

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)709/18-19
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 21 January 2019, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai (Chairman)
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
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 HO Kai-ming
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

**Public Officers
attending** : **Agenda item IV**

Mr Joshua LAW, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Hermes CHAN
Director of General Grades
Civil Service Bureau

Miss Donna CHAN Fung-kwan
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Ms Fiona LI Man-wai
Chief Executive Officer (Administration)
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Agenda item V

Mr Joshua LAW, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Thomas CHOW, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Ms Amy WONG
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Mr Benjamin MOK
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service
(Pay & Leave)

Ms Anne TENG
Assistant Secretary General (1)
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil
Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of
Service

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Mina CHAN
Senior Council Secretary (4)7

Miss Shirley HAU
Senior Council Secretary

(Complaints & Resources Management)2

Ms Maggie CHUNG
Council Secretary (4)1

Mr Griffin FUNG
Legislative Assistant (4)7

Mr Terry HON
Clerical Assistant (4)1

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I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)412/18-19 -- Minutes of meeting held on 19 November 2018)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2018 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last regular meeting on 17 December 2018

(LC Paper No. CB(4)374/18-19(01) -- Submission from the General Union of HKSAR Government Leisure Services Staff (Chinese version only) (Restricted to members only)

LC Paper No. CB(4)374/18-19(02) -- Administration's response to the submission from the General Union of HKSAR Government Leisure Services Staff)

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

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3. Having regard to the importance of tree management especially in light of the recent onslaught of super typhoons, Mrs Regina IP requested the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") to follow up with the Administration on the civil service establishment, training and outsourcing arrangement for the tree management work of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD").

(Post-meeting note: With the concurrence of the Chairman, this subject matter was included in the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion".)

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

4. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed concern about the lack of substantive progress for the Administration's plan to implement the civil service medical benefits as stated in the Policy Address 2018, in particular the provision of defined Chinese medicine services for eligible civil servants. While understanding that the subject matter was currently included under Item 5 "An overview of medical and dental benefits for civil servants, pensioners and eligible dependants" of the "List of outstanding items for discussion", he said that consideration could be given to discussing the subject as a separate item.

5. Members agreed that the next regular Panel meeting would be held on 18 February 2019 to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Issues relating to the lifeguards of LCSD; and
- (b) Update on extension of the service of civil servants.

6. Regarding item (a) above, the Chairman consulted members whether the relevant unions as well as members of the public should be invited to give views on the subject. Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Mr HO Kai-ming opined that since the discussion would be focused on the staff establishment, recruitment, remuneration packages, work safety and training, etc. of LCSD's lifeguards, only the relevant unions should

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be invited. Members agreed. Considering that the management of public swimming pools and gazetted beaches fell under the terms of reference of the Panel on Home Affairs ("HA Panel"), members also agreed to the Chairman's proposal to invite members of HA Panel to join the discussion of this agenda item.

IV. Use of agency workers

(LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(03) -- Administration's paper on the use of agency workers

LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(04) -- Administration's paper on T-contract services

LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(05) -- Paper on the use of agency workers prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(4)426/18-19(01) -- Letter dated 15 January 2019 from Hon IP Kin-yuen concerning the use of agency workers by the Education Bureau (Chinese version only)

7. The Chairman informed the meeting that Mr IP Kin-yuen had sent in a letter dated 15 January 2019 requesting information on the use of agency workers by the Education Bureau ("EDB") (LC Paper No. CB(4)426/18-19(01)). The Administration's response dated 18 January 2019 to the said letter was tabled at the meeting. Members also noted that a submission dated 18 January 2019 from Mr Charles Peter MOK on the engagement of information technology ("IT") contract staff by Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds") under a term contract (commonly known as "T-contract") was also tabled at the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response and the submission were circulated to members via LC Paper Nos. CB(4)449/18-19(01) and (02) respectively by email.)

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8. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on the use of agency workers by B/Ds as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(03)). Deputy Government Chief Information Officer ("DGCIO") also briefed members on the engagement of T-contract staff by B/Ds centrally administered by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer ("OGCIO"), as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(04)).

T-contract staff

9. Mr Charles Peter MOK, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Mr POON Siu-ping and the Deputy Chairman voiced great concern over the rare situation that, as at 31 December 2018, different B/Ds engaged a total of 3 140 T-contract staff, which far exceeded the combined civil service and non-civil service contract ("NCSC") IT workforce of about 2 241 working in the Government, and were three times of the 1 025 agency workers used by B/Ds.

