

# **立法會**

## ***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)1382/16-17

(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

### **Panel on Public Service**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Monday, 15 May 2017, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon KWOK Wai-keung (Chairman)  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP  
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN

**Members absent** : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon CHU Hoi-dick  
Hon HO Kai-ming

**Public Officers  
attending** : **Agenda item III**

Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Eddie MAK, JP  
Acting Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

**Agenda item IV**

Mr Clement CHEUNG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Eddie MAK, JP  
Acting Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

**Clerk in attendance** : Mr Anthony CHU  
Chief Council Secretary (4)1

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Wendy JAN  
Senior Council Secretary (4)7

Miss Maggie CHUNG  
Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Cynthia TAM  
Legislative Assistant (4)9

Mr Terry HON  
Clerical Assistant (4)1

---

## Action

### **I. Information papers issued since the last regular meeting on 21 April 2017**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)912/16-17(01) -- Administration's response to the submission from Government Amenity Management Supervisors General Union regarding the implementation of five-day week in the Government

LC Paper No. CB(4)1019/16-17(01) -- Letter dated 4 May 2017 from Hon LAM Cheuk-ting concerning the meal break arrangement for the Ambulanceman Grade in the Fire Services Department)

Members noted that the above papers had been issued since the last meeting.

### **II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

2. Members noted that the next regular Panel meeting would be held on 19 June 2017 to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service; and
- (b) 2017-2018 Civil Service Pay Adjustment.

3. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that Dr Elizabeth QUAT and she had sent a joint letter dated 21 March 2017 to the Chairman concerning the

## Action

enactment of dedicated legislation to prohibit acts of insulting public officers. She understood that it would take time for the Administration to examine this issue, and therefore proposed to include this item in the "List of outstanding items for discussion" ("the List"), so that the Panel could discuss this issue at a future meeting. The Chairman said that the issue raised by Dr CHIANG could be included in the List. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung suggested that, taking this opportunity, the Panel should also discuss enactment of legislation against public officers who insulted members of the public.

*(Post-meeting note: At the instruction of the Chairman, the joint letter was issued to members on 31 May 2017 vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1124/16-17(01).)*

4. The Chairman informed members that Mr LAM Cheuk-ting had written to the Panel on 4 May 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(4)1019/16-17(01)) requesting it to discuss the meal break arrangement for the Ambulanceman Grade in the Fire Services Department as early as possible. As a relevant item had already been included in the List (item 4) and the Administration had previously advised that it would provide an information note on the issue to the Panel, Mr LAM's letter had been included in this item. A copy had also been sent to the Administration for it to incorporate its response to the letter in the information note to be issued to the Panel.

5. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan was concerned about the long working hours of doctors working in public hospitals and sought clarification on which Panel was responsible for following up this issue. The Chairman directed the Clerk to seek the views of the Panel on Health Services on the matter.

*(Post-meeting note: Dr CHIANG Lai-wan was informed after the meeting that the subject of working hours of doctors working in public hospitals should be taken up by the Panel on Health Services.)*

### **III. An overview of the civil service establishment, strength, retirement, resignation, age profile and gender profile**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(03) -- Administration's paper on  
an overview of the civil  
service establishment,  
strength, retirement,

Action

resignation, age profile  
and gender profile

LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(04) -- Paper on the overall establishment, strength, retirement, resignation and age profile of the civil service prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the overall civil service establishment, strength, retirement, resignation, age profile and gender profile, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(03)). He also advised the meeting that out of 3 378 additional civil service posts to be created in various bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") in 2017-2018, some 400 posts would be created for replacing non-civil service contract ("NCSC") positions for which the long-term need had been established, and more than 90% of these posts would replace NCSC positions which had existed for five years or longer.

Retirement and resignation

7. Mr POON Siu-ping noted from paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper that in 2015-2016, the age group of 50-59 represented about 34% of the civil service strength. As this group of civil servants would be retiring within the next ten years, Mr POON enquired whether the Administration had assessed the impact of their retirement on the provision of public service.

8. SCS explained that a larger number of civil servants being in the age group of 50-59 was due to expansion of establishment in the 1980s. In addition, six years of recruitment freeze in the early-2000s also indirectly contributed to this phenomenon. As regards succession planning, SCS advised that the Administration had put in place a structured framework to assist B/Ds in grooming and developing civil servants with potential for advancement. The Administration had also introduced a package of initiatives for extending the service of civil servants beyond retirement age, such as the Post-retirement Service Contract ("PRSC") Scheme, to meet specific operational needs of B/Ds in the interim if necessary.

