

For discussion
on 15 October 2018

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Initiatives of Civil Service Bureau In the 2018 Policy Address

Purpose

This paper outlines the policy initiatives relating to Civil Service Bureau (“CSB”) featured in the 2018 Policy Address and Policy Agenda.

Details

Augmenting the Civil Service Establishment

2. To effectively implement the new policies and initiatives proposed by the current-term Government and to tie in with the commissioning of various large-scale cross-boundary infrastructures, we have expanded the civil service establishment substantially by 3.7% in 2018-19, far exceeding the average year-on-year increases in the past ten years. Looking ahead, the Government will uphold the prudent principle in the management of the civil service establishment to ensure that our civil service will continue to develop in a steady and orderly manner and cater for the needs of social development.

Establishing a New Civil Service College

3. The Civil Service Training and Development Institute (“CSTDI”) under CSB is responsible for formulating training policies and providing training programmes that fulfill the common training needs of civil servants, such as leadership and management, language and communication, national studies and the Basic Law, with a view to promoting a culture of continuous learning in the civil service.

4. In her Policy Address last year, the Chief Executive proposed to establish a new civil service college with upgraded training facilities so as to further enhance training for civil servants in the areas of leadership, interactive communication with the public, use of innovation and technology, etc. Apart from deepening civil servants' understanding of our country's development and the relationship between the Central Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR") as well as enhancing their awareness of international affairs, the college is also tasked promote exchanges with civil servants in other places. We have identified a "Government, Institution or Community" site with an area of about 11 000 square metres in Kwun Tong for redevelopment. In addition to the civil service college, our preliminary proposal is to provide a District Health Centre and other community facilities in this composite development under the themes of "healthy living" and "lifelong learning". There will also be a green walkway connecting Kwun Tong Road with Kwun Tong Community Centre. The development project will bring to the community new and diversified community facilities as well as activity venues to the district, which is set to become a new landmark of Kwun Tong. This, together with the nearby Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project of the Urban Renewal Authority and the Kowloon East district which is transforming the area into another core business district, will greatly enhance the connectivity of the central areas in Kwun Tong. We will consult the Kwun Tong District Council on the proposal in due course.

5. The civil service college is expected to be completed in 2026. In the meantime, CSTDI will continue to enhance training for civil servants, including training in innovation and use of technology to tie in with the Government's Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong. In parallel, we will continue to enhance training for civil servants in national studies and the Basic Law to better tap the important opportunities in the "Belt and Road" Initiative and the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area" development, as well as to leverage the "one country, two systems" advantage to make further contributions to our country and Hong Kong. CSTDI will also promote exchanges with visiting civil servants from the Mainland and other places by sharing with them the administration and management experience of the HKSAR Government.

6. We will set up a civil service training advisory board comprising professionals and government officials to give guidance on training programmes for the civil service and its long-term development strategy, and to prepare for the development of the new civil service college.

Enhancing Medical and Dental Benefits for Civil Service Eligible Persons (“CSEPs”)

7. We always endeavour to enhance the medical and dental benefits for CSEPs. We also review the service capacity and scope of such benefits for meeting the medical needs of CSEPs. Having carefully considered the staff side’s request for including Chinese medicine in the scope of civil service medical benefits and following the development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong, the Government, as an employer, has decided to explore an appropriate arrangement for providing CSEPs with defined Chinese medicine services as part of the civil service medical benefits. Furthermore, the sixth Families Clinic located in Sai Kung will commence operation in December 2018 as scheduled to enhance general out-patient service dedicated for CSEPs.

Extending Maternity Leave for All Female Government Employees

8. To set an example of a good employer, the Government has decided to extend the maternity leave for all female employees of the Government to 14 weeks to allow them more time to spend with and take care of their new-born children. Officers whose actual or expected date of confinement falls on 10 October 2018 or after will all benefit from the initiative.

Conducting Grade Structure Reviews for All Disciplined Grades

9. Our civil service pay policy is to offer sufficient remuneration to attract and retain talents to provide the public with effective and efficient services. To this end, we conduct regular pay surveys to ascertain if the salaries in the civil service and the private sector are broadly comparable. However, it is difficult for us to find in the private

sector posts and jobs that are comparable with those in various disciplined services. Therefore, we have decided to conduct regular grade structure reviews for all disciplined services to ensure that their grade structure and remuneration are effective in attracting and retaining talents.

Enhancing the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme

10. The Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme aims at recognising the long and meritorious service of serving civil servants. All local non-directorate officers with a continuous service of 20 years or more, who have track records of consistently very good performance and have not received any government travel award before, are eligible for consideration for the grant of the award. The award is granted on a one-off basis and in the form of an accountable travel allowance. The rate of the travel allowance is revised on 1 April each year with reference to the rate of change in package tour charges in the Consumer Price Index (C) in the past 12-month period ending February. The amount of the travel allowance for 2018-19 is \$24,320. The number of awards to be granted each year is determined on the basis of one award for every 27 officers meeting the service requirement (1:27), and the total number of awards is about 2 530 in 2018-19. Under the current arrangement, if the selected officer is married and will be travelling with his/her spouse, the same travel allowance will be provided for the spouse. As an enhancement to the scheme, we will, from 2019-20 onwards, relax the travelling with spouse requirement in the scheme to allow the awardee (whether married or not) to flexibly nominate a travelling companion and receive the same travel allowance.

Promoting the Employment of Persons with Disabilities

11. The Government has all along been committed to eliminating disabilities and other forms of discrimination in employment. The Government, as an employer, leads by example. We have implemented facilitating measures to assist persons with disabilities to apply for government jobs to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities in this respect. We also enhance our effort in providing students with disabilities with internship opportunities in the Government. In 2018,

we arranged internship for about 100 students with disabilities, doubling the average figure of previous years, in various government departments. The participating students have given positive feedback on the scheme. We will continue to implement the scheme to enable more young persons with disabilities to take up diversified jobs during the internship so that they can equip themselves and strengthen their competitiveness for employment.

Strengthening Support for Non-Ethnic Chinese

12. To increase government job opportunities for non-ethnic Chinese, it is imperative to first address the main difficulty faced by them in applying for government jobs, namely the Chinese language proficiency requirements (“LPRs”). In this connection, CSB completed in February 2018 a comprehensive review on the entry requirements relating to Chinese language proficiency for all the civil service grades, increasing the total number of grades that have lowered/will lower their Chinese LPRs by 22 to 53. We will monitor the recruitment situation of these grades and step up our efforts in promoting suitable civil service job opportunities to non-ethnic Chinese, with a view to encouraging more of them to pursue a career in the Government. To further facilitate access by non-ethnic Chinese to public services they require, CSTDI will provide newly recruited civil servants and front-line staff with more training related to cultural sensitivity and equal opportunities.

13. In addition, to help young non-ethnic Chinese accumulate work experience and enhance their competitiveness for employment, CSB will introduce an internship programme for non-ethnic Chinese university students on a pilot basis in various government departments. The scheme is expected to be launched next summer.

Advice Sought

14. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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