

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1552/20-21(04)

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Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 27 September 2021

Practical arrangements for the 2021 Legislative Council General Election

Purpose

This paper summarizes the past discussions held by the Panel on Constitutional Affairs ("the Panel") on the practical arrangements for the 2016 and 2020 Legislative Council ("LegCo") General Elections.¹

Background

2. The Electoral Affairs Commission is a statutory and independent body responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections. The 2021 LegCo General Election is scheduled to be held on 19 December 2021.

Panel's discussion

3. The Administration consulted the Panel on the practical arrangements for the 2016 and 2020 LegCo General Elections at its meetings on 18 April 2016 and

¹ Amidst the severe epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced on 31 July 2020 that the 2020 LegCo General Election, originally scheduled for 6 September 2020, would be postponed for a year to 5 September 2021, in order to protect public safety and public health as well as ensure that the election would be conducted openly and fairly. To implement this decision, CE in Council had invoked the Emergency Regulations Ordinance (Cap. 241) to make the Emergency (Date of General Election) (Seventh Term of the Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap. 241L) ("the Regulation"). The Regulation specified the new election date and had brought the original electoral process to an end. The date of the 2021 LegCo General Election set out in the Regulation has been further amended from 5 September 2021 to 19 December 2021 with the enactment of the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 ("the Bill"). The Bill comprised a number of proposals which included amending the election date for the 2021 LegCo General Election stipulated in the Regulation. The Bill came into effect on 31 May 2021.

18 May 2020 respectively. The major issues raised by the Panel are summarized below.

Recruitment of electoral staff

4. With regard to the 2020 LegCo General Election, members noted that about 31 000 electoral staff, which was about 50% more than that recruited in the 2019 District Council ("DC") Ordinary Election, were required for the election. The Administration informed members that the application deadline for the recruitment exercise had been extended from 28 April to 18 May 2020 due to insufficient applications. As at 18 May 2020, the Registration and Electoral Office ("REO") had only secured 70% of the required number of electoral staff. Some members expressed doubt as to whether 31 000 electoral staff was sufficient, given that more polling stations would be set up and a high voter turnout was expected in the 2020 LegCo General Election. Members hoped that the Administration would use all possible means to recruit more civil servants to serve as electoral staff, so that electors would not have to wait for a long time to vote on the polling day.

5. The Administration advised that 31 000 was only the minimum number of electoral staff required for the 2020 LegCo General Election and that REO would seek to recruit as many electoral staff as practicable. The Administration further advised that in view of the difficulties experienced in recruiting electoral staff in the 2019 DC Ordinary Election and the increased electorate size, REO was making arrangements for appointing, in addition to serving civil servants, retired civil servants from all bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") as electoral staff (especially those who had served as electoral staff before retirement). Some members suggested recruiting serving and retired staff of the disciplined services as electoral staff, which in their view would help improve the crowd control and maintenance of order in polling and counting stations. At the request of the Panel, the Administration provided after the meeting a breakdown by B/Ds of the number of civil servants appointed as electoral staff in the 2016 LegCo General Election and the 2019 DC Ordinary Election respectively (see **Appendix I**).

Queuing, polling and counting arrangements

6. Members pointed out that electors of certain functional constituencies ("FC") were required to indicate their preferences for candidates by writing Arabic numerals and not by stamping in the circles opposite the names of the candidates of their choice on the ballot papers. Members were concerned that there had been cases in the past elections where the electors concerned had mistakenly used the chop provided at the polling stations to mark the ballot papers because the polling staff had omitted to provide them with a pen to do so,

thus resulting in a relatively high proportion of invalid ballot papers in the relevant FC elections. Members enquired about the measures to be taken to prevent recurrence of similar incidents in future elections. The Administration advised that REO would strengthen its training to familiarize the polling staff with the stipulated electoral procedures and requirements.

7. Members also asked what specific measures would be implemented in the 2020 LegCo General Election to facilitate electors with special needs (e.g. elderly persons, pregnant women and persons with mobility difficulties) to vote. Members further expressed concern that on the polling day of the 2019 DC Ordinary Election, some electors had queued up repeatedly outside the polling stations in a bid to deter other electors from casting their votes, and some young people had successfully applied for ballot papers in the name of other elderly electors. Members urged the Administration to address the aforementioned cases and implement appropriate measures to prevent elderly electors from being deprived of their right to vote. The Administration agreed to follow up and come up with enhancement measures to address the above problems.

