

For discussion on
4 June 2001

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS

CREATION OF ADDITIONAL DIRECTORATE
POSTS IN THE BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT**

INTRODUCTION

The paper informs Members of a proposal we intend to put to the Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee on the creation of additional supernumerary directorate posts in BD and the organization of the Buildings Department (BD).

PROPOSAL

2. To implement the comprehensive strategy for building safety and timely maintenance we intend to propose the creation of the following 13 supernumerary directorate posts for 5 years from 1 October 2001 -

- 1 Director of Buildings (D6) (in a new D6 rank held against one permanent post of Director of Buildings (D5))
- 1 Deputy Director of Buildings (D3)
- 2 Assistant Director of Buildings (D2)
- 4 Chief Building Surveyor (D1)
- 2 Chief Structural Engineer (D1)
- 2 Chief Building Surveyor/Chief Structural Engineer (D1)(bi-discipline posts)
- 1 Principal Executive Officer (D1) (to be offset by the deletion of one permanent post of Chief Executive Officer (MPS 45-49))

3. The BD has on a trial basis reorganized its directorate structure to improve service delivery since July 2000. We intend to seek the approval of the Establishment Sub-Committee for this revised structure and to create further posts on this basis.

ORGANISATION

4. Before July 2000, BD was organized in five divisions as shown in Enclosure 1, each under an Assistant Director with sections headed by Chief Building Surveyors (CBS) or Chief Structural Engineers (CSE).

5. In July 2000, following the completion of a review and extensive consultation with staff associations, the Director of Buildings introduced a new organizational structure on a trial basis for one year as shown at Enclosure 2. Two divisions process proposals for new building developments, two deal with regulatory control of existing buildings and one division provides technical and management support throughout BD. The new arrangement provides for more clearly identifiable points of contact for the customers of BD and improved coordination. We propose that this revised structure should be approved and form the basis on which further posts are created to deal with the implementation of the comprehensive strategy for building safety and timely maintenance.

IMPLEMENTATION OF BUILDING SAFETY INITIATIVES

6. In February 2000 we set up within the Planning and Lands Bureau the Task Force on Building Safety and Preventive Maintenance (the Task Force) to devise a comprehensive strategy for the safety and maintenance problems which plague many private buildings, particularly those over 20 years old. Following extensive consultation on the Task Force's proposals, we presented a comprehensive strategy and implementation plan to deal with these problems to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 23 April 2001. This was followed by a press conference to announce the plan to the public. The plan has been well-received.

7. BD will have the primary responsibility for taking forward many of the proposals in this implementation plan. It has been allocated additional provision of \$191.8 million in 2001-02. It will have responsibility for enhancing financial assistance and professional support for building owners, improving forward planning for building maintenance, increasing the devolution of authority to professionals and contractors and improving community participation and public education on matters relating to building safety and maintenance. The main operational targets for BD, within the next five to seven years, are to remove 150,000 to 300,000 unauthorized building works (UBW), clear all illegal rooftop structures from 4,200 single-staircase buildings and control over 200,000 advertisement signboards.

8. To take forward and achieve these targets and measures will mean very substantial increases in BD's responsibilities and workload for existing buildings over the next five years. It will need to employ about 370 additional non-civil service contract staff, create 88 additional non-directorate supervisory posts and contract out enforcement work relating to unauthorized building works. It will also need to strengthen its directorate structure at all levels to meet the operational and management challenges posed by these commitments. This will entail some further re-organization of directorate-level responsibilities.

Further restructuring

9. The increases in responsibilities, workload and the staff to meet these, mean that it is necessary to divide the work of BD into two branches, each headed by a Deputy Director. A revised structure of the Department over the next five years is at Enclosure 3.

