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\$300,000 Leung legal bill let-off

By Carmen Cheung

THE Legislative Council select committee on Laurence Leung Ming-yin's forced retirement will not pursue the government on a \$300,000 bill for legal costs, it was revealed yesterday.

The costs concerned action into the disclosure of a crucial Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) report into the former immigration chief.

However, the committee may issue a statement of regret at the initial refusal of Chief Secretary Anson Chan Fang On-sang to reveal the contents of the ICAC Operations Review Committee (ORC) report, and her decision to seek court action.

Chairman Ip Kwok-him said the select committee had decided not to proceed further with the probe into Mr Leung following the disclosure of the ORC report.

Mr Ip said he and the committee had seen the report and come to the conclusion that it did not contain any information relating to the government's decision to force Mr Leung to retire.

"The select committee decides that it is not necessary to pursue further the issue on the disclosure of the ORC report," he said.

Mr Ip said the committee would not ask the Attorney General to pay its legal costs resulting from court proceedings.

"Having regard to the wider public interest the select committee has decided not to pursue the issue of costs.

"If the issue was to be pursued, the Legislative Council and the administration would be wasting public money on arguing who should be responsible for the costs."

Mr Ip said the select committee would complete the drafting of its inquiry report next Wednesday.

The report will be submitted to the whole council on 11 June and debated by legislators on 18 June.

A spokeswoman for Mrs Chan said the government was pleased Mr Ip had come to his conclusion and had reported it to the select committee.

She said: "The Attorney General has already taken action to discontinue the relevant legal proceedings."

However, she said the administration did not see any grounds for the select committee to regret Mrs Chan's instigation of court proceedings.

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