administration ALA6 Dr Helena WONG	the Licensing Board might, with the approval of SFH, by notice published in the Gazette, amend Part 2 of Schedule 5. The notice was subsidiary legislation. At Dr Helena WONG's request, ALA6 explained section 16(7) of Schedule 5. Examination of Part 6 – clause 57 ALA6's advice that there was no criminal sanction imposed against a person for wilfully	
		obstructing the exercise of a power under clause 57(2)(e), as indicated in clause 60(1)(a). Under clause 57(3), a person holding a specified instrument (i.e. a licence, an exemption or a temporary suspension of liability) and the employees, servants or agents of the person had to provide the assistance and information required by DFEH or an authorized officer for exercising the powers under clause 57. No criminal sanction was imposed for	

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		non-compliance with clause 57(3). ALA6 informed members that the majority of members of the former Bills Committee considered the Administration's proposal acceptable, provided that the Administration should review and propose amendments, in a timely manner, to the relevant provisions as and when necessary.	
		Dr Helena WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the consequences of not providing DFEH or an authorized officer with the assistance and information under clause 57(3). The Administration's advice that a person who wilfully obstructed the exercise of a power under clause 57(2)(a), (c) or (d) committed an offence and was liable on conviction to a fine and imprisonment. Having regard to the views of the former Bills Committee, the Administration had proposed a CSA to the effect that non-compliance with clause 57(3) did not constitute an offence.	
012036 - 013403	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG ALA6 Ms YUNG Hoi-yan	Examination of Part 6 – clause 58 ALA6's response to Dr Helena WONG's enquiry that clauses 57(3) and 58(2)(d) catered for different scenarios. The Administration's response to Dr WONG's enquiry regarding the purposes of clauses 57 and 58. Dr WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding whether the employees would be subject to criminal sanction if the premises concerned were suspected to contain evidence of an offence under the Ordinance ("the premises") and the employees willfully obstructed the exercise of power under clause 58.	
		The Administration's responses to Ms YUNG Hoi-yan's enquiries regarding the place of detaining a person found on the premises and the detention period. Ms YUNG's concern and the Administration's response regarding the risk of unlawful detention of a person if the search of the premises was carried out without a search warrant and a detention period was not provided for in the Bill. The Administration's advice that clause 58(3) had imposed certain conditions on searching the premises without a search warrant. In light of	

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		premises, it was not expected that the search of columbarium premises would take an exceedingly long time. Ms YUNG's reiteration of her concern about the risk of unlawful detention of a person as the	
		detention period was not stipulated in the Bill.	
013404 - 014502	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung	Examination of Part 6 – clause 59 Dr Helena WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding whether the employees who were found on the premises would be prosecuted and arrested. The Administration's advice that generally speaking, the specified instrument holder would be liable for non-compliance with the Ordinance in operating a columbarium and the conditions of a specified instrument. Whether prosecution actions would be taken against a person found on the premises would depend on individual circumstances.	
		The Administration's response to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's concern that an employee who was innocent might be arrested by the exercise of the power of arrest by DFEH or an authorized officer under clause 59. The Administration's explanation of clause 11(3) which provided for a defence of a person who was charged with an offence under clause 11(1), and clause 98 which concerned liability of directors, partners, etc. for offences under the Ordinance.	
014503 – 014554	Chairman Administration	Examination of Part 6 – clause 60	
014555 – 014752	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Part 6 – clause 61 ALA6 drew members' attention that under clause 61(3)(a), if the things seized, removed or impounded under clause 58(2)(b) had not been collected by the owner of the things within the 60 days stated in the notice to the owner, the things were to become the property of the Government.	
014753 – 015215	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Part 6 – clause 62 ALA6 drew members' attention that under clause 62(6), the operation of the decision to serve an enforcement notice would not be suspended pending determination of an appeal against the decision to serve the notice, unless DFEH decided otherwise. She informed members that the provision was added to the Bill having regard	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		to the views of the former Bills Committee. The Administration's advice of the reasons for the addition of that provision to the Bill.	
015216 - 020245	Chairman	Break	
020246 – 021204	Chairman Administration	Examination of Part 9 – clauses 91 to 98	
021205 – 021341	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG	Examination of Part 9 – clause 99 Dr Helena WONG's concern and the Administration's response that the Administration might need longer time to institute court proceedings for an offence under the Ordinance. The Administration's advice that there was no time limit for instituting prosecution for an indictable offence. The Administration would keep in view the implementation of the Ordinance and propose amendments to the Ordinance as and when necessary.	
021342 – 021544	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG	Examination of Part 9 – clause 100 At Dr Helena WONG's request, the Administration gave a brief account of the proposed fees in Schedule 6.	
021545 - 022253	Chairman Administration	Examination of Part 9 – clauses 101 to 106	
022254 – 022548	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Schedule 7, section 1 ALA6's advice that SFH might, by notice published in the Gazette, amend Schedule 7 and the notice was subsidiary legislation.	
022549 – 024104	Chairman Administration	Examination of Part 10 – clauses 107 to 111	
024105 – 024146	Chairman	The Chairman's advice that members might refer to the marked-up copy of the relevant legislation proposed to be amended by the Bill as prepared by the Legal Service Division of the LegCo Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)345/16-17(02)) in the examination of clauses 112 to 131.	
024147 – 025246	Chairman Administration ALA6	Examination of Part 11 – Division 1, clauses 112 to 113 Division 2, clauses 114 to 116 Division 3, clauses 117 to 120 Division 4, clauses 121 to 123 ALA6 drew members' attention that no criminal sanction was imposed for contravening the new	

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		section 113A(2) and (5) proposed to be added to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) and that the "other particulars" mentioned in the new section 113A(5) were not provided for in subsidiary legislation. She invited members to consider whether the proposed arrangements under these provisions were acceptable.	
		The Chairman's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the reasons for not imposing criminal sanction for contravening the new section 113A(2) and (5), and the consequences for non-compliance.	
		Dr Helena WONG's enquiry and the Administration's response regarding the reasons for the addition of the new section 113A to Cap. 132.	
025247 – 025739	Chairman Administration	Examination of Part 11 – Division 4, clauses 124 to 125 Division 5, clauses 126 to 127 Division 6, clauses 128 to 129 Division 7, clauses 130 to 131	
025740 - 030322	Chairman Administration Mr Holden CHOW ALA6	Examination of Schedule 6 The Administration's response to the Chairman's enquiry that the fee for issue of licence was for the entire validity period of the licence and was dependent on the interment capacity of a columbarium. The proposed fees in Schedule 6 were generally accepted by the sector. In response to Mr Holden CHOW's enquiry, the Administration advised that the proposed fees in Schedule 6 were set on a cost-recovery basis. ALA6's advice that SFH might, by notice published in the Gazette, amend Schedule 6 and the notice was subsidiary legislation. Completion of clause-by-clause examination of the Bill.	
030323 - 031030	Chairman Administration Dr Helena WONG ALA6	The Administration's briefing on the scope of the CSAs it intended to propose and its proposed time frame for resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill. Dr Helena WONG's enquiry and the Chairman's response regarding the tentative date for resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.	

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		The Chairman's advice that the Bills Committee would discuss the CSAs proposed by the Administration and by members (if any) at the next meeting. (Post-meeting note: The next meeting of the Bills Committee would be held on Thursday, 16 March 2017, at 2:30 pm.)	

Council Business Division 2
<u>Legislative Council Secretariat</u>
2 August 2017