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25 October 2019

The Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Room 903, Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Hon CHU,

2019-20 Civil Service Pay Adjustment

I refer to your letter of 18 September 2019 to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) requesting separate handling of or voting for the Legislative Council Finance Committee (FC) paper FCR(2019-20)33 on the 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment, such that the pay adjustment for police officers could be singled out for separate deliberation and voting. Your letter has been referred to us for follow-up and reply.

According to the established annual civil service pay adjustment mechanism (the established mechanism), in determining the pay adjustment for civil servants each year, the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) shall take into account all the six relevant factors, i.e. the net pay trend indicators (for different salary bands), the state of Hong Kong's economy, changes in the cost of living, the Government's fiscal position, the pay claims of the staff side and civil service morale. The civil service is considered as a whole without any particular consideration for staff of individual departments or grades. Once the approval for the decision on the annual civil service pay adjustment has been obtained from the FC, the pay adjustment has all along been applied to all civil servants according to their respective salary bands, regardless of their departments or grades. Therefore, we do not see any justification for departing from the established mechanism to handle or vote for the FC paper on the 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment separately so as to single out the pay adjustment for police officers.

As regards overtime allowance for police officers mentioned in your letter, we must point out that overtime allowance for individual officers (including the Disciplined Services Overtime Allowance (DSOA)) and the annual civil service pay adjustment are under two distinct mechanisms. The former is handled by the heads of the relevant departments in accordance with the prevailing regulations and guidelines, and granted to eligible officers who have worked overtime. As for the latter, as stated above, the CE-in-Council determines the civil service pay adjustment each year in accordance with the established mechanism under which overtime work has never been a factor for consideration. If approved by the FC, the 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment will bring no change at all to the existing mechanism for handling overtime allowance (including the DSOA) for civil servants (including police officers).

As stated in the relevant FC paper, the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service was briefed on the 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment at its meeting on 21 June. Members raised no objection to our submission of the proposal to the FC. This agenda item was originally scheduled for discussion at the FC meeting on 5 July in the last legislative session, but was not discussed in the end due to cancellation of the meeting. We hope that the FC will promptly consider and approve the proposed 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment so that all civil service colleagues can receive their adjusted salary and “back-payment” under the 2019-20 pay adjustment exercise as soon as possible, and that the adjusted subventions to aided schools and various subvented organisations (including the Hospital Authority and non-governmental organisations receiving subsidies from the Social Welfare Department) can be released as soon as possible to enable the organisations concerned to adjust the salaries of their staff in accordance with their established practice.

Yours sincerely,



(Benjamin Mok)

for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. The Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Chairman, Legislative Council Finance Committee
Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1