8. The Administration introduced the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 ("the Bill") into LegCo on 13 April 2021. The Bill comprises, among others, the following areas of amendments to specifically address the abovementioned concerns raised by members -

- (a) introducing a new offence under the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (Cap. 554) to prohibit any person from inciting another person not to vote, to cast a blank or invalid vote by way of public activity during an election period, and providing that any person who *wilfully obstructs or prevents another person from voting at an election* commits a corrupt conduct; and
- (b) empowering the Presiding Officers to set up *a special queue for electors in need* in public elections.

9. For details of the above new measures, members may refer to the LegCo Brief on the Bill (File Ref. CMAB C1/30/5/5) issued by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau on 13 April 2021.

10. During discussion of the practical arrangements for the 2016 LegCo General Election, some members considered that the existing manual counting arrangement did not keep pace with the development of modern technology, and queried the cost-effectiveness of engaging about 25 000 civil servants on the polling day for counting of one million votes or so. These members pointed out that in Taiwan, results of public elections which involved the counting of tens of

millions of votes were available within only a few hours after the close of the poll. The Administration explained that vote counting machines were not suitable for the counting of votes for geographical constituency and FC elections because of constraints posed by the design and size of the ballot papers. Some members suggested that REO might consider using smaller ballot papers so that they could be fed into and read by a vote counting machine.

Safety measures amid Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic

11. Members asked whether electors would be required to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between each other when queuing to vote on the polling day of the 2020 LegCo General Election if the COVID-19 pandemic had not ended by then. Pointing out that some organizations would provide transportation for electors to get to the polling stations, members asked whether a cap would be imposed on the number of persons that could be carried by each vehicle. Members also enquired about the voting arrangements for electors under compulsory quarantine at home or at designated quarantine facilities, and whether electors showing signs of fever would be disallowed to enter the polling stations to vote.

12. The Administration advised that requiring electors to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between each other in queuing was considered not practicable as it would render the queues unduly long. That said, electoral staff would remind electors in the queue to wear a mask and keep some distance from each other. Also, REO would continue to closely monitor the pandemic situation and draw up appropriate safety measures in consultation with the Centre for Health Protection so as to ensure electors' safety and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Proposal of designating the day after the polling day as a school holiday

13. Members considered that the proposal of designating the day after the polling day as a school holiday would enable more flexible use of the school premises at which polling stations had been set up as this would obviate the need to return the premises in the early morning following the polling day. The Administration advised that the Education Bureau ("EDB") had initiated exchanges with relevant stakeholders (i.e. school management) on the proposal and the preliminary responses received were positive.

14. Members may wish to note that as announced in the Education Bureau Circular No. 5/2020 issued on 9 June 2020, EDB has designated the day following a major public election, i.e. LegCo General Elections and DC Ordinary Elections, as a school holiday starting from the 2020-2021 school year.

Relevant Legislative Council question

15. At the Council meeting of 15 September 2021, Hon Starry LEE raised an oral question on the practical arrangements for the 2021 LegCo General Election. The question and the Administration's reply are at **Appendix II**.

Recent development

16. The Panel will discuss the practical arrangements for the 2021 LegCo General Election at the next meeting on 27 September 2021.

Relevant papers

17. A list of the relevant papers available on the LegCo website is at **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 September 2021

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LC Paper No. CB(2)1400/19-20(01)
CONSTITUTIONAL AND MAINLAND AFFAIRS BUREAU
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23 July 2020

Ms Joanne MAK
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Mak,

**Meeting of Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Supplementary Information regarding the
Practical Arrangements for the Legislative Council elections**

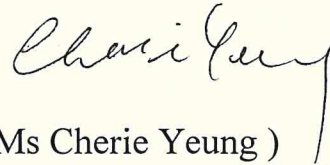
At the meeting of this Panel on 18 May 2020, Hon Ted Hui enquired about the breakdown of the total number of electoral staff by bureaux/departments (“B/Ds”) recruited for the 2016 Legislative Council (“LegCo”) General Election and 2019 District Council Ordinary Election (“DCOE”) respectively, and requested the Government to provide a written reply. After consulting the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), our reply is as follows –

- (1) For the 2016 LegCo General Election, the REO appointed a total of about 23,400 civil servants from 73 B/Ds as polling and counting staff on the polling day. Civil servants who were appointed as electoral staff accounted for about 0.82% to 36.4% of the establishment of B/Ds concerned as of 31 March 2016.

