

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1661/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 12 July 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP (Chairman)
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
- Member absent** : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS, JP
- Members attending** : Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
- Public officers attending** : **Agenda item III**

Mr Patrick NIP, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Action

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Miss Ann CHAN
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Mr Leo LI
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service
(Pay and Leave)

Mrs Vicki KWOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for Security 2

Mr Simon CHENG
Principal Management Services Officer (Security)
Security Bureau

Agenda item IV

Mr Patrick NIP, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Hermes CHAN, JP
Director of General Grades
Civil Service Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Wendy JAN
Chief Council Secretary (4)1

Staff in attendance : Ms Maggie CHUNG
Senior Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Peggy CHUNG
Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Karin TSOI
Clerical Assistant (4)1

Action

I. Information papers issued since the last regular meeting on 21 June 2021

[LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1216/20-21(01) and (02)]

Members noted that the Administration's responses to the letters dated 11 May and 8 June 2021 from Mr LUK Chung-hung and Ms Elizabeth QUAT respectively regarding the manpower situation of and grade structure review ("GSR") for lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") had been issued since the regular meeting of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") on 21 June 2021.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

[LC Paper No. CB(4)1202/20-21(01)]

Schedule of regular meetings in August and September 2021

2. The Chairman informed members that the Panel would hold regular meetings on 23 August and 20 September 2021. Schedule of the meetings was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1188/20-21 on 30 June 2021.

Items for next regular meeting

3. The Chairman informed members that the Administration proposed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting of the Panel on 23 August 2021:

- (a) Kwun Tong Composite Development Project; and
- (b) Update on implementation of the requirement for civil servants and government staff appointed on non-civil service terms to sign declaration.

4. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman raised concern about the manpower shortage problem of LCSD's lifeguards and its impact on the operation and services of public swimming pools and gazetted beaches. They enquired as to when the Panel would discuss item 12 "Grade structure review for lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department" in the Panel's "List of outstanding items for discussion" ("the List").

5. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") replied that the Administration noted members' concerns about the manpower situation of LCSD's lifeguards and planned to exchange views with members on the subject matter at the meeting of the Panel in September 2021.

Action

6. Given that it was now the swimming season, Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr LUK Chung-hung called on the Administration to discuss with the Panel the manpower shortage problem of LCSD's lifeguards as early as possible for the sake of the safety of LCSD's lifeguards and members of the public. SCS replied that he would liaise with LCSD and revert to the Secretariat after the meeting about the timing for discussing the matter.

(Post-meeting note: As proposed by the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, the Panel would discuss "Kwun Tong Composite Development Project" and "Manpower situation of the lifeguards of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department" at the next regular meeting. Notice of meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1325/20-21 on 5 August 2021.)

7. The Chairman asked about the progress of the declaration arrangements for staff of Government-funded bodies. SCS advised that he had relayed members' views on the subject matter to the relevant Bureaux/Departments ("B/Ds") and the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office. The Administration would announce the detailed arrangements in due course.

List of outstanding items for discussion

8. The Chairman referred members to item 7 "Proposed amendments to subsidiary legislation on discipline made under Disciplined Services Ordinances" in the List. He advised that the Secretariat had not received by 12 July 2021 any requests from members for holding a meeting to discuss the matter upon receiving the Administration's information paper on "Commencement of Legislative Amendments made in 2012 to Subsidiary Legislation on Discipline made under Disciplined Services Ordinances" (LC Paper No. CB(4)1136/20-21(01)). Members agreed that the subject be removed from the List.

III. Grade structure review for the disciplined services grades

[Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grades, LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1202/20-21(02), (03) and (06) to (12), CB(4)1219/20-21(01) and (02) and CB(4)1231/20-21(01) and (02)]

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, SCS briefed members on the findings and recommendations of the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service ("SCDS") and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service on the GSR for the disciplined services grades, details of which were set out in the Report on

Action

the GSR for the Disciplined Services Grades ("the Report") and the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)1202/20-21(02)).

10. Members noted that 10 written submissions from relevant staff unions/associations and a letter dated 9 July 2021 from Mr CHAN Hak-kan (LC Paper No. CB(4)1231/20-21(01)) had been received on this subject matter.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to the submissions and Mr CHAN Hak-kan's letter was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1328/20-21(01) on 6 August 2021.)

11. The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council, they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to the subject under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the subject.

