

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON TRANSPORT**

Retention of Chief Engineer/West Rail Post in Highways Department

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out the Administration's proposal to retain the existing supernumerary post of Chief Engineer/West Rail (CE/WR) in the Highways Department (HyD) up to 31 December 2004.

BACKGROUND

2. On 6 December 1996, the Finance Committee (FC) approved vide EC(96-97)46 the creation of a supernumerary post of CE/WR in HyD for a period of five years from 6 December 1996 to handle all matters relating to the West Rail project, subject to review thereafter. Specifically, CE/WR is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the West Rail project, monitoring its programme and progress, overseeing the resolution of all interfacing matters between West Rail and other development projects, and administering the Public Works Programme items on Essential Public Infrastructure Works (EPIW) for West Rail entrusted to the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) for implementation.

NEED FOR RETENTION OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER POST

3. Based on the current programme, