

政府總部
公務員事務局
香港添馬添美道2號
政府總部西翼



CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
WEST WING
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES
2 TIM MEI AVENUE, TAMAR
HONG KONG

本函檔號 Our Ref.: LM to PC/531/000/1 Pt.25
來函檔號 Your Ref.: CB4/PL/PS

電話號碼 Tel. No.: 2810 3100
傳真號碼 Fax No.: 2501 0749
電郵地址 E-mail Address: csbts@csb.gov.hk
網址 Homepage Address: <http://www.csb.gov.hk>

2 June 2020

Clerk to Panel on Public Service
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Carol WONG)

Dear Ms WONG,

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
Letter from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2020 attaching Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan's letter to the Chairman of the Panel on Public Service, which suggested including the "review of civil service fringe benefits" in the outstanding items for discussion in the current legislative session. In respect of the issues raised in Dr Hon CHIANG's letter, our response is set out below.

In view of inadequate educational facilities in Hong Kong for English-speaking children at the time, the Overseas Education Allowance (OEA) scheme was introduced in 1964 to enable children of expatriate officers to continue education in their countries of origin. The scheme was extended to local officers in 1972 on the grounds of equity and parity. Since the scheme was originally intended for expatriate officers and was subject to country restriction, when the OEA scheme was extended to eligible local officers, it also covered schooling in the United Kingdom only.

The Government had in earlier years reviewed the OEA scheme. In the light of significant improvements in the quality and the level of provision of education in Hong Kong, the case for providing new recruits with assistance towards meeting the cost of education overseas had worn thin. The Government therefore decided in 1996 to cease the provision of OEA to recruits who were offered appointment on or after 1 August 1996. Subsequently, a comprehensive review was conducted on the fringe benefit type of allowances for the civil service, and in 2006, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved freezing the ceiling rates for OEA with no further rate adjustment until the complete phasing out of the allowance. This arrangement has been adopted since then.

For facilitating purchase of property by civil servants and retired civil servants in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), one of the new policy measures introduced by the Central Government as announced after the meeting of the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA held in Beijing on 6 November 2019 is to exempt the requirements for Hong Kong residents in purchasing properties in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA to provide evidence of their duration of residence, study or employment; and to meet conditions on the payment of individual income tax and social security. This measure enables Hong Kong residents to enjoy the same treatment as local residents in the Mainland cities, thereby facilitating Hong Kong residents including civil servants and retired civil servants to purchase properties in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA.

As regards the proposal on the construction of civil servants estate in the Mainland cities of the GBA by the Government, it involves a number of complexities including demand, legal issues, financial arrangements, project management, etc., which require careful consideration. We are open to the idea. At the same time, we will continue to monitor closely the application and allocation position of various quota categories under the Civil Service Public Housing Quota (CSPHQ) Scheme. Enhancement measures will be introduced as and when appropriate to strive for the best arrangements for colleagues where

practicable. For instance, we obtained in 2018 the approval of the Hong Kong Housing Authority for increasing the quota places for Green Form Certificates under the 2018/2019 to 2022/2023 CSPHQ exercises, with an increase of over 50% quota places in total for the five years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sharon Ko', written in a cursive style.

(Miss Sharon Ko)

for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Chairman, Panel on Public Service