- (2) As regards the 2019 DCOE held in November last year, the REO appointed a total of about 20,200 civil servants from 72 B/Ds as polling and counting staff on the polling day. Civil servants who were appointed as electoral staff accounted for about 2.16% to 31.8% of the establishment of B/Ds concerned as of 31 March 2019.

The number of electoral staff by B/Ds in the 2016 LegCo General Election and 2019 DCOE and the number as a percentage of each B/D's establishment are at Annex.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Cherie Yeung)

for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

c.c. Chief Electoral Officer

Distribution of Electoral Staff by Bureau/Department in 2016 Legislative Council General Election and 2019 District Council Ordinary Election

B/Ds	2016 Legislative Council General Election				2019 District Council Ordinary Election			
	Electoral Staff	%	Establishment as at 31.03.2016	Electoral Staff as a % of Establishment	Electoral Staff	%	Establishment as at 31.03.2019	Electoral Staff as a % of Establishment
Census and Statistics Department	471	2.02%	1,293	36.43%	396	1.96%	1,247	31.76%
Government Property Agency	53	0.23%	213	24.88%	60	0.30%	209	28.71%
Social Welfare Department	1,794	7.68%	5,800	30.93%	1,613	8.00%	6,275	25.71%
Land Registry	160	0.69%	534	29.96%	145	0.72%	566	25.62%
Lands Department	1,061	4.54%	4,084	25.98%	1,052	5.22%	4,475	23.51%
Food and Health Bureau (incl. Food Branch & Health Branch)	29	0.12%	168	17.26%	46	0.23%	210	21.90%
Rating and Valuation Department	230	0.98%	866	26.56%	193	0.96%	895	21.56%
University Grants Committee Secretariat	14	0.06%	67	20.90%	16	0.08%	76	21.05%
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service	10	0.04%	33	30.30%	7	0.03%	34	20.59%
Environmental Protection Department	437	1.87%	1,839	23.76%	428	2.12%	2,084	20.54%
Inland Revenue Department	780	3.34%	2,833	27.53%	592	2.94%	2,889	20.49%
Housing Department	2,200	9.42%	8,950	24.58%	1,930	9.57%	9,483	20.35%
Audit Commission	37	0.16%	192	19.27%	40	0.20%	197	20.30%
Trade and Industry Department	116	0.50%	497	23.34%	104	0.52%	516	20.16%
Buildings Department	422	1.81%	1,690	24.97%	394	1.95%	1,956	20.14%
Labour Department	596	2.55%	2,370	25.15%	503	2.49%	2,505	20.08%
Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency	326	1.40%	1,106	29.48%	244	1.21%	1,227	19.89%
Companies Registry	72	0.31%	316	22.78%	71	0.35%	379	18.73%
Government Laboratory	117	0.50%	484	24.17%	89	0.44%	487	18.28%
Architectural Services Department	391	1.67%	1,814	21.55%	343	1.70%	1,987	17.98%
Transport Department	346	1.48%	1,544	22.41%	310	1.54%	1,763	17.58%
Treasury	98	0.42%	489	20.04%	89	0.44%	510	17.45%
Highways Department	460	1.97%	2,156	21.34%	413	2.05%	2,367	17.45%
Planning Department	168	0.72%	854	19.67%	156	0.77%	896	17.41%
Auxiliary Medical Service	19	0.08%	99	19.19%	17	0.08%	99	17.17%
Environment Bureau	8	0.03%	49	16.33%	9	0.04%	53	16.98%
Office of the Communications Authority (incl. Office for Film, Newspaper and Article Administration)	81	0.35%	400	20.25%	69	0.34%	409	16.87%
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau	19	0.08%	175	10.86%	32	0.16%	195	16.41%
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	353	1.51%	2,055	17.18%	354	1.76%	2,210	16.02%
Legal Aid Department	129	0.55%	543	23.76%	86	0.43%	546	15.75%
Public Service Commission Secretariat	2	0.01%	28	7.14%	5	0.02%	32	15.63%
Civil Engineering and Development Department	369	1.58%	1,822	20.25%	305	1.51%	1,956	15.59%
Security Bureau	33	0.14%	198	16.67%	37	0.18%	238	15.55%
Chief Executive's Office (incl. Central Policy Unit before 2018 & Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office after 2018)	11	0.05%	104	10.58%	16	0.08%	103	15.53%
Development Bureau (incl. Planning and Lands Branch & Works Branch)	64	0.27%	379	16.89%	64	0.32%	440	14.55%
Drainage Services Department	347	1.49%	1,914	18.13%	287	1.42%	1,986	14.45%
Water Supplies Department	859	3.68%	4,407	19.49%	649	3.22%	4,513	14.38%
Official Receiver's Office	44	0.19%	242	18.18%	39	0.19%	273	14.29%
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department	1,720	7.36%	11,186	15.38%	1,578	7.82%	11,270	14.00%
Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (incl. Treasury Branch, Financial Services Branch & Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (before 2017))	46	0.20%	357	12.89%	41	0.20%	296	13.85%
Innovation and Technology Bureau (incl. Efficiency Office after 2018, Innovation and Technology Commission & Office of the Government Chief Information Officer)	121	0.52%	849	14.25%	149	0.74%	1,097	13.58%
Post Office	778	3.33%	5,173	15.04%	704	3.49%	5,238	13.44%
Intellectual Property Department	21	0.09%	139	15.11%	21	0.10%	157	13.38%
Judiciary	309	1.32%	1,626	19.00%	228	1.13%	1,742	13.09%
Marine Department	219	0.94%	1,397	15.68%	184	0.91%	1,456	12.64%
Transport and Housing Bureau	31	0.13%	189	16.40%	26	0.13%	208	12.50%
Government Logistics Department	107	0.46%	707	15.13%	85	0.42%	706	12.04%
Department of Justice	204	0.87%	1,291	15.80%	171	0.85%	1,422	12.03%
Labour and Welfare Bureau	24	0.10%	119	20.17%	14	0.07%	122	11.48%
Customs and Excise Department	847	3.63%	5,986	14.15%	783	3.88%	6,999	11.19%
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department	506	2.17%	3,935	12.86%	456	2.26%	4,121	11.07%
Leisure and Cultural Services Department	1,415	6.06%	9,327	15.17%	1,087	5.39%	9,838	11.05%
Civil Service Bureau	103	0.44%	976	10.55%	103	0.51%	1,002	10.28%
Hong Kong Observatory	41	0.18%	308	13.31%	34	0.17%	332	10.24%
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (incl. Communications and Creative Industries Branch & Commerce, Industry and Tourism Branch)	45	0.19%	354	12.71%	44	0.22%	431	10.21%
Home Affairs Bureau	48	0.21%	264	18.18%	28	0.14%	292	9.59%
Department of Health (incl. Hospital Authority)	884	3.79%	7,658	11.54%	686	3.40%	7,418	9.25%
Offices of the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Financial Secretary (incl. Efficiency Unit before 2018, Admin Wing, CS Private Office, FS Private Office & EABFU)	74	0.32%	546	13.55%	47	0.23%	510	9.22%
Secretariat, Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance	4	0.02%	20	20.00%	2	0.01%	23	8.70%

