

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)363/18-19
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by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of policy briefing cum meeting held on
Monday, 15 October 2018, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai (Chairman)
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
- Members absent** : Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
- Public Officers attending** : **Agenda item III**
Mr Joshua LAW, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Brian LO, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Ms Amy WONG
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Mr Eric CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 3

Mr LI Pak-hong, BBS, JP
Director of General Grades
Civil Service Bureau

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

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

Ms Maggie CHUNG
Council Secretary (4)1

Mr Griffin FUNG
Legislative Assistant (4)8

Mr Terry HON
Clerical Assistant (4)1

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I. Information papers issued since last meeting on 17 July 2018

(LC	Paper	No. --	Information note from the
CB(4)1585/17-18(01)			Administration on meal
			break arrangement for the
			Ambulanceman Grade in
			the Fire Services

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LC Paper No. CB(4)7/18-19(01) -- Submission from the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions (Chinese version only)

Members noted that the above papers had been issued since the last regular meeting on 17 July 2018.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(4)30/18-19(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion)

2. Members agreed that the next regular Panel meeting would be held on 19 November 2018 to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Non-civil service contract staff; and
- (b) The Civil Service Outstanding Service Award and other commendation schemes for civil servants.

3. Referring to a recent fatal drowning accident involving a lifeguard of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD"), Mr LAM Cheuk-ting suggested that the Panel discussed as early as possible item 8 of the "List of outstanding items for discussion" ("the List") on the issues relating to the grade structure review ("GSR"), manpower situation and training of lifeguards employed by LCSD. Mr LAM had also written a letter to the Chairman on the matter. Mr HO Kai-ming shared Mr LAM's views and considered that the item should be discussed before the commencement of the 2019 bathing season. Mr HO suggested arranging three discussion items at each regular meeting in the future so as to cover the issues on the List as soon as possible.

4. The Chairman said that he would consider the above suggestions in consultation with the Administration.

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(Post-meeting note: On the instruction of the Chairman, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting's letter dated 12 October 2018 was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)65/18-19 on 18 October 2018 and was referred to LCSD for response. The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)145/18-19 on 31 October 2018. The Administration has proposed to discuss issues related to lifeguards of LCSD at the Panel meeting in December 2018.)

III. Briefing by the Secretary for the Civil Service on the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(4)15/18-19(01) -- Administration's paper on the policy initiatives of the Civil Service Bureau in the 2018 Policy Address)

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the policy initiatives relating to the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") featured in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address ("the Policy Address") and Policy Agenda as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)15/18-19(01)).

Establishing a new civil service college

Location of the new civil service college

6. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Mr HO Kai-ming stated their support for the establishment of the civil service college and urged for its expeditious commissioning. Taking into account that the civil service college would be a part of a composite development located on a prime site in Kwun Tong, and the transport infrastructure in the vicinity would be upgraded/constructed under the "Energizing Kowloon East" project, Mr HO called on the Administration to gauge views from the Kwun Tong District Council ("KTDC") and relevant stakeholders regarding the facilities to be provided in the composite development and the interface with the transport network in the area. A better coordination with KTDC and stakeholders would ensure a smooth planning and implementation of these projects. SCS assured members that the Administration would consult KTDC on the composite development project in due course.

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Courses to be provided by the new civil service college

7. In response to Mr IP Kin-yuen's enquiries about the mission of the civil service college and the functions of the proposed civil service training advisory board, SCS advised that with the upgraded training facilities and more training space to be provided in the new civil service college, the Administration aimed to further enhance training for civil servants. As regards the civil service training advisory board, it would be a new arrangement for giving guidance on training programmes for the civil service and their long-term development, and to prepare for the development of the civil service college.

8. Mr LAM Cheuk-ting enquired about the content of the training to be provided by the civil service college. Mr Jeremy TAM opined that civil servants should be kept abreast of policy changes on the Mainland, such as the policy on reclamation. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan suggested strengthening national studies and visits to help civil servants grasp the latest developments on the Mainland. She also stressed that civil servants should be reminded to enhance communication with members of the public.

9. SCS pointed out that before the commissioning of the civil service college, the Administration would continue to enhance training for civil servants in various areas, including interactive communication with the public and the use of innovation and technology. With a view to deepening civil servants' understanding of the Mainland's development and the relationship between the Central Government and Hong Kong, as well as widening their international perspective, the Administration would continue to arrange national studies training programmes and visits to the Mainland, and other executive training programmes in overseas countries.

10. Noting from the Administration's paper that training which tied in with the Administration's Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong would be provided for civil servants, Mr KWOK Wai-keung sought details of the training programmes. Mr Charles Peter MOK pointed out that according to his understanding, the Civil Service College in Singapore was providing training relating to artificial intelligence, design thinking and big data analytics/applications to its civil servants. He enquired whether these types of training would be organized for civil servants in Hong Kong.

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11. SCS advised that each year, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer arranged training programmes mentioned by Mr Charles Peter MOK, as well as training in innovative technology, smart city, IT security management, the use of social media and cloud computing etc., for around 1 800 and 4 000 civil servants respectively. The Civil Service Training and Development Institute had planned to further increase the annual target number of participants from 1 800 to 3 600. In this connection, CSB would submit a discussion paper on the overview of the training and development for civil servants at a future Panel meeting in the 2018-2019 legislative session. Details on the training programmes on innovation and use of technology (including the names of the programmes and estimated number of participants of each programme) to be provided to civil servants in the coming year would be included in the Administration's paper.

Augmenting the civil service establishment

12. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired about the distribution of the 6 700 newly created posts in 2018-2019 and reiterated her request for a five-year manpower forecast of civil service establishment. Dr Elizabeth QUAT was supportive of the initiative of augmenting the civil service establishment. Concerning the manpower needs at the new boundary control points, such as the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link West Kowloon Terminus and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong port area, Dr QUAT asked whether the recruitment and training of frontline staff of the Immigration Department and the Customs and Excise Department could be expedited.

13. SCS advised that about 70% of the civil services posts to be created in 2018-2019 were frontline posts, and 1 400 posts would be assigned for carrying out control duties at new boundary control points. As regards manpower planning, SCS remarked that every year Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds") would review their manpower requirements taking into account their operational needs and submit bids for resources for new posts through the resource allocation exercise for the following year. The year-on-year increase of the civil service establishment in the past few years remained stable at about 1% to 2% on average except 3.7% in 2018-2019. CSB would keep in view the recruitment and manpower situation amongst B/Ds. B/Ds would also strengthen the manpower responsible for conducting recruitment exercises to speed up the intake of new recruits when necessary.

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14. Referring to statements made by the Chief Executive in a recent media interview, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting queried whether the Administration would, during the appointment/integrity checking process, examine the political beliefs or affiliations of prospective appointees for civil service posts, such as their views on Hong Kong independence. In this connection, Mr HO Kai-ming pointed out that as stipulated in the Civil Service Code, civil servants were required to uphold their political neutrality and to serve the Chief Executive with loyalty and to the best of their ability, no matter what their own political beliefs were.

15. In response, SCS stressed that appointment to the civil service was based on the principle of open and fair competition. With the purpose of ensuring that prospective appointees for civil service posts and serving civil servants were of good character and high integrity and contribute to public confidence in the civil service, the integrity checking system for civil servants was established and formed part of the recruitment procedure. He would not comment on the Chief Executive's statements referred by Mr LAM Cheuk-ting nor disclose any details of the integrity checking for civil servants.

16. SCS further said that according to the Civil Service Code, civil servants were required to be committed to the rule of law and the administration of justice, and to exercise executive powers in compliance with the Basic Law and the Laws of Hong Kong. As for the requirement of political neutrality, the Civil Service Code stated that civil servants should serve the Chief Executive and the Government of the day with total loyalty and to the best of their ability, no matter what their own political beliefs were. They should not allow their own personal party political affiliation or party political beliefs to determine or influence the discharge of their official duties and responsibilities, including the advice they gave and the decisions or actions they took.

Conducting grade structure review for all disciplined grades

17. Both Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Mr Jeremy TAM welcomed the Administration's decision on conducting regular GSR for all disciplined services once every 10 years. Dr QUAT sought information on the implementation details, including the procedures, timetable and consultation arrangements of the GSR to be conducted for the disciplined services grades. Noting that the last GSR for the disciplined services was conducted 10 years ago in 2008, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired about the measures to expedite the progress of the coming GSR.

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18. SCS advised that on 2 October 2018 the Chief Executive-in-Council decided to invite the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service ("the two Committees") to conduct a GSR for all disciplined services grades. It was expected that the GSR would take about 18 months to complete. The two Committees would carry on with their fine tradition of thoroughly consulting the management and staff side of the disciplined services in order to ascertain the updated information relating to the job nature, responsibilities and recruitment and retention situation of the disciplined services. It was envisaged that the two Committees would submit their review reports to the Chief Executive by around mid-2020.

19. Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan and Mr Jeremy TAM expressed their concern about the serious manpower wastage in the Correctional Services Department and the Government Flying Service ("GFS") and enquired about the interim alleviation measures to be taken before the completion of GSR for all disciplined services. Mr TAM stressed that not only the vacancy rate of pilot grade in GFS had reached about 40%, the rank of GFS Controller was also lower than the head of other disciplined services, and these problems would damage the morale in GFS. With a view to retaining staff and boosting morale in GFS, he suggested creating new tiers of assistant directorate ranks in GFS so that the Pilot, Air Crewman Officer and Aircraft Engineer grades could have a better career progression pathway. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the Administration would consider conducting GSRs for other grades in the civil service.

20. SCS said that he would convey members' views on the GSR for all disciplined services to the two Committees for their conduct of the review in an independent manner. The anticipated timing required for the completion of the review had taken into account the comprehensive scope of the review and the emphasis on ensuring sufficient and thorough consultation with the management and staff side of the disciplined services. Meanwhile, he would take into account any initial views of the two Committees and work together with Secretary for Security on the interim measures, if any, that could be taken to address the staff wastage and retention issues of the disciplined services grades concerned before the completion of the GSR.

21. In this connection, the Chairman called on the Administration to proactively follow up members' concerns with the two Committees. The

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Chairman also requested the Administration to update the Panel on the progress of GSR in July 2019 as agreed at the work plan meeting.

Enhancing medical and dental benefits for civil service eligible persons

22. Mr SHIU Ka-fai stated his support for the provision of Chinese medicine ("CM") services to civil service eligible persons ("CSEPs") and enquired about the implementation timetable. Emphasizing the long-standing request of civil servants for the inclusion of CM services in the scope of civil service medical benefits, Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Mr POON Siu-ping, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan urged the Administration to finalize the implementation details as soon as practicable. Worrying that the implementation timeline might be hindered by the progress of incorporating CM into the public healthcare system, Mr KWOK suggested that SCS closely communicate with the Food and Health Bureau in this regard.

23. SCS replied that the implementation timetable was not available for the time being, but the Administration would explore and devise the details, including the scope of CM services to be provided to CSEPs, and report to the Panel in due course.

24. Mr KWOK Wai-keung further asked whether the Administration would consider allowing CSEPs to claim reimbursement for procuring CM services in the private market. Mr POON Siu-ping and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired whether the Administration could, before the commissioning of the Tseung Kwan O CM Hospital, provide CM services for CSEPs through the existing 18 CM clinics. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan added that the Administration might consider reserving priority discs for CSEPs at the aforesaid 18 CM clinics.

25. SCS pointed out that to avoid the perception of competing for resources with members of the public, the Administration's preliminary inclination was to provide CM services for CSEPs at dedicated clinic facilities. He assured members that the Administration would explore an appropriate arrangement for providing CSEPs with defined CM services as part of the civil service medical benefits.