CREATION OF SUPERNUMERARY POSTS

a) 1 Director of Buildings (D6)

10. The large expansion in responsibilities, workload and staffing of

BD over the next five years will place heavy management responsibilities on the Director of Buildings. The Director has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the challenging targets set out in the implementation strategy are met. He will be under intense public scrutiny to deliver this. The extent and complexity of the demands to be placed on the Director will require a high degree of administrative ability and sound political judgement, exceeding that normally undertaken at D5 level. We thus propose to create a supernumerary post of Director of Buildings (D6) (the level of a Group II department), held against the present post of Director of Buildings (D5) (the level of a Group III department).

b) Deputy Director of Buildings (D3)

11. We propose that the existing Deputy Director of Buildings post is retitled as Deputy Director (Building Development & Administration), with responsibility for building development (New Buildings Divisions 1 and 2) and Support Division and departmental administration. His responsibility will include approval of new building developments, structural safety of new buildings, new building initiatives, building site audits, new legislation, human resources and training, IT developments, technical support and departmental administration. The proposed new Deputy Director of Buildings (Building Safety) post will have responsibility for all matters concerning the safety of existing buildings and responsibility for the aspects of implementation plan on building safety and timely maintenance fully under BD. Thus he will oversee removal of UBWs, illegal rooftop structures, structural safety of canopies and signboards, registration of building professionals and contractors, building safety aspects of premises requiring licensing and support for building owners.

c) Assistant Director (D2)

12. We propose to create two new supernumerary posts of Assistant Director of Buildings, each to head a new Existing Buildings Division. The existing two Assistant Directors in this area cannot cope with the existing heavy workload, let alone the increased demands of the implementation plan. The workload from stepped-up action has increased substantially for clearance of UBWs from 404 buildings in

2000 to 900 a year from 2001. Following the creation of these two posts, the existing Assistant Directors will be able to provide prompt responses to district-related work, including inspection of buildings, blitz clearance of UBW, responding to complaints, implementation of the Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme, and enhanced representation on District Management Committees on building management matters.

13. We propose that the two existing Assistant Directors be underpinned by **two additional Chief Professional Officers (D1) (1 CBS, 1 CSE)** each to take charge of a new district to cope with the additional workload as set out in Enclosure 4.

i) Assistant Director (Existing Buildings)3

14. This new post will take responsibility from the two existing Assistant Directors for the sections processing outstanding removal orders; one CSE post from Existing Buildings 1 and one CBS post from Existing Buildings 2 will be so redeployed. In addition, new sections are proposed for action against illegal rooftop structures and dangerous canopies.

15. It is a mammoth task to clear the approximately 12,000 illegal rooftop structures covering 4,500 single-staircase buildings. BD cleared 95 single-staircase buildings in 1999 and 220 in 2000. The target for 2001 and beyond is to clear 700 such buildings a year. We propose that a **supernumerary CBS (D1)**, (CBS (Illegal Rooftop Structures)) heads a new section to tackle this problem.

16. The safety of canopies is a matter of increasing public concern. There are some 11,000 approved canopies, of which 7,000 require further investigation, and an estimated 28,000 unauthorized canopies. To deal with this safety problem promptly we propose that a **supernumerary CSE (D1)**, (CSE (Canopies)), heads a new section tasked to verify the safety of approved canopies and remove unauthorized canopies.

ii) Assistant Director (Existing Buildings)4

17. This new post will supervise five sections headed by a Chief

Professional Officer. In addition, the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme, headed by a Chief Executive Officer, will be under this post. The post will take responsibility for litigation and professional discipline; slope safety (from Existing Buildings Division 1); fire safety (from Existing Buildings Division 2); registration of building professionals and contractors and signboard registration; and contract management and safety of licensed premises.

18. BD anticipates a 10-fold increase in prosecution against building owners over the next 5 years as it clears unspent removal orders and increases its action against UBWs. There may be increases in professional disciplinary cases as well as appeals against Orders. Part of one CBS post in Support Division will be redeployed to the new division for this task.

19. We propose to create **one supernumerary post of CBS/CSE (D1)** (Chief Officer (Registration and Signboards)) to be responsible for the registration of building professionals and contractors and to manage the new task of the registration of signboards. The post will be responsible for the management of the existing registration of 1,190 Authorized Persons, 377 structural engineers and 1,211 contractors and be responsible for establishing the register for minor works contractors, as recommended by the Task Force. We anticipate some 5,000 minor work contractors will be registered. There are 220,000 advertisement signboards attached to or erected on buildings in Hong Kong. This number increases by about 3% a year and surveys indicate that about 10% have been abandoned. The Task Force has recommended that signboards be registered under a self-financing scheme to ensure their structural safety. The scheme is expected to come into operation in 2002, following the enactment of legislation.