Home Affairs Department	170	0.73%	1,995	8.52%	165	0.82%	2,144	7.70%
Civil Aid Service	17	0.07%	103	16.50%	8	0.04%	105	7.62%
Education Bureau	506	2.17%	5,536	9.14%	437	2.17%	5,999	7.28%
Radio Television Hong Kong	66	0.28%	703	9.39%	51	0.25%	737	6.92%
Immigration Department	597	2.56%	7,210	8.28%	556	2.76%	8,886	6.26%
Civil Aviation Department	62	0.27%	730	8.49%	50	0.25%	803	6.23%
Information Services Department	33	0.14%	434	7.60%	26	0.13%	434	5.99%
Government Flying Service	15	0.06%	230	6.52%	16	0.08%	281	5.69%
Registration and Electoral Office	2	0.01%	245	0.82%	8	0.04%	240	3.33%
Invest Hong Kong	2	0.01%	35	5.71%	1	<0.01%	37	2.70%
Correctional Services Department	191	0.82%	6,906	2.77%	161	0.80%	6,989	2.30%
Fire Services Department	325	1.39%	10,240	3.17%	250	1.24%	10,974	2.28%
Hong Kong Police Force	1,094	4.68%	33,688	3.25%	764	3.79%	35,436	2.16%
Hong Kong Monetary Authority	1	<0.01%	18	5.56%	0	0.00%	7	0.00%
Total	23,354	100%	173,087	13.49%	20,167	100%	183,959	10.96%