12. Mrs Regina IP declared that she was Honorary President of several civil service organizations. Ms Elizabeth QUAT declared that she was Honorary President of several disciplined services staff unions. Mr CHAN Chun-ying declared that he was a member of the Operations Review Committee of the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC"). Mr Tony TSE declared that he was a member of SCDS.

Pay scales

Pay scale for the Immigration Assistant grade of the Immigration Department

13. Members noted from paragraph 10.12 of the Report that SCDS had recommended enhancing the pay scales of the Immigration Assistant ("IA") grade by, inter alia, creating two new pay points on the renamed Disciplined Services (Rank and File) Pay Scale ("DS(R)") (i.e. DS(R)4a and DS(R)31a) as the new scale minimum of the IA rank and new scale maximum of the Chief IA rank respectively. As the proposed entry pay point and maximum pay point of the IA grade were still lower than those of comparable grades in other disciplined services, the Chairman relayed the disappointment of the Immigration Department ("ImmD") staff sides at not having equal pay with their counterparts in other disciplined services departments. Mr SHIU Ka-fai sought explanation on why the pay scales of the IA grade were not aligned with that of comparable grades in other disciplined services.

Action

14. Mrs Regina IP, Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr CHAN Hak-kan considered it unfair that ImmD staff could not have equal pay with their counterparts in other disciplined services departments. They further cited various examples to illustrate that the changes in the scope of work of ImmD in the past decade had resulted in heavier workload, greater difficulties and danger for ImmD staff. For instance, ImmD staff could now possess arms and weapons and had to undergo relevant trainings. In light of the above, they called on the Administration to reconsider the staff sides' request for bringing the pay of IA grade on par with comparable grades in other disciplined services.

15. SCS advised that the proposal of bringing the entry pay of the IA grade on par with comparable grades in other disciplined services had previously been considered in the last GSR in 2008, but SCDS had decided that the entry pay of the IA grade should be maintained. In the current GSR, SCDS examined all relevant factors, including the scope, complexity and conditioned hours of work as well as the recruitment, retention and career progression of the IA grade. As the average wastage of the IA rank in the past five years was the second highest as compared with its comparable ranks in the disciplined services, SCDS recommended narrowing the existing pay difference between IAs and their counterparts in other disciplined services to address the problem. However, as the conditioned hours of work for ImmD were different from other disciplined services departments, SCDS suggested preserving the pay relativity between the IA grade and its comparable grades in other disciplined services.

16. Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr CHAN Hak-kan did not subscribe to the argument put forward by the Administration. Given that each disciplined services department/agency was distinct in its work nature, job duties, responsibilities, etc., Ms QUAT and Mr CHAN considered it inappropriate to use conditioned hours of work as the major consideration to determine the pay of the disciplined services. They were also worried that SCDS' recommendation on the pay scale for the IA grade mentioned in paragraph 10.12 of the Report might have adverse impact on the staff morale of ImmD.

17. SCS noted the views of members and the staff sides of ImmD. He stressed that SCDS had considered all job factors of the IA grade before making the recommendation, and conditioned hours of work were not the only consideration. Each of the disciplined services departments/agencies was unique in work nature, and the pay difference among the disciplined services could reflect such uniqueness. It lacked sound justifications to align the pay for the IA grade with comparable grades in other disciplined services simply for the reason that there should be pay parity.

Action

Establishment of independent pay scales for disciplined services staff of the Fire Services Department

18. In reply to Mr SHIU Ka-fai's enquiry, SCS said that the disciplined services staff of the Fire Services Department ("FSD") had requested establishing an independent pay scale for FSD staff. SCS further explained that the establishment of a separate pay scale for any of the disciplined services should only be supported with very strong justifications. Upon examining the job factors, job uniqueness and the existing internal relativities among the disciplined services, SCDS considered that there were no strong reasons to establish independent pay scales for disciplined services staff of FSD.

Pay scale for the Junior Police Officer grade of the Hong Kong Police Force

19. As regards Mr LUK Chung-hung's enquiry on when the Administration would implement the recommendation of raising the scale maximum for the Police Sergeant rank, SCS advised that the Civil Service Bureau was studying the findings and recommendations in the Report in consultation with relevant stakeholders. After considering all comments received, the Civil Service Bureau would submit proposals to take forward the findings of the GSR for the decision of the Chief Executive("CE")-in-Council. The Administration aimed to seek the approval of the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") and the Finance Committee ("FC") on the salary and increment-related recommendations within the current Legislative Council session.