20. We propose to create a **supernumerary CBS (D1)** (CBS (Contract Management and Licensed Premises)) post to be responsible for the management of contracts and the safety of licensed premises. The post will administer the wide range of consultancies and work-related contracts, primarily to implement BD's enforcement drive against unauthorized structures over the next five years. These tasks are currently handled by CBS/CSE (Technical Support) in the Support

Division who is fully occupied with his other duties on the computerization of building plans retrieval and other applications of IT to improve BD's services to its customers. In addition, regarding the safety of licensed premises, BD examines some 6,000 applications annually for restaurants, places of public entertainment and schools, etc. We intend to reduce the time taken to process such applications to 14 or 28 days from the existing time of 40 days to meet business expectations in these areas. To achieve this, further non-directorate resources and direction at the Chief Professional level are required.

d) Support Division

21. Within Support Division we propose to create **one supernumerary post of CBS (D1)**, (CBS (Legislation and Audit)), **and one supernumerary post of CBS/CSE (D1)**, (Chief Officer (Building Innovation)). The CBS is to deal with updating the Buildings Ordinance and regulations and providing internal audit of BD's practices to improve efficiency. The review of the Buildings Ordinance and regulations to promote greater flexibility while maintaining safety standards is a major undertaking and will require extensive consultation over the next few years. As regards internal audit, this is currently performed by different sections on an ad hoc basis. We intend to centralize the function to improve the efficiency of both internal audit and the areas audited. For these matters, continuing professional direction at the D1 level is required.

22. The CBS/CSE is to be responsible for formulating policies and working procedures for the processing of building development proposals containing green or innovative features. He will liaise with other departments on the practicability and any necessary incentives to promote widespread adoption. He will consider and develop methods for the environmental assessment methods suitable for buildings in Hong Kong.

23. We propose that the Chief Officer (Technical Support) post be retitled as Chief Officer (Corporate Development) with responsibility in two areas: for maximizing the use of IT within the department to improve information handling and retrieval; and for an expanded programme of training of staff. The latter is vital to achieve the targets

of the implementation plan as there will be almost 300 new recruits at the technical and professional level for whom training will be required.

e) Principal Executive Officer (D1)

24. The Departmental Administration Section is currently headed by the Departmental Secretary (CEO) and is responsible for general administration and human resources management services to the whole department. The enlargement of the department and the need to integrate the 370 non-civil service contract staff of various grades into it will add significantly to the complexity of the work of the Departmental Secretary. In addition, over the next few years he will need to assist the Director in regular reviews of the organisation of the department and its development needs to ensure that resources are deployed in the most effective manner. The level of duties are such that the post should be held by a directorate member of the Executive grade. We propose to create a supernumerary post of Principal Executive Officer, to be offset by the deletion of one permanent post of Chief Executive Officer (MPS 45-49).

CREATION AND REVIEW OF POSTS

25. As most of the targets set by the task force are scheduled to be achieved within five to seven years, we propose to create the 13 supernumerary directorate posts for a period of five years from 1 October 2001. We will review the establishment position in three years' time and annually thereafter, in the light of progress achieved. We will also review the directorate structure of BD again in 2005 with a view to assessing whether any of the posts are required for longer than five years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

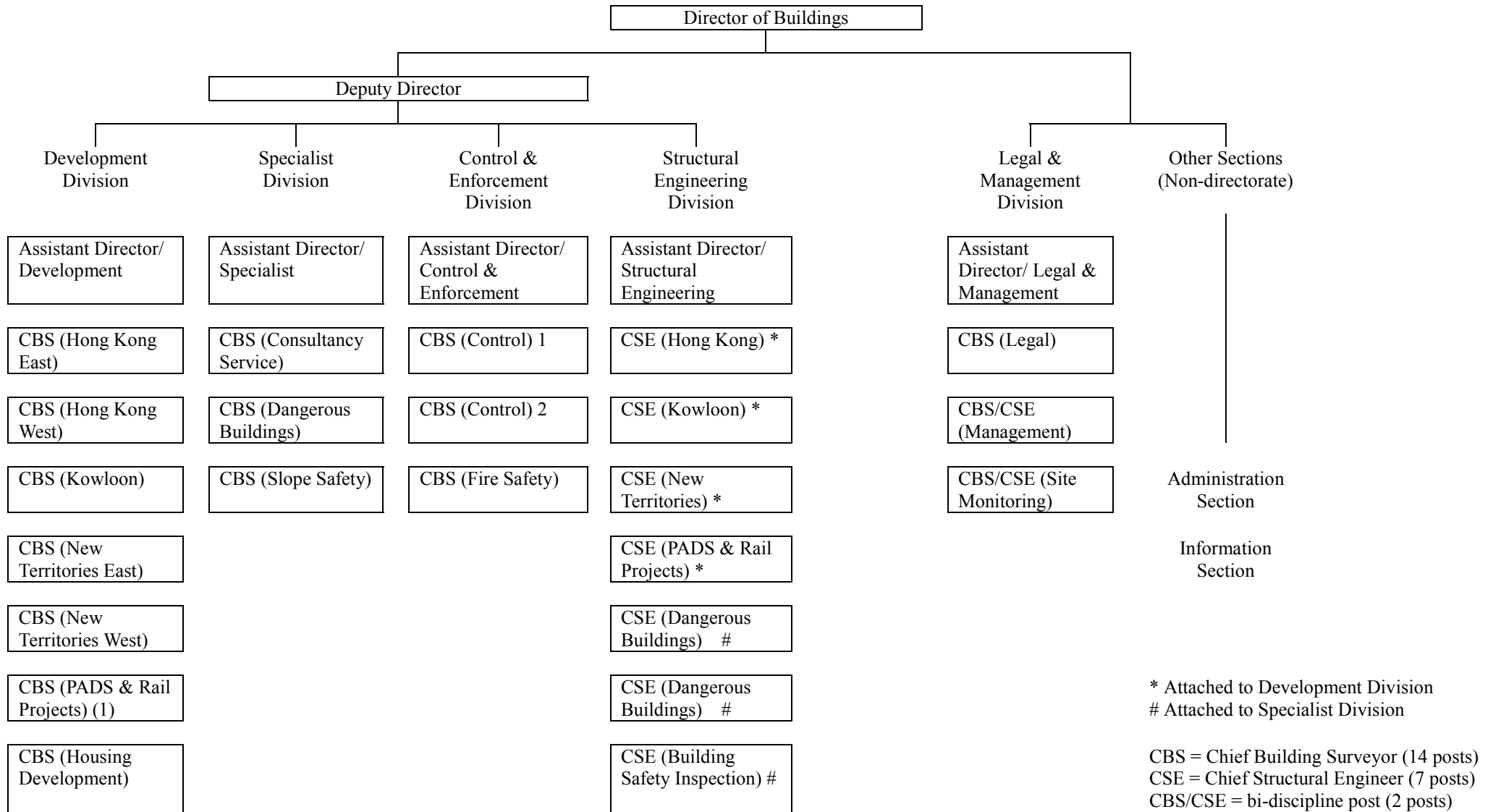
26. The net additional annual cost of the proposals (notional annual salary cost at mid-point) is \$14.5 million. We have included sufficient provision in the Estimates to meet the costs of the proposals.

CONSIDERATION BY ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

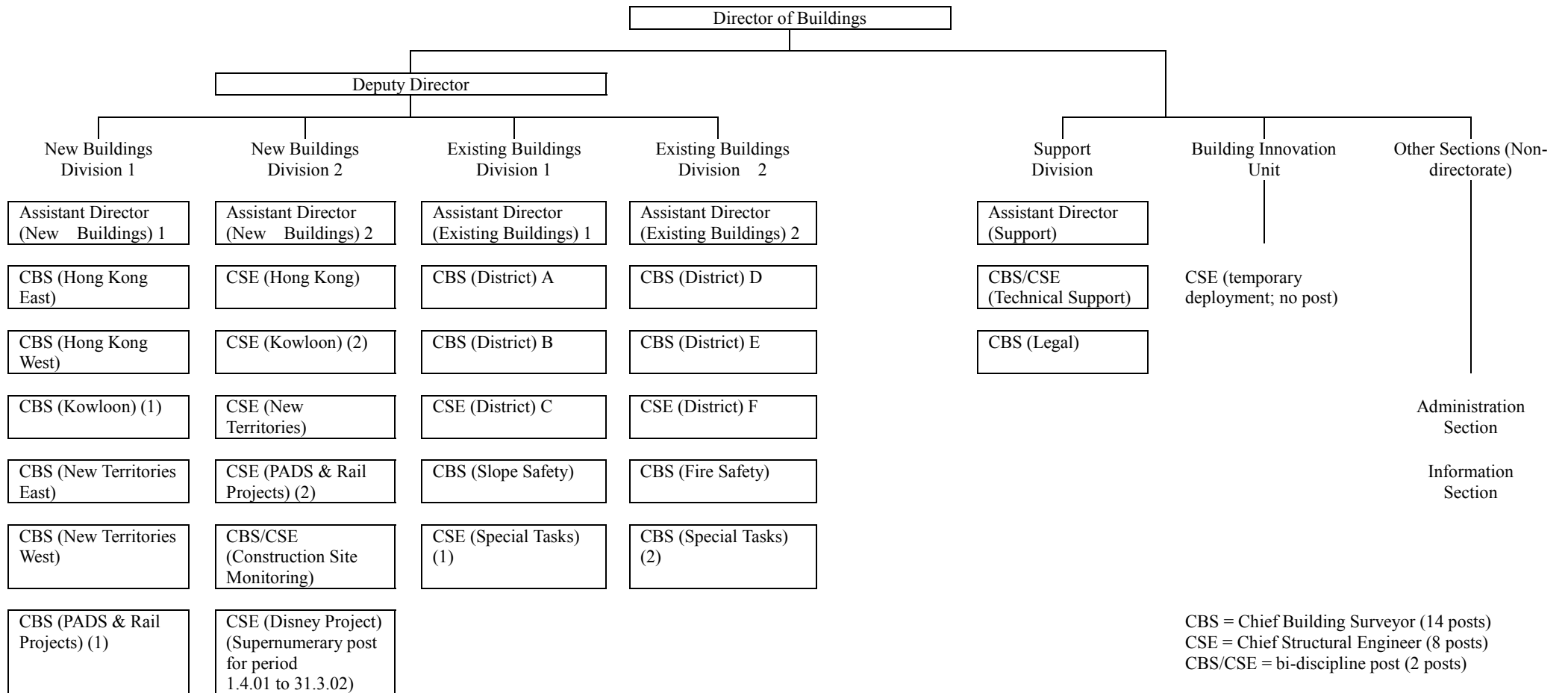
27. We intend to put the above proposals to the meeting of the Establishment Subcommittee of Finance Committee to be held on 13 June 2001.

