

LCQ19: Roles and responsibilities of Deputy Secretaries of Departments

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (July 13):

Question:

Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the three Deputy Secretaries of Departments (DSoDs) created by the current-term Government, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the specific division of work between, and duties of, the three Secretaries of Departments (SoDs) (i.e. the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Financial Secretary and the Secretary for Justice) and their respective DSoDs;
- (2) as the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration and the Deputy Financial Secretary will assist their respective SoDs in supervising the policy bureaux under them, of the details of the division of work concerned;
- (3) as the Government has indicated that the creation of the posts of DSoDs is for strengthening the Government's top-level capacity to co-ordinate, how the three DSoDs will fulfil their roles of co-ordinating various government departments, including whether they will set up task forces for different inter-departmental tasks; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;
- (4) how the three DSoDs co-ordinate among themselves; and
- (5) as the Chief Executive (CE) pledged in his election manifesto to set targets and key performance indicators for selected tasks within the first 100 days after the new-term Government took office, whether the CE will assign the three DSoDs to carry out selected tasks, and set targets and indicators for such tasks; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government's reply to Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen's question is as follows:

- (1) and (2) The Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) assists the Chief Executive (CE) in supervising the nine policy bureaux under the CS's care and plays a key role in ensuring co-ordination in policy formulation and implementation within the Government. The CS also covers specific priority

areas of the CE's policy agenda, and is responsible for forging a closer and more effective working relationship with the Legislative Council and drawing up the Government's legislative programme. In addition, the CS exercises statutory functions vested in him by law, such as those concerning the handling of appeals and operations of certain public bodies.

Major work of the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration (DCS) can generally be grouped under the following four categories: (a) to assist the CS to oversee and co-ordinate the day-to-day operation of the nine policy bureaux under his purview; (b) to assist the CS to review proposals submitted by policy bureaux; (c) to co-ordinate projects that involve the remits of various departments as directed by the CE and the CS. In this regard, a District Matters Co-ordination Task Force announced by the Government on July 6, 2022, is to be led by the DCS, who will co-ordinate efforts from various bureaux and departments to enhance the overall environmental hygiene and cityscape in Hong Kong; and (d) to share the burden of the CS in attending public events and chairing of meetings.

The primary responsibility of the Financial Secretary (FS) is to assist the CE in overseeing policy formulation and implementation of financial, monetary, economic, trade, development, housing, transport, logistics, innovation and technology as well as industrial matters. The FS exercises control over the Exchange Fund with the assistance of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority. The FS is also in charge of the Government Budget and is responsible under the Public Finance Ordinance for laying before the Legislative Council each year the government's estimates of revenue and expenditure. The FS presents in the annual Budget Speech budgetary proposals and moves the Appropriation Bill, which gives legal effect to the annual expenditure proposals in the Budget.

The Deputy Financial Secretary (DFS) will co-ordinate and take forward the work of six policy bureaux under the purview of the Financial Secretary's Office. Coverage of the work is very wide, including land and housing, transport and logistics, financial and economic development, innovation and technology, industry, etc. The DFS expects that he will, especially at the initial stage of this term of the government, focus more on spatial planning, land supply and construction of housing. He will also participate in the formulation of the Budget for the next financial year. As for other areas, he will share the work as appropriate according to the instructions of the FS and actual circumstances.

The Secretary for Justice (SJ) heads the Department of Justice (DoJ) and is responsible for supervising six Law Officers in the DoJ, covering civil law matters, constitutional and policy affairs, international law, law drafting, criminal prosecutions, prosecution of criminal cases endangering national security and other related legal work. The Deputy Secretary for Justice (DSJ) will share the heavy workload of the SJ. While the related division of work and responsibilities would depend on the actual operational needs of the DoJ, his main responsibilities initially are to assist in co-ordinating and planning legal work in four areas, including: (a) enhancing education on the rule of law, the Constitution of the People's Republic of

China, the Basic Law and national security; (b) promoting legal exchange and collaboration in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; (c) promoting development of LawTech in Hong Kong; and (d) attracting and nurturing legal talents required to complement Hong Kong's development in various professional fields under the national development.

(3) The Government announced on July 6, 2022, the establishment of four Task Forces which are to be led by officials at the rank of Secretary or Deputy Secretary of the Department. The DCS will take the lead in the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force to supervise various bureaux and departments to enhance the overall environmental hygiene and cityscape in Hong Kong and build a clean and livable environment through broad-based community participation. The Task Force convened its first meeting on July 12. The first phase of work for the Task Force is to co-ordinate the launching of a three-month clean-up campaign against hygiene black spots across the territory. The Task Force will harness the combined strengths of government departments and different sectors of the community, especially the network of District Services and Community Care Teams to be set up in the 18 districts. From October this year, the Task Force will review the experience gained in the first phase of work and supervise relevant bureaux and departments to set sustainable action plans, key performance indicators and a system for evaluating the effectiveness of their measures. The Task Force will also commence work on promoting improvement to cityscape, such as beautifying public space, improving street furniture, and enhancing city landscape and community streetscape, etc.

The DFS will chair the inter-departmental Task Force on Public Housing Projects. The Task Force is responsible for overseeing the production of public housing, and its terms of reference include monitoring the timely handover of sites earmarked for construction of public housing projects; exploring measures to expedite their construction and intake; producing and continually updating forecast of new public housing supply; considering and resolving major cross-bureaux or inter-departmental issues affecting the timely completion of public housing projects, as well as considering and formulating measures to increase the supply of public housing. The Task Force convened its first meeting on July 12. As clearly directed by the CE, the Task Force will submit specific proposals to the CE within the first 100 days of the new term of the Government, including putting forward proposals for expediting the construction of public housing, with a view to raising the production and speed of overall public housing supply, making Hong Kong a better place to live and work.

(4) The DCS, DFS and DSJ will assist in handling policy matters under the purview of the CS, FS and SJ respectively, with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.

(5) The CE mentioned at the CE's Question and Answer Session in the Legislative Council on July 6, 2022, that all Directors of Bureaux (DoBs) had been asked to set indicators for selected projects in their respective policy areas so as to monitor the work progress. The DoBs will submit the indicators to the Chief Executive's Office in August.

As aforementioned, the target of the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force as led by the DCS is to co-ordinate the launching of a three-month clean-up campaign starting July in its first phase of work. Then in October this year, the Task Force will supervise the relevant bureaux and departments to set sustainable action plans, key performance indicators and a system for evaluating the effectiveness of their measures as well as commencing to promote improvement to cityscape.

As regards the Task Force on Public Housing Projects chaired by the DFS, as mentioned above, it will, as clearly directed by the CE, submit specific proposals to the CE within the first 100 days of the new term of the Government, including putting forward proposals for expediting the construction of public housing, with a view to raising the production and speed of overall public housing supply, making Hong Kong a better place to live and work.