Improving remuneration packages and advancement prospects of T-contract staff and enhancing transparency of information

10. Mr Charles Peter MOK criticized the Administration for making limited efforts in addressing T-contract staff's concerns in the new T-contract which would commence on 1 February 2019 ("T25 contract"), especially in the areas of improving their remuneration and fringe benefits. In this connection, he enquired about the measures implemented by the Administration to monitor that the T25 contractors would provide the committed remuneration packages to their T-contract staff, improve the transparency by disclosing more information for the T-contract staff's reference, such as the service fees payable by the Government for engagement of T-contract staff, the annual pay adjustment rate and the performance of T-contractors etc., and solicit views of the T-contract staff direct.

11. DGCIO replied that improvements to the remuneration packages of T-contract staff as committed by T25 contractors had been incorporated into the relevant contracts. T-contractors were required to submit regular reports on their compliance with the contract provisions during the term of T25 contract. OGCIO would also conduct random checks of relevant records kept by T-contractors to ensure they had fulfilled their contractual obligations. Should any T25 contractor be found to violate the contract terms and fail to rectify within a reasonable

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period, OGCIO would issue a Notice of Default to the contractor concerned. As specified in the contract, the Administration could terminate the contract with the T-contractor who had received three or more Notices of Default during the contract period. The Notices of Default issued under T25 contract would also be taken into account in assessing future tenders for similar services submitted by the T-contractor concerned. In order to enhance transparency, DGCIO advised that OGCIO would open up the dataset on the average government monthly expenditure on T-contract services for different staff categories from mid-2019 and provide an update on a half-yearly basis. OGCIO would also consider disclosing more information as suggested by Mr Charles Peter MOK including the annual pay adjustment rate and the progress of T-contractors in enhancing the remuneration packages of T-contract staff. At the request of Mr MOK, DGCIO undertook to provide written responses to the questions raised by him.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)541/18-19(02) on 15 February 2019.)

12. Dr Elizabeth QUAT expressed dissatisfaction at the Administration's response to the measures to protect the work benefits of T-contract staff. She enquired about the Administration's detailed plans to address the issues of excessive exploitation by the T-contractors on the T-contract staff and standardize the minimum remuneration as well as employment terms for T-contract staff.

13. DGCIO responded that in order to retain talent, most of the contractors under T25 contract provided medical insurance covering outpatient and/or inpatient services; some offered annual leave more than the minimum statutory requirement, and end-of-contract gratuity/long service award, etc. For T-contract staff re-engaged by OGCIO under T25 contract, the service fees payable to T25 contractors had increased by 5% to 6% on average, which would in turn benefit the relevant T-contract staff.

(At around 11:40 am, the Chairman left the meeting and the Deputy Chairman took the chair.)

14. On Dr Elizabeth QUAT's query about the T-contract system and the role of T-contractors, DGCIO pointed out that engaging IT staff through a term contract to implement and support IT projects was a common practice in the private sector, which allowed flexibility for B/Ds to tap the market's latest expertise and pool of professionals, as well as to

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foster technology knowledge exchange between IT personnel in the civil service and the private sector. As regards the role of T-contractors, DGCIO advised that they were responsible for the recruitment, training, management and other human resources matters of the T-contract staff.

15. In response to the concerns of the Deputy Chairman and Dr Elizabeth QUAT over the low morale and lack of advancement prospects for T-contract staff, DGCIO advised that she did not notice any morale problem as IT civil servants and T-contract staff worked as a team in the Government. She advised that around half of the existing T-contract staff in the staff categories of "Contract Senior Project Manager", "Contract Project Manager", "Contract Senior Systems Analyst" and "Contract Systems Analyst" had advanced to their current category from a lower one during the T-contract periods. At the request of Dr QUAT, DGCIO undertook to provide written response on the Administration's plans to improve the remuneration packages and advancement prospects of T-contract staff as raised by her after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)541/18-19(02) on 15 February 2019.)

Converting T-contract posts to civil service posts

16. Mr POON Siu-ping asked when B/Ds had critically reviewed the need for converting the T-contract positions with long-term service needs into civil service posts. Sharing a similar view, Mr Charles Peter MOK and Dr Elizabeth QUAT also suggested converting T-contract staff to civil servants, especially those who had been working for the Government for a long time.

17. DGCIO responded that the Administration was fostering IT development by implementing over 1 000 new IT projects in the past five years with an overall expenditure exceeding \$10 billion. Through the annual Resource Allocation Exercises, the number of civil service posts in the Analyst/Programmer grade had increased considerably by 69, 119 and 166 in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 respectively to meet the service needs of B/Ds. Implementation of IT projects required different IT skills-set at different stages. The T-contract staff engaged could complement the services provided by IT grade civil servants, enabling B/Ds to better meet their fluctuating IT manpower demand.

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18. DGCIO further advised that, according to the Government's policy to fill civil service vacancies by an open, fair and competitive process, vacancies in the basic rank would normally be filled by open recruitment. As for vacancies in the promotion ranks, unless there was no civil service candidate found suitable, they would normally be filled by promotion of suitable candidates within the civil service. DGCIO undertook to provide written response to members' suggestion of converting T-contract staff to civil servants after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)541/18-19(02) on 15 February 2019.)

Review of IT manpower needs

19. Responding to the Deputy Chairman's question on when the last strategic review on IT manpower in the Government took place, DGCIO advised that OGCIO had put in place a manpower management framework and internal guidelines on the use of different kinds of IT manpower resources in the Government in 2010, according to which B/Ds should establish a core team of IT civil servants primarily responsible for developing and managing IT strategies and should regularly review their IT manpower needs. DGCIO said that OGCIO would consider conducting a new review of IT manpower in the Government in due course.

20. Noting that many T-contract staff had been working in the Government for more than five years, the Deputy Chairman asked whether the number and percentage of non-recurrent/time-limited IT projects undertaken by the Administration in the past few years exceeded the recurrent ones, so that the Administration needed to engage such a large number of T-contract staff for a long period of time. DGCIO undertook to provide the required figures after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)541/18-19(02) on 15 February 2019.)

Agency workers

Nature of agency workers and their use in Bureaux/Departments

21. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about the monitoring role of the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") in the use of agency workers. Noting

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that six B/Ds were each engaging more than 50 agency workers as at 30 September 2018, Mr POON enquired whether B/Ds would notify CSB of their engagement of agency workers and how often CSB would collect the relevant statistics from B/Ds and discuss with them on their use of agency workers.

22. SCS replied that CSB had delegated the authority of approving proposal for procuring agency worker service to the officers at Directorate Pay Scale D2 or above of the concerned B/Ds. To ensure that agency workers were engaged only when fully justified and proper approval procedures were followed, CSB would review their use of agency workers annually and also discuss with the B/Ds from time to time during the meetings with the heads of departments.

23. For maintaining the quality of public service, Mr HO Kai-ming considered it more appropriate to engage NCSC staff instead of agency workers for short-term jobs exceeding 15 months. He therefore queried about the rationale for CSB to allow procuring B/Ds to renew/re-let existing contracts for the supply of agency workers, and the reasons for B/Ds to engage agency workers but not NCSC staff for short-term jobs.

24. SCS explained that while civil servants and NCSC staff were deployed for meeting long-term and time-limited service needs respectively, agency workers were usually engaged for meeting urgent or unforeseen short-term service needs. As far as public service quality was concerned, he assured members that the Administration would closely monitor the service quality of public services delivered by agency workers. The performance of these workers would be monitored and the records of services provided by the relevant employment agencies would also be taken into account in award or renewal of future similar service contracts.

25. Director of General Grades ("DGG") supplemented that as a general guideline, the length of a contract for procurement of the service of agency workers should not exceed nine months. Should an existing contract be extended with an expected aggregate period exceeding 15 months, the B/Ds concerned would be required to seek approval from CSB. CSB did not receive any such applications in the past three years.

26. Mr Tony TSE expressed concern on whether agency workers, especially those working in the professional departments such as the Buildings Department and Lands Department, were delegated with powers to take enforcement actions in accordance with the relevant

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ordinances when performing their duties. Given the short-term nature of the agency workers, he considered the procuring B/Ds needed to monitor the proper exercise of such powers by these workers. SCS replied that agency workers were mainly responsible for providing ancillary and supporting services, while the tasks requiring the exercise of statutory powers should mostly be handled by civil servants. He took note of Mr TSE's concern and undertook that the Administration would pay attention to this issue.

27. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for the general direction of the Administration in using agency workers for meeting those short-term service needs, such as tasks related to by-election, to obviate the need to recruit additional civil servants for these ad hoc tasks. He considered the engagement of agency workers a flexible arrangement which could streamline the manpower deployment and also contributed to the optimal utilization of public funds. Moreover, he opined that agency workers were free to apply for civil service posts if they so wished. If they preferred to stay as agency workers, they must see in these jobs the merits, such as work flexibility or provision of relevant training.

