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15 November 2019

The Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
The Hon James TO Kun-sun
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
The Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
The Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
The Hon HUI Chi-fung
The Hon KWONG Chun-yu

Room 909-914
9/F, Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Members,

2019-20 Civil Service Pay Adjustment

I refer to your letter of 1 November 2019 to the Chairman of the Legislative Council Finance Committee (FC) requesting that the pay adjustment for police officers should be handled separately from the FC paper FCR(2019-20)33 on the “2019-20 civil service pay adjustment”. You also requested that funding proposals in relation to the Hong Kong Police Force should not be submitted to the Legislative Council at the moment. With the concurrence of the FC Chairman, 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 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 separate the pay adjustment for police officers from the FC paper on the 2019-20 civil service pay adjustment.

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.

Regarding the timing for the submission of funding proposals to the FC, the Government has to take into account different considerations in a holistic manner, including the urgency and order of priorities of the items, as well as the progress of FC discussion. It is not appropriate to make sweeping generalisations.

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