Extending maternity leave for all Government employees

26. While welcoming the initiative of extending maternity leave ("ML") for all Government employees to 14 weeks, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan and Mr HO Kai-ming expressed concern on whether subvented organizations would follow the lead of the Administration to adopt the

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extended ML arrangement. Mr HO considered that subvented organizations should be able to deploy their resources to implement the extended ML arrangement, and enquired about the financial implications to the Government arising from the implementation of extended ML. Mr POON Siu-ping sought details of the manpower arrangement for implementing extended ML in the Government and asked whether the Government would consider further increasing the duration of paternity leave ("PL") for its employees.

27. SCS said that given that only about 1 400 government employees (i.e. less than 1% of the strength) each year took ML in the past few years, he believed that the relevant B/Ds could reallocate the duties of these staff and absorb the financial implications within their existing resources. As for the implementation of extended ML in subvented organizations, he advised that it would be up to them to determine the terms and conditions for their employees having regard to their own circumstances. The Administration would not interfere with the management of subvented organizations regarding personnel matters.

28. On the provision of PL for government employees, SCS explained that the Administration had to strike a balance between the benefits of further extending PL and the prudent use of public funds. The existing five days of PL with full pay for eligible government employees were more favourable than the statutory requirements under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57).

29. Mr IP Kin-yuen stressed that as the Codes of Aid which were promulgated by the Education Bureau had stipulated the ML arrangements for staff in aided schools, CSB should liaise with the Education Bureau for early implementation of extended ML in aided schools. SCS said that the Education Bureau would communicate and follow up the issue with aided schools.

Enhancing the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme and strengthening support for non-ethnic Chinese

30. Mr Jeremy TAM expressed gratitude to CSB for its effort in relaxing the travelling with spouse requirement in the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme to allow the awardee (whether married or not) to flexibly nominate a travelling companion and received the same travel allowance.

31. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan appreciated the Administration's initiative to introduce an internship programme for non-ethnic Chinese university

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students in various B/Ds and suggested accommodating more participants under the programme. SCS replied that the programme which was a pilot scheme would be limited initially to a small number of participants.

Other concerns

Work arrangements under hot or inclement weather

32. In view of the impact brought about by the Super Typhoon Mangkhut on Hong Kong's traffic network, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired about the guidelines on work arrangements of civil servants under and after inclement weather.

33. In response, SCS advised that the Administration cared about the occupational safety of its employees, and there were guidelines on the arrangements for resumption of duty of government staff after tropical cyclones. B/Ds had also drawn up their own departmental instructions and work plans to suit their operational requirements. According to the guidelines, when No. 8 or higher Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal was lowered to No. 3 or below within office hours, staff should report for duty as soon as practicable. Where there was road flooding, landslide or heavy rain, or non-availability of public transport services, etc., and affected staff experienced delay in reporting duty, they should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable and supervisors should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual affected staff and handled each case with flexibility. Notwithstanding this, CSB would work with B/Ds to examine the relevant guidelines and consider any areas for enhancement.

34. Mr SHIU Ka-fai commended the Administration and frontline civil servants for the precautionary measures for Mangkhut and their round-the-clock service in the course of typhoon. However, he considered that there was room for improvement in the coordination with public transport operators and dissemination of relevant information in the aftermath of the typhoon. He further enquired whether any civil servants were being punished for not being able to resume work on time on 17 September 2018 after Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 was lowered.

35. SCS replied that he did not have such information in hand. He pointed out that on 17 September 2018 when the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal in respect of Super Typhoon Mangkhut was lowered from No. 8 to No. 3, the Administration had reminded the management of B/Ds to show understanding and exercise flexibility in handling

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employees who could not resume work on time due to traffic conditions.

36. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan also urged the Administration to review its guidelines on working in very hot weather, in particular for those outdoor workers, so as to better safeguard the health of government employees. The Administration could also take the lead as an example of a good employer for other organizations and companies to follow. Concurring with Dr CHIANG's views, Dr Elizabeth QUAT considered that the protection of civil servants from heat stroke in outdoor working areas should be enhanced. In reply, SCS said that some B/Ds had, depending on their operational requirements, formulated their own guidelines relating to safety at work under hot weather. He welcomed members to refer individual cases to him for follow up.

IV. Any other business

37. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:17 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 December 2018