28. SCS responded that despite that the use of agency workers allowed flexibility for B/Ds to meet their operational needs, civil service posts would be created if there were genuine long-term service needs. However, since the current civil service establishment was approaching 190 000, and there was an increase of 3.7% of civil service manpower in 2018-2019 financial year, the Administration would be prudent in creating additional civil service posts.

The Education Bureau

29. Mr IP Kin-yuen expressed concern about the reasons for EDB being the largest user of agency workers with 144 workers as at 30 September 2018. While considering it justifiable for the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency to use agency workers for coping with the workload during the application peaks of its various student financial assistance schemes, he queried the need for EDB to engage 134 agency workers to meet urgent/unforeseen service needs or unexpected surge in service demands for the short-term in 2018. He also sought the reasons for engaging 39 agency workers to support service needs related to the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme ("the KG Scheme") and other kindergarten related tasks given that two directorate posts and 56 non-directorate posts had already been created in 2016 for the KG Scheme. He opined that if there were genuine

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manpower needs in the long run, EDB should engage long-term staff instead of short-term agency workers.

30. SCS advised that to tie in with the mounting service needs in recent years, EDB had increased the number of civil service posts created for the KG Scheme from 24 in 2016-2017 to some 60 and over 70 in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 respectively. Notwithstanding the increase, there were still needs for agency workers. Among the 134 agency workers engaged by EDB, 68 (which was 15 more than the previous year) of them were engaged mainly for providing clerical and general support to seasonal upsurge of workload for service needs such as the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test in 2018 and another 39 of them were for supporting the processing of applications for Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission and the KG Scheme. He considered EDB's use of agency workers within the prescribed scope to meet the service needs of its various education programmes during different peak seasons. SCS assured members that CSB would continue to monitor the situation in ensuring agency workers were used only when fully justified. At the request of Mr IP Kin-yuen, SCS undertook to provide the detailed statistics regarding the use of agency workers in EDB after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)559/18-19(01) on 20 February 2019.)

The Hospital Authority

31. Expressing concern over the deployment of agency workers as health care assistants and nurses in public hospitals where they might not be able to effectively perform the duties due to their short-term nature, Mr HO Kai-ming sought information on the policy of using agency workers by the Hospital Authority ("HA") and the relevant details such as the rank and number of such workers engaged in the past three years. SCS undertook to convey Mr HO's request to HA for response.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)580/18-19(01) on 22 February 2019.)

The Antiquities and Monuments Office

32. As told by a former agency worker of the Antiquities and Monuments Office ("AMO"), Mr Jeremy TAM said that AMO used

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agency workers to meet its manpower needs for junior positions as the arrangements were quicker and easier compared to the creation of new civil service posts that involved long and complicated procedures. AMO would continue to retain these agency workers if their performance were satisfactory. In this connection, he enquired if this was a common practice in AMO, and whether CSB would review the number of agency workers engaged by B/Ds and their job nature for a few years to monitor if the agency workers were used for some long-term needs.

(At around 12:00 noon, the Chairman resumed the chair.)

33. SCS responded that apart from meeting urgent/unforeseen/unexpected surge in operational and service needs for the short-term, agency workers were also engaged to tide over the short-term manpower gap due to the lead time required for conducting recruitment exercises for filling newly created civil service posts, which usually took nine to 15 months. CSB would make constant monitoring efforts to ensure B/D's compliance with the guidelines for using agency workers.

34. DGG added that for some bureaux such as EDB, use of agency workers was necessary for meeting the peak seasons of various programmes. Overall speaking, CSB noted that the number of agency workers engaged by B/Ds had been on a continuous downward trend, dropping from the peak of some 2 400 in 2009 to about 1 000 in 2018.

Fringe benefits of agency workers

35. Mr Jeremy TAM was of the view that to prevent exploitation of agency workers by their agencies, the Administration should clearly state in the tender documents the minimum fringe benefits, including annual leave and medical benefits, to be provided for the agency workers. Echoing a similar view, Mr Tony TSE called on the Administration to give consideration to setting of minimum remuneration and fringe benefits for the agency workers as this would affect their work performance.