Action

9. The Chairman said that although the resignation rate of civil servants only increased from 0.55% to 0.65% of the strength of civil servants from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016, he was worried that this increase in resignation rate, together with the large number of civil servants retiring in the next five years, might have a negative impact on the stability of the civil service. Sharing a similar concern, Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that the resignation rate of civil servants, including directorate civil servants, in 2015-2016 (0.65%) was at the highest level in the past 15 years, and sought the reasons for the relatively high figure and the resignation situation of NCSC staff. Both the Chairman and Dr CHEUNG further enquired about the measures to be taken by the Administration to retain quality and experienced civil servants and NCSC staff with a view to maintaining the sustainability and stability of the civil service.

10. SCS said that 1 056 civil servants resigned in 2015-2016, of which 665 (63%) left during the probationary period. Given that probationers were still in the early stage of adaptation and some might find the civil service not suitable for them, which was understandable. Naturally, their resignation would have relatively less adverse effect on stability. For directorate civil servants, out of 141 who left the civil service in 2015-2016, 127 (90%) did so on retirement and only five (3.5%) tendered resignation.

11. SCS further advised that due to rising natural wastage rate of the civil service, coupled with steady growth of civil service establishment by 1% to 1.5% annually in the past five years, an average of about 10 000 appointments were made each year to meet manpower needs, resulting in a large horde of probationers. As over half of the resignees were probationers, there would be a consequential impact on overall resignation rate. He added that the Administration was mindful of the need to develop civil servants, especially those in the middle level, for succession planning purposes. CSB would liaise with those B/Ds which had high wastage rate to devise staff retention plans and discuss with individual B/Ds to ensure early identification of succession problems, advance planning and timely implementation of suitable measures.

Admin 12. At the request of Dr Fernando CHEUNG, SCS undertook to provide the wastage figure of NCSC staff, and the number of NCSC staff who were recruited as civil servants for the past two years.

13. Regarding 665 new recruits who resigned during the probationary period, the Chairman was concerned that the Administration

## Action

might be overly optimistic as it had not conducted any review on attractiveness of the civil service.

14. SCS considered that the civil service was still attractive, as reflected by the prevailing pattern of job applications. In the five-year period ending 2015-2016, 85% of new recruits was under 39 years old, thereby helping to normalize the age profile of the civil service. He reiterated that the Administration would continue to develop and prepare officers with potential for taking up higher responsibilities to facilitate smooth succession.

15. The Chairman opined that apart from provision of training, the Administration should allocate more resources to foster a greater sense of belonging among civil servants with a view to retaining quality and experienced staff and establishing mutual trust. SCS replied that in addition to the various commendation schemes for civil servants, he paid regular visits to B/Ds to make personal contact with departmental management and staff representatives at all levels. These visits would enable the management to have a better understanding of the problems at workplace, in particular difficulties faced by frontline personnel and boost morale.

### Promotion prospect of civil servants

16. The Deputy Chairman noted from paragraph 10 of the Administration's paper that while the natural wastage rate would increase from 4% for the five-year period ending 2018-2019 to 4.2% in the five-year period ending 2023-2024, it would then decline to 3.1% in the five-year period ending 2028-2029. As it took on average 14 years for a civil servant to gain promotion, the Deputy Chairman was concerned about attractiveness of the civil service after 2023-2024. He enquired on how a declining natural wastage rate would affect promotion prospect, and asked to know the average time for NCSC staff to get promoted. The Chairman further asked whether the Administration had developed any system for outstanding talents to get fast-track promotion.

17. SCS advised that while the service-wide average time for a civil servant to promote to the next higher rank was about 14 years, the situation varied among different grades/ranks, and it usually took much shorter time for those with outstanding performance to reach the directorate ranks. He added that NCSC staff would not be eligible for promotion but, the Administration would ascertain the need to replace those NCSC positions with established long-term service needs by civil service posts. According to results of the last Starting Salaries Survey,

## Action

starting pay of most civilian grades were broadly comparable to the upper quartile level of market pay. With a competitive starting remuneration package and a stable career, he believed that the attractiveness of civil service jobs could be maintained.

- Admin 18. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, SCS undertook to provide the average time taken for civil servants in the upper, middle and lower salary bands respectively to get promoted to the next higher rank.

### Training to facilitate smooth succession

19. Mr Wilson OR asked whether the Administration had regularly reviewed the effectiveness of the training provided for civil servants to facilitate smooth succession in the civil service.

20. SCS explained that the Administration spent around \$1 billion on civil service training each year. While B/Ds offered vocational training to meet job-specific requirements, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI") under CSB focused on programmes that fulfilled common needs, such as leadership style and management skills.