Multiple entry and entry qualifications

20. Noting that SCDS recommended rejecting the proposals of introducing multiple entry points for the purpose of recognizing the higher qualifications of new recruits, Mr CHAN Chun-ying enquired about the measures in place to attract candidates of high calibre to join the civil service.

21. SCS replied that under the existing mechanism, individual grades might offer a higher entry pay to an appointee to take account of relevant qualifications/experience above the prescribed levels. In addition, incremental jumps would be provided to officers in specific ranks in the disciplined services to recognize their specified achievements, such as passing a specified qualifying examination for promotion and attaining specified technical qualifications.

Action

Conditions of service and other matters

Conditioned hours of work

22. The Chairman sought the Administration's views on the request of a staff association for aligning the conditioned hours of work of the disciplined services departments/agencies. Worrying that police officers had to work overtime from time to time and their conditioned hours of work might be too long (i.e. 48 hours a week), Mr LUK Chung-hung called on the Administration to consider reducing their conditioned hours of work.

23. SCS advised that the ambit of the current GSR was primarily about the pay scale and structure of each of the grades and ranks in the disciplined services. Other proposals received from the staff sides which fell outside the scope of the GSR (such as conditioned hours of work, fringe benefits and retirement age) would be referred to the relevant departments for consideration. He pointed out that conditioned hours of work varied among the disciplined services and were laid down in accordance with their operational needs and other relevant considerations. Thorough considerations had to be made before making changes to the conditioned hours of work of disciplined services grades. As regards the situation of police officers performing overtime work, he advised that disciplined services overtime allowance would be provided to the staff concerned as compensation where appropriate.

Retirement age

24. Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr Tony TSE called on the Administration to review the retirement age of disciplined services staff. Mr TSE was of the view that the extension of retirement age of disciplined services staff could help alleviate the manpower shortage problem of disciplined services. He pointed out that many retired disciplined services officers wished to stay in the workforce and apply for relevant post-retirement outside work. Mrs Regina IP pointed out that many heads of the disciplined services were healthy and capable of working when they had reached the retirement age. She suggested that the Administration should extend the retirement age of disciplined services staff so as to retain expertise and experience and ensure smooth succession planning.

25. SCS replied that the retirement age of new recruits who joined the Government on or after 1 June 2015 had been raised. There were also various initiatives in place for B/Ds to extend the service of civil servants beyond retirement age to meet manpower and operational needs, such as the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme, final extension of service and the adjusted mechanism for further employment of serving civil servants beyond

Action

retirement age for a longer duration. In 2018, the Administration launched the option for serving civil servants who joined the Government between 1 June 2000 and 31 May 2015 to choose to retire later. Over 80% of the eligible disciplined services officers had taken the option. In addition, the Hong Kong Police Force launched a scheme on 1 April 2021 for all serving police officers at non-directorate level who joined the Government before 1 June 2000 to apply for extending their service beyond retirement age up to the age of 60. CE had also given in-principle approval for other disciplined services departments to explore launching a similar scheme.

Medical and dental benefits

26. Mr CHAN Chun-ying welcomed SCDS' recommendation on making available life-long civil service medical and dental benefits to ICAC staff (regardless of their appointment terms and when they joined the service) invalidated as a result of injury on duty. He further requested the Administration to provide the number of ICAC staff who were invalidated as a result of injury on duty since ICAC was established in 1974.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1558/20-21(01) on 17 September 2021.)

27. Mr LUK Chung-hung relayed the request of the staff sides for the provision of post-retirement medical and dental benefits to civil servants appointed on or after 1 June 2000. SCS advised that as the request would bring fundamental changes to the established civil service remuneration system, the Administration had to make thorough and careful consideration.

Grade structure and manpower support

28. Mrs Regina IP supported the recommendation of creating one additional Deputy Director/Deputy Commissioner post each in ImmD, FSD, the Customs and Excise Department and the Correctional Services Department. She was of the view that the recommendation could facilitate the grooming of talents. SCS advised that the recommendation could also facilitate the operation and manpower planning of the departments.