36. SCS replied that as agency workers were not government employees, it was not appropriate for the Administration, as the service user, to provide employment benefits to them. It should leave to the agencies concerned to adjust the relevant remuneration package terms according to the market situation so as to attract suitable talents. Nevertheless, he added that the Labour and Welfare Bureau had recently devised some improvement measures in respect of government outsourced service contracts, which would also apply to the non-skilled

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agency workers. These measures included increasing the technical weighting in marking schemes for tender assessment to not less than 50% and raising the weighting for wage level as an assessment criterion to at least 25% in the technical assessment, enhancing the employment benefits of non-skilled employees including entitlement to a contractual gratuity, statutory holiday pay upon employment for not less than one month and additional remuneration for working when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above was in force.

V. Review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey

(LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(06) -- Administration's paper on the review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey

LC Paper No. CB(4)414/18-19(07) -- Paper on Civil Service Pay Level Survey and Starting Salaries Survey prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

37. At the invitation of the Chairman, SCS briefed members on the findings and recommendations of the review on Civil Service Pay Level Survey ("PLS") and Starting Salaries Survey ("SSS") conducted by the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service ("the Commission"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)414/17-18(06)).

Frequency for the conduct of surveys

38. Mr POON Siu-ping recognized the importance of PLS and SSS in providing useful reference information for effective implementation of the civil service pay policy. Referring to paragraph 10 of the Administration's paper about the frequency for conducting the surveys, he sought elaboration on the Commission's recommendation that SSS could be conducted as and when necessary in response to specific circumstances. SCS explained that the Commission was of the view that the six-yearly PLS and the annual Pay Trend Survey ("PTS") had

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provided a solid basis for ensuring the broad comparability between the civil service and private sector pay. SSS therefore played a complementary role and, to a large extent, was akin to an added assurance to the pay adjustment data obtained from PLS and PTS. With the proposed inclusion of more entry ranks in future PLSs, the Commission considered that PLS should be able to capture and reflect the pay related data at entry ranks more effectively and provide broad indications as to whether an SSS should be conducted. As such, conducting SSS as and when necessary in response to specific circumstances instead of at a fixed interval would be a more flexible arrangement.

39. Assistant Secretary General (1), Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service added that to maximize the utility of pay data gathered from private sector organizations participating in the pay surveys, the Commission recommended collecting additional pay-related data specifically targeted at entry-level positions in the questionnaire for future PLSs. The additional data collected would enable the enhanced PLS to provide broad indications as to whether the levels of pay for private sector entry-level positions as classified into different Qualification Groups ("QGs") were generally in tandem with the benchmarks for the corresponding QGs in the civil service. As such, the Administration could consider whether SSS should be conducted after reviewing the broad indications as revealed by PLS and the specific circumstances that might have significant impact on the employment market.

Staff participation

40. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about the engagement of the staff side of the four Central Consultative Councils and the four major service-wide staff unions in the review exercise, SCS advised that the Commission had exchanged views with the staff side at different stages of the review and had taken into account their views where appropriate. The Administration had also invited the staff side to provide their views on the review findings and recommendations. Upon receiving the views from the relevant stakeholders including the staff side, the Administration would submit its recommendations on the way forward to the Chief Executive-in-Council for a decision.

41. Mr Tony TSE declared interest as a member of the Commission and expressed support for the recommendations raised in the report on the review. Echoing Mr POON Siu-ping's concern, Mr TSE sought details about the staff side participation in providing their views on the

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Commission's report, in particular whether there were any boycott actions taken by staff associations against the consultation currently undertaken on the review results. SCS advised that upon receipt of the Commission's report on 17 December 2018, the staff sides were invited to provide their views on the report by the end of January 2019. The Administration had not received any response so far, but did not envisage strong views on the report as the Commission had fully engaged the staff side in the course of the review. The Administration would continue to maintain close communication with the staff side.

Work conditions of civil servants

42. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan called on the Administration to fully gauge the views of the staff side on the report. While agreeing that a reasonable civil service pay level was important for the Administration to retain talents to provide quality public service, she considered that the Administration should also give due regard to other issues such as work stress and long working hours, etc. which might also affect staff morale.

43. SCS responded that the review was to examine matters relating to PLS and SSS, and thus the Commission's report did not cover issues on the work conditions of civil servants. That said, the Administration had all along been paying attention to the staff morale issue, and measures had been taken to address issues relating to civil servants' work pressure and working hours, etc. To support the implementation of various new initiatives and ease the workload of civil servants, the Administration had expanded the civil service establishment by 6 700 posts in 2018-2019, representing a year-on-year increase of about 3.7%. SCS assured members that due consideration would continue to be given to staff morale in order to retain talents to provide the public with an effective and efficient service.

VI. Any other business

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:33 pm.