21. As regards effectiveness, SCS said that feedback from attendees of the training programmes was largely positive, and staff from CSTDI would sit-in selected modules to monitor the proceedings. Furthermore, many short local courses offered by CSTDI recorded a high participation rate, which could be a useful performance indicator.

### Female participation rate in the civil service

22. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the reason for an increase of female participation rate in the civil service from 33.4% in 2001-2002 to 37.1% in 2015-2016, SCS pointed out that it corresponded with the overall trend of higher female participation rate in the labour force, and might also be attributable to the rising education level of females. Besides, their strong communication skills provided an edge when competing for civil service jobs that demanded ability to elucidate public policies.

### PRSC Scheme

23. Regarding Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the number of applications received by B/Ds under the PRSC Scheme, SCS advised that current figures might not yet reflect the full picture because some B/Ds



## Action

had only focused thus far on selected retiring/retired officers possessing specific expertise/experience to undertake ad hoc, time-limited, seasonal or part-time tasks. The number of PRSC staff was somewhat confined by the requirement for B/Ds to meet from internal redeployment the cost involved. On the other hand, the adjusted mechanism for further employment of civil servants beyond retirement age, which was expected to be rolled out in June 2017, would provide another avenue for B/Ds to retain civil servants beyond retirement age for meeting operational needs. In view of the warm reception, the Administration would consider allowing B/Ds, where necessary and justified, to seek additional resources to employ staff under the PRSC Scheme.

Admin 24. At the request of Mr POON Siu-ping, SCS undertook to provide a breakdown by B/Ds and by work types the number of applications received by B/Ds and the number of staff employed under the PRSC Scheme.

## **IV. Employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(05) -- Administration's paper on employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service

LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(06) -- Paper on employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

25. SCS briefed members on the progress made in implementing measures to facilitate the employment of ethnic minorities ("EMs") in the civil service, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)991/16-17(05)).

### Racial profile of the civil service

26. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry whether the Administration had set a target ratio of EM employees in the civil service, SCS advised that since the Administration had adopted a policy of equal opportunities in employment, the race of a candidate was not a relevant

Action

consideration in the recruitment process. As such, setting a target ratio might not be the most appropriate and effective means to facilitate EMs' employment. Instead, the Administration had implemented measures to ensure that EMs had equal access to job openings like other applicants. In this connection, guidelines had been issued to heads of department/grade regarding their responsibilities to review and, where appropriate, adjust the Chinese language proficiency requirements of individual grades without compromising the job requirements. Since 2010, Chinese written proficiency requirements for 31 grades (comprising different departments and work types) had been lowered/removed, which should help enhance EMs' employment opportunities in the civil service. The 31 grades included those with lower entry requirements, such as Workman I/II, Artisan and Motor Driver, which would facilitate access of EMs with lower education attainment to the relevant jobs. Meanwhile, CSB had also been liaising with B/Ds to identify rooms to tap into the pool of EMs to meet B/Ds' operational needs.

27. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Wilson OR further asked about the number of EMs and the relative proportion in the civil service. SCS explained that as neither applicants for civil service posts nor serving civil servants were required to indicate their ethnic origins in the appointment process, such information was unavailable. Nevertheless, the Administration had conducted voluntary and anonymous surveys in 2011 and 2013 to gather statistics on the racial profile of the civil service, but the response rate was only 15.4%, and the accuracy of the information collected could not be verified.

28. With a view to better understanding the employment situation of EMs for providing relevant support, as well as to evaluating the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the Administration in facilitating the employment of EMs in the civil service, the Deputy Chairman, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Ms Alice MAK and Dr Fernando CHEUNG urged the Administration to resume the survey to collect some baseline figures for comparison purpose. Dr CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG recommended the Government to explain to its staff (including the civil servants and NCSC staff) the purpose of the survey, so that they would be more willing to inform the Government of their ethnic origins. SCS promised that CSB would consider conducting the survey again and would encourage civil servants to respond, but due to voluntary nature of the survey, staff could decide not to respond to the survey. The survey, if conducted, should also tie in with the timing when population census data would be available, so that the Administration could compare the

Action

collected statistics of racial profile of the civil service with the general population.

Employment of ethnic minorities in some B/Ds

29. Dr Fernando CHEUNG commended CSB and individual B/Ds for making efforts to facilitate EMs to join the civil service in the past few years. For example, the Labour Department ("LD") had implemented the Employment Services Ambassador ("ESA") Programme for EMs in which trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who could communicate in EM languages would be engaged as ESAs to work at LD's job centres or industry-based recruitment centres for six months. However, he cast doubt on the effectiveness of the ESA Programme as ESAs were not employed by LD afterwards. In this connection, Dr CHEUNG suggested that LD should hire EM as long-term civil servants, instead of ESAs, to enhance the employment support services for EM job seekers.