Planning and Lands Bureau
May 2001

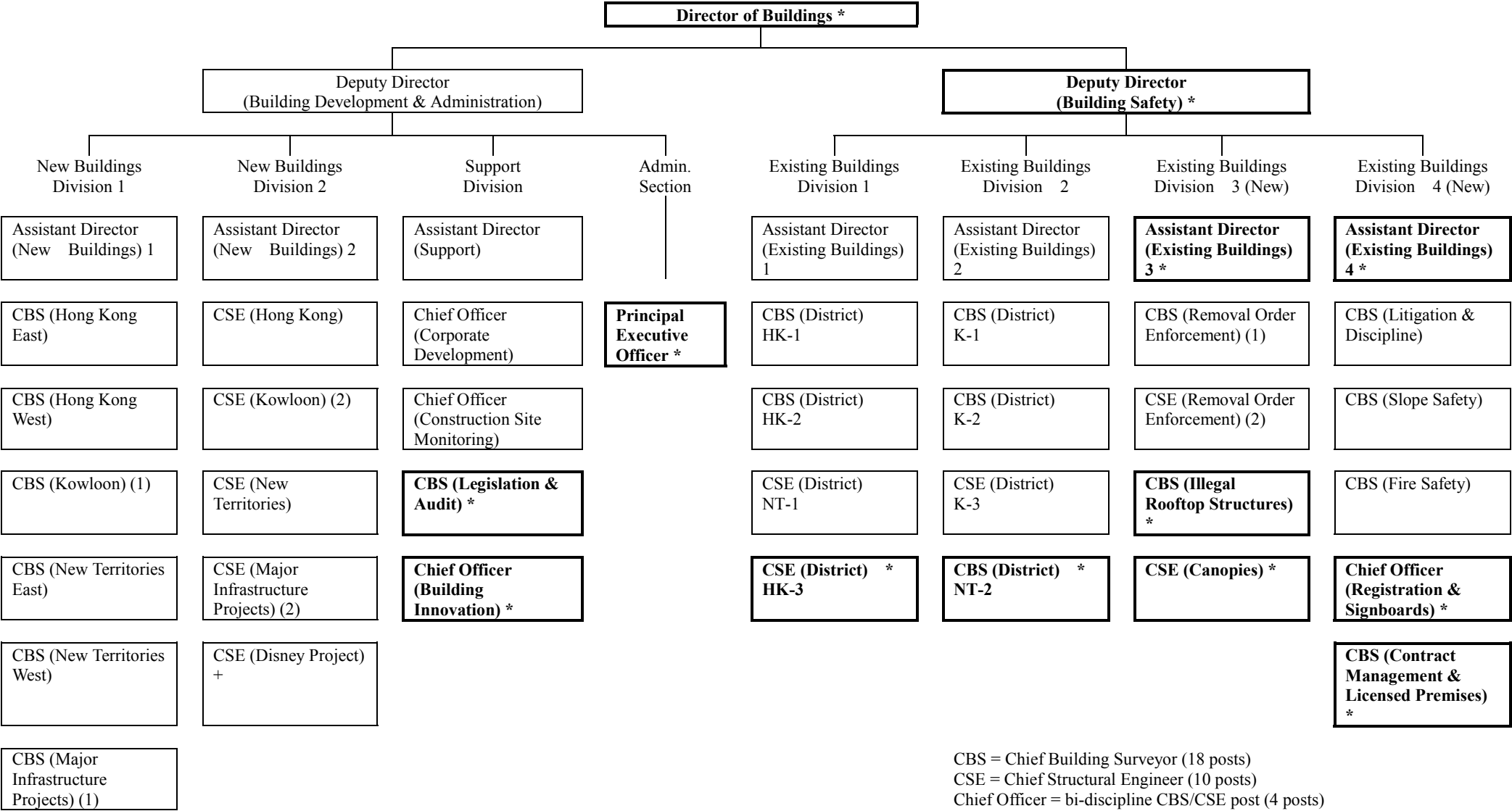
Directorate Structure of the Buildings Department (before July 2000)



Existing Directorate Structure of the Buildings Department (after re-organisation in July 2000)



Proposed Directorate Structure of the Buildings Department



CBS = Chief Building Surveyor (18 posts)
 CSE = Chief Structural Engineer (10 posts)
 Chief Officer = bi-discipline CBS/CSE post (4 posts)

* **Proposed supernumerary posts (13 posts)**
 + Existing supernumerary post

Workload of District Sections of Existing Buildings Divisions 1 & 2

Geographical Distribution

The following distribution of work produces a full and roughly equal workload for the 8 District Section Heads. The Director of Buildings may need to modify the distribution of work in the light of operational circumstances.

| Existing Buildings Division 1 District Section | Districts covered |
|---|---|
| HK-1 | Central & Western, Southern, Islands |
| HK-2 | Wanchai |
| NT-1 | Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Sai Kung, Shatin, Tai Po |
| HK-3 (proposed new Section) | Eastern |
| Existing Buildings Division 2 District Section | |
| K-1 | Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok (South) |
| K-2 | Sham Shui Po, Mong Kok (North) |
| K-3 | Kowloon City |
| NT-2 (proposed new Section) | Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, North |

Output

The following data indicate the estimated output of the District Sections before (in 2001) and after (from 2002) implementation of the task force's recommendations and provision of additional resources.

| Main work activities | Output in 2001 with 6 Sections, <u>excluding</u> work and resources flowing from task force recommendations | Annual output from 2002 with 8 Sections, <u>inclusive</u> of work and resources flowing from task force recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| Buildings targeted under blitz UBW clearance operations | 500 * | 1,000 * |
| Buildings comprehensively repaired under CMBS | 150 | 200 * |
| Programmed inspections of old buildings | 800 | 1,300 |
| UBWs cleared | 12,000 | 20,000 |
| Complaints followed up | 12,700 | 18,100 |
| Works orders issued in owner default cases | 120 | 200 |
| Dangerous or abandoned signboards removed/repared | 700 | 1,200 |

* plus enforcement follow-up on previously targeted buildings

UBW : Unauthorised building works

CMBS : Comprehensive Maintenance of Buildings Scheme