

Recruitment of staff

The Audit Commission ("Audit") conducted a review of the staff recruitment work of the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") and four bureaux/departments ("B/Ds"), namely the Correctional Services Department ("CSD"), Education Bureau, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

2. The Committee noted the following findings from the Director of Audit's Report:

- whereas the CSB was responsible for setting recruitment policies and recruiting staff for 14 general grades, B/Ds were responsible for the recruitment of staff for the other grades in the civil service. However, the CSB did not have an established mechanism to periodically collect information on recruitment exercises conducted by B/Ds and monitor their completion time. In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, some 20% of the open recruitment exercises conducted by B/Ds took over eight months to complete;
- for 50 open recruitment exercises conducted between 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, email was not used in 43 exercises. 43% of the 258 000 applicants were found not meeting the stated entry requirements;
- due to heavy workload from large-scale recruitment exercises, the CSD took 356 to 714 days to complete 10 small-scale recruitment exercises. It had more recently commenced a comprehensive review of its overall recruitment process;
- there was room for improvement in the open recruitment processes, including vetting applications, shortlisting candidates and holding skill tests/examinations; and
- Workman I and Workman II were two of the controlled grades with open recruitment controlled by the CSB. Due to the reduced pool of candidates and high decline rates, nine in-service recruitment exercises conducted by three B/Ds failed to recruit sufficient officers to fill the vacancies. As at 31 March 2013, these three B/Ds had some 930 Workman I/Workman II vacancies. Such in-service recruitment generally did not reduce civil service vacancies service-wide, but resulted in competition among B/Ds for staff and high staff turnover. The operations of a B/D would also be adversely affected when a large number of its staff were transferred out to other B/Ds.

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3. The Committee did not hold any public hearing on this subject. Instead, it asked for written responses regarding open recruitment of civil servants and recruitment of non-civil service staff. The replies from the **Secretary for the Civil Service, Commissioner of Correctional Services, Secretary for Education, Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene** and **Director of Leisure and Cultural Services** are in *Appendices 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44* respectively.

4. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of the progress made in implementing the various recommendations made by Audit.