30. SCS advised that the ESA Programme for EMs in LD was a pilot scheme. According to LD, the programme was effective in enhancing participants' ability to secure employment after the completion of the ESA programme. Notwithstanding, he would convey Dr CHEUNG's views to LD.

31. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan said that to her understanding, some 71 and 47 EMs were serving in the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") and the Correctional Services Department respectively, and that represented less than 1% of the total number of staff in the two Departments. Noting that Yau Tsim District of HKPF had been organizing Chinese language classes and activities for EM members through the "Project Gemstone" operated under the Junior Police Call scheme, she asked whether the Administration would expand such programmes for EM youths in other districts to equip them with Chinese language skills to apply for civil servant posts.

32. Mr Wilson OR also praised the EM Police Community Liaison Assistants and Police Constables ("PCs") in Sau Mau Ping District of HKPF for their efforts to foster a close communication with the EM communities and assisted the effective implementation of community policing strategy in the area.

33. SCS pointed out that in the past few years, HKPF had been making sustained efforts to recruit more EMs to meet its operational needs. In 2010-2011, only one of the three non-ethnic Chinese ("NECs")

Action

applicants was appointed as PC, but the applications received from NECs and numbers of appointments in 2016-2017 increased to 55 and 18 respectively, and the success rate of NECs was 33%, compared with 11% for other applicants. For those NEC applicants who had failed in the PC recruitment exercise, HKPF would refer them to participate in programmes on Chinese language and job interview skills. Visits to Police Units, career talks and sharing by police officers on work experience had also been organized for NEC youths. SCS believed that despite the relatively small number of applications received from NECs and candidates appointed, the above measures played an important role in fostering EM youths in adopting a positive attitude towards society and in joining the civil service.

34. Mr Wilson OR enquired whether CSB had issued any guidelines for other B/Ds to implement measures to facilitate the employment of EMs. SCS replied that CSB had helped B/Ds identify how they could tap the talent pool of EMs. He also sought Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members' assistance in what new or enhanced services B/D could explore to tap the talent pool of EMs.

35. As the private sector would follow the lead of the Government in formulating policies, the Deputy Chairman hoped that B/Ds would keep trawling suitable EMs to join the civil service so as to improve the employment situation of EMs in Hong Kong.

Employment of interpreters proficient in specified ethnic minority languages

36. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired about the employment terms of interpreters proficient in EM languages engaged by the Immigration Department ("ImmD") and expressed concern whether the employment package for these interpreters was attractive enough to retain their services. SCS replied that ImmD had recently engaged nine interpreters to communicate with EMs on issues such as non-refoulement claims. They were engaged on NCSC terms with employment package determined by ImmD with reference to the prevailing employment market situation.

Admin

37. At the request of Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, SCS undertook to provide members with information on the salaries and benefits for interpreters proficient in EM languages engaged by individual government departments after the meeting.

Action

38. Ms Alice MAK was concerned that the Judiciary had also engaged part-time court interpreters with university degree to provide translation services in EM languages, yet their hourly rate was just around \$280, which was substantially lower than that for those interpreters who provided interpreting services in English and Chinese. She also suggested that, to ensure EMs' equal access to public services, each B/D should engage more interpreters proficient in EM languages as civil servants. SCS stressed that the terms and conditions of service for NCSC staff were determined according to a host of factors, including the employment market situation. Depending on the operational and service needs, B/Ds would seek necessary resources to convert NCSC positions for which the long-term needs had been established to civil service posts.

Public services provided to ethnic minorities

39. Mr POON Siu-ping pointed out that he was a member of the LegCo Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities ("the Subcommittee"). Some deputations had relayed to the Subcommittee that the Administration had failed to provide adequate public services for EMs. Ms Alice MAK also criticized the Administration for not keeping records on the number of EM users of public services. As such, the Administration could not assess their needs for public service and had no way to know whether adequate service had been provided.

40. SCS said that the Administration had all along paid much attention to the needs of EMs, and members' suggestions to further strengthen the community support and public services to EMs were most welcomed. He would convey members' concerns to relevant B/Ds accordingly. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's question whether the Administration would consider establishing a dedicated department to provide centralized supporting services to EMs, SCS advised that the suggestion was out of CSB's purview. Nevertheless, subject to resources availability, CSB would assist B/Ds to create additional posts to provide relevant services to EMs as and when appropriate.

**V. Any other business**

41. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:45 pm.