Way forward

Implementation of the recommendations

29. The Deputy Chairman and Mr CHAN Chun-ying enquired about the timing for implementing the recommendations in the Report, including the

Action

timetable for seeking approval from ESC and FC. Mrs Regina IP and Ms Elizabeth QUAT called on the Administration to implement the recommendations as soon as practicable. SCS reiterated that the Administration aimed to seek approval from ESC and FC within the current Legislative Council session.

30. The Chairman pointed out that as the current GSR for the disciplined services grades was announced in October 2018 and completed in June 2021, some staff side representatives were of the view that the recommendations in the Report should take retrospective effect, otherwise it would be unfair to both serving staff and those who had retired in recent years. The Deputy Chairman also requested the Administration to give consideration to the various suggestions made by the staff sides on the retrospective effective date of the recommendations.

31. SCS advised that the current GSR for the disciplined services grades was originally expected to be completed in about 18 months, yet the progress was delayed due to the social unrest in 2019 and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic. That said, SCDS and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service had strived to complete the GSR as early as possible. Unless there were special reasons, the Administration would implement the salary and increment-related proposals with effect from the first day of the month of approval by FC.

32. In response to Mrs Regina IP's enquiry, SCS advised that the financial implications of implementing the recommendations in the Report would be subject to the CE-in-Council's final decision on the recommendations.

Timetable for the next grade structure review

33. Given that the CE-in-Council had decided in 2018 that GSR for the disciplined services grades would be conducted once every ten years and the current GSR was announced in October 2018 and completed in June 2021, the Chairman enquired about the timing of the next GSR. He also enquired about the measures to ensure timely completion of future GSR. Ms Elizabeth QUAT asked whether the Administration would consider shortening the interval of conducting GSRs to once every six years as proposed by some staff side representatives in view of the fast changing employment environment.

34. SCS replied that the CE-in-Council had decided that its decision to adopt a ten-year interval between GSRs should continue to be taken as a guiding principle, and the precise timing of the next review should be decided

Action

by the Government of the day after taking into consideration all relevant factors.

Other concerns

Education support for children of disciplined services staff

35. Mr Tony TSE raised concern that children of some disciplined services staff had been unfairly treated at schools since the social unrest in 2019. He urged the Administration to address the problem and provide adequate assistance to these staff and their children.

36. SCS said that the Education Bureau and the Security Bureau had established mechanism to handle such cases. In addition, policies were in place to facilitate Hong Kong students to study in the Mainland. For example, FC had recently approved the proposal to expand the scope of the Local Education Allowance so that eligible officers could apply for education allowances in respect of their children's primary and secondary education in the Mainland.

Training for disciplined services staff

37. In response to Mr LUK Chung-hung's enquiry on how the Administration would strengthen training to foster a greater sense of allegiance among disciplined services staff, SCS advised that the disciplinary forces had their respective training schools to provide relevant training for their staff. On the part of the Civil Service College, it would, upon establishment, also provide and enhance training on national studies, including the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the Basic Law and national security, for all civil servants.

Conclusion

38. The Chairman concluded that the Panel agreed that the Administration might submit relevant proposals recommended in the GSR to ESC and FC for consideration.

IV. Implementation progress of the Job Creation Scheme

[LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1202/20-21(04) and (05)]

39. At the invitation of the Chairman, SCS briefed members on the implementation progress of the Job Creation Scheme (including Job Creation

Action

Scheme 1.0 and 2.0), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4) 1202/20-21(04)).

Job Creation Scheme

Implementation progress

40. Mr CHAN Chun-ying said that according to the Administration's reply to a written question raised in the Council meeting on 7 July 2021, among the 9 053 jobs created under the subsidy schemes for fresh graduates and young people, only 6 083 jobs (about 67%) had been filled as at end May 2021. He asked why the jobs in a number of B/Ds, such as the Development Bureau, had all been filled, but quite a number of jobs in some other B/Ds had yet to be filled.

41. Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service advised that about 25 000 jobs out of the 31 000 jobs created under the Job Creation Scheme 1.0 had been filled. The recruitment exercises for the remaining 6 000 jobs, including one-fourths created in the Government and three-fourths created in the non-governmental sector, were in full swing. SCS pointed out that jobs related to public works projects under the Development Bureau were filled in a short time as fresh graduates in relevant disciplines required work experience to attain their relevant professional qualifications.

