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17 May 2017

Clerk to the Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attention: Ms Wendy JAN)

Dear Ms JAN,

Re: Panel on Public Service
Letter from Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

In item 1 of his letter to the Panel on Constitutional Affairs dated 20 April 2017, the Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho expressed concern about the disposal of flight mileage awards earned from duty travel by civil servants. Our reply to your letter dated 5 May 2017 is as follows.

The Government has put in place internal guidelines on how civil servants and government departments should dispose of the flight awards earned by civil servants from duty travel outside Hong Kong. The basic principle is that, as duty passages for civil servants are paid by the Government, flight awards so claimed must first be used for subsequent duty travel. As such, if flight awards earned from duty travel are claimed and credited to the personal mileage account of a civil servant, it is incumbent on him to report this to his department to facilitate the use of the flight awards for subsequent duty travel.

Flight awards may normally be used only within a specified time frame. As most civil servants are not required to undertake duty visits outside Hong Kong on a frequent basis and the restrictions usually imposed on air tickets redeemed under flight awards scheme may not fit in with the itinerary of the relevant civil servant's subsequent duty visits, it may not always be possible for the accumulated mileage to be utilised for duty travel before expiry. Where an individual civil servant's flight awards are not expected to be used for duty travel before their expiry, the Head of Department may exercise his discretion to permit the officer concerned to use such awards for private purposes. The above arrangement seeks to strike a reasonable balance between ensuring proper use of government funds and allowing civil servants to enjoy commercial offers normally available to non-government employees.

In respect of different cases, including those where civil servants with flight mileage balance earned from duty travel prior to leaving the service, Heads of Departments may consider the actual circumstances and various redemption options in accordance with the principles set out in the guidelines for proper disposal of flight awards earned from duty travel.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Winnie Tse', written in a cursive style.

(Miss Winnie TSE)
for Secretary for the Civil Service