Press Releases

LCQ1: Ensuring fair and smooth conduct of Legislative Council General Election

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (September 15):

Question:

The 2021 Legislative Council (LegCo) General Election will be held on December 19 this year. Some members of the public have pointed out that this Election has a significant meaning in that it is the first LegCo election to be held after the electoral system has been improved to implement the most fundamental principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong". However, during the canvassing period for candidates and even on the polling day of the 2019 District Council (DC) Election, there were numerous illegal acts in society which involved the use of violence to obstruct individual candidates and their teams from conducting electioneering activities. In addition, a large quantity of extreme and misrepresented propaganda appeared on the Internet in an attempt to discredit individual candidates and the entire polling arrangement, advocate electors to take actions to obstruct other electors from voting as well as boycott that Election. In order to ensure the fair and smooth conduct of the LegCo General Election, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has any targeted plan to enable members of the public to correctly understand the most fundamental principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" under the new electoral system; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the strategies and measures it has put in place to guard against the recurrence in this Election of illegal acts similar to those which occurred in the 2019 DC Election; the Government's deployment for the election day to ensure that candidates can conduct electioneering activities safely and electors can go to the polling stations to cast their votes free from threat, so as to enable this Election to be conducted fairly and smoothly; and

(3) given that the Government will introduce for the first time in the LegCo General Election measures to provide special queuing arrangement for voters in need and use the Electronic Poll Register system to assist in the issuance of ballot papers, of the Government's plan to strengthen the training for polling staff, and whether measures are in place to prevent the Election from being affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic, so as to ensure the smooth conduct of this election?

Reply:

President,

The National People's Congress (NPC) made the Decision on Improving the Electoral System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (the Decision) on March 11, 2021 and authorised the NPC Standing Committee (NPCSC) to amend Annex I on Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the HKSAR and Annex II on Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council (LegCo) of the HKSAR and its Voting Procedures to the Basic Law. Subsequently, the NPCSC adopted the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law on March 30. To implement the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law, the HKSAR Government introduced the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Bill 2021 (the

Bill) into the LegCo for first reading and second reading on April 14. After a total of 5 subcommittee meetings involving 10 meeting hours and a total of 12 intensive meetings of the Bills Committee involving 37 meeting hours, the Bill was passed by the LegCo on May 27. The Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021 (Amendment Ordinance) was formally gazetted and came into effect on May 31. Currently, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) is working closely with the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) to ensure the three upcoming important elections are conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and in a fair, open and honest manner.

In consultation with the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the Security Bureau and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), our consolidated reply to the Hon Starry Lee's question is as follows:

(1) Following the NPC's passage of the Decision on March 11, the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPCSC, together with the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, organised more than 60 seminars and conducted various visits and meetings in Hong Kong on the implementation of the NPC's Decision on the improvement of the electoral system of the HKSAR between March 15 and 17 to enable different sectors in Hong Kong to understand more about the background, ideas and principles of the Decision. They have gauged extensively the views of representatives from various sectors of the Hong Kong society. Besides, the HKSAR Government all along spares no effort in explaining to the public about the advantages, the necessity and urgency of improving the electoral system, as well as how the improved electoral system fully implements "patriots administering Hong Kong" and enhances the effectiveness of governance. Since March this year, the CMAB has allocated more than \$16 million on various publicity activities. In addition to printing and distributing more than 100,000 copies of booklets outlining the improved electoral system in detail, the Government has set up a dedicated website on improving the electoral system, with user friendly texts and diagrams explaining the related matters. Moreover, Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux have explained the improved electoral system to various sectors in the community through their political platforms, blogs and media interviews, etc., and the Chief Executive even personally hosted a TV programme of the Radio Television Hong Kong to discuss with guests from the 40 Election Committee subsectors, with a view to providing the public with an in-depth explanation on improving the electoral system.