42. In view of the worsening employment situation, Ms Elizabeth QUAT urged the Administration to speed up the recruitment of the 6 000 jobs and asked whether there were any difficulties encountered in the recruitment process. SCS advised that the Administration targeted to create 31 000 time-limited jobs within two years under the Job Creation Scheme 1.0. Since the recruitment exercises were conducted by individual organizations according to their actual circumstances, some of the organizations might need more time to conduct the exercises. The Administration had been working closely with them to expedite the recruitment process, and aimed to fill all the jobs created under the Job Creation Scheme 1.0 by 2021.

43. The Deputy Chairman and the Chairman also urged the Administration to expedite the recruitment process, so that all the jobs created under the Job Creation Scheme could be filled in a timely manner. SCS advised that some time-limited jobs in the public sector were created in service providers' units and the filling of these posts was generally more speedy.

Action

44. In response to Ms Elizabeth QUAT's enquiry, SCS advised that each job placement normally lasted from 6 to 12 months while extension of duration beyond 12 months would be considered based on the merits of individual cases. For job duration, around 90% of the jobs lasted from 6 to 12 months and the remaining 10% of the jobs lasted less than six months. He further said that if some of the jobs created under the Job Creation Scheme 1.0 were well received, the Administration would continue to create such jobs in the Job Creation Scheme 2.0.

45. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, SCS undertook to provide after the meeting the number of time-limited government jobs in each of the seven main job categories as set out in paragraph 6 of the Administration paper, with a breakdown by monthly salary range and duration, as well as the number of such jobs that had been filled so far.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1290/20-21(01) on 23 July 2021.)

46. In reply to Mr LUK Chung-hung's question, SCS confirmed that 1 700 jobs created for practitioners of the tourism industry to carry out administrative support work at 24 Community Vaccination Centres were under the Job Creation Scheme 2.0.

47. Mr LUK Chung-hung further enquired about the monitoring mechanism in place under the Job Creation Scheme to guard against possible labour exploitation. SCS advised that for those private companies which had received subsidies under the Scheme to employ staff, they were required to provide relevant information, such as the salary of the positions and number of staff employed under the Scheme. The public bodies or organizations administering the subsidy schemes were required to submit reports and conduct audit reviews on the schemes.

Way forward

48. Given the positive responses to some subsidy schemes in the non-governmental sector, such as the FinTech Anti-epidemic Scheme for Talent Development, Mr CHAN Chun-ying enquired whether the Administration would consider regularizing these subsidy schemes so as to nurture talents for the industry. SCS advised that the Administration has no plan to regularize the subsidy schemes in the non-governmental sector as the Job Creation Scheme was a temporary measure to create time-limited jobs. He said that it would be desirable if the fintech companies could consider retaining the talents in the industry after the subsidy period.

Action

49. Ms Elizabeth QUAT and the Deputy Chairman opined that the Administration should consider extending the job placement period and creating more job positions under the Job Creation Scheme to further relieve the unemployment situation due to the epidemic. The Chairman opined that the Administration should announce as early as possible whether there would be new measures to relieve the unemployment situation when the employment period of the time-limited jobs nearly came to an end.

50. SCS advised that as Job Creation Scheme 2.0 was just announced in February 2021, the Administration was focusing on conducting recruitment exercises for the remaining jobs created under Job Creation Scheme 1.0 and launching the Job Creation Scheme 2.0. He added that the Administration had launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme to encourage and support young people to work and develop their career in the Mainland cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

51. Mr Holden CHOW asked whether the Administration would consider putting forward more job creation proposals for practitioners in the tourism industry. SCS advised that the Administration was open to any feasible proposals for creating time-limited jobs put forth by industries hit hard by the epidemic.

Matching Grant Scheme for Skills Upgrading under the Anti-epidemic Fund

52. Mr CHAN Chun-ying enquired why only 37 applications for training funds for organizing training programmes under the Matching Grant Scheme for Skills Upgrading had been approved as at January 2021. He further sought information about the number of beneficiaries of the approved training programmes.

53. SCS advised that the lukewarm response to the Matching Grant Scheme for Skills Upgrading might be attributed to the provision of similar training programmes by many organizations or enterprises for their employees in various sectors. The Administration would reallocate the resources to other areas of need. He undertook to provide the number of beneficiaries of the training programmes organized under the Matching Grant Scheme for Skills Upgrading after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1290/20-21(01) on 23 July 2021.)

Action

V. Any other business

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

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 October 2021