Moreover, the concept of "patriots administering Hong Kong" has been featured in the ongoing publicity campaign for the 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections and the publicity campaign for the 2021 LegCo General Election commencing in early October, with a view to enabling the public to clearly understand the necessity and superiority of the improved electoral system, i.e. enhancing the balanced and orderly political participation of the Hong Kong community and ensuring broader representation of the political structure, so as to better realise the overall and fundamental interests of the Hong Kong community and fully implement the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" further.

(2) The Decision of the NPC on March 11 stipulates that the HKSAR should effectively organise and regulate relevant electoral activities in accordance with law, with a view to implementing the new electoral system that accords with the actual situation in Hong Kong. In this connection, two new offences have been introduced under the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (ECICO) by virtue of the Amendment Ordinance, including the corrupt conduct to wilfully obstruct or prevent another person from voting at an election, and the illegal conduct to incite another person not to

vote, to cast a blank or invalid vote by way of public activity during an election period. As the law enforcement agency of the ECICO, the ICAC will pay close attention to conducts that may constitute manipulation of or sabotaging the elections, and take resolute law enforcement action to combat such illegal activities. Where appropriate, the ICAC will take the initiative to request relevant social media platforms or websites to remove potentially illegal content. The ICAC has kick-started a holistic educational and publicity programme by organising face-to-face sessions to brief stakeholders in the elections on the electoral law and aforementioned new offences, while strengthening the online publicity campaign by producing promotional videos on the new offences after the legislative amendments considering that this type of behaviours mostly occur on the Internet. Regarding the false information about the elections, not only will the relevant officials and the EAC Chairman personally clarify the issues, the relevant clarifications will also be posted on the website of the CMAB, the Facebook page and dedicated website of the LegCo General Election, and the dedicated website on improving the electoral system, with a view to providing the public with correct information as soon as possible.

Indeed, we must point out that the cyber world of the Internet is not a virtual space not bound by law. In Hong Kong, most of the laws targeting crime prevention in the real world apply also in the cyber world of the Internet. Therefore, the public should use the Internet lawfully and properly. Any criminal offences are regulated by the relevant laws regardless of whether they were committed in real life or online. The Police have all along gathered intelligence for criminal offences committed in the cyber world through various channels, including online platforms and social media, and would disseminate crime prevention messages via the Internet. If someone is found to be suspected of breaching the law, the Police will investigate and take enforcement actions in accordance with law. For the 2021 LegCo General Election, various government departments will work closely to formulate an appropriate security plan to deal with possible risks that may occur and ensure that all election-related activities will be conducted in a smooth and orderly manner. On the polling day, the Police will, based on the risk assessments, implement appropriate measures and make manpower arrangements in each polling station and its vicinity so as to enable the election to be conducted safely.

(3) We are now recruiting electoral staff for the 2021 LegCo General Election. We will conduct briefing sessions on the polling and counting procedures as well as the relevant arrangements for the electoral staff, including hands-on practice of counting duties. In view of the new measures in enhancing the electoral arrangements, including the electronic poll register system and the dedicated queue for electors with special needs, the Registration and Electoral Office will include designated slots during the briefing sessions to brief electoral staff on relevant arrangements, with a view to ensuring smooth operations on the polling day. Meanwhile, having regard to the experience in the 2019 District Council Ordinary Election, we shall strengthen the polling management training for the polling officers concerned, with an emphasis on enhancing their capability in maintaining the order of the polling and counting stations, etc.

In addition, we will closely keep in touch with the FHB and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health to continuously assess the impact of the epidemic on the LegCo General Election to formulate various plans. Our preliminary plan is to set up a polling station at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre to allow electors who are undergoing compulsory quarantine to temporarily leave their rooms to vote. As regards persons arriving at Hong Kong who are undergoing compulsory quarantine at designated places, considering that COVID-19 cases with mutant strain are of relatively higher transmissibility, we consider that electors who

intend to vote should take note of the quarantine measures for inbound travellers, and plan their itinerary as early as possible to allow sufficient time for quarantine arrangements, so that they can exercise their voting right at their allocated polling stations on the polling day.

Ends/Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Issued at HKT 17:17

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Appendix III

Relevant documents on practical arrangements for the 2021 Legislative Council General Election

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Constitutional Affairs	18.4.2016 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	18.5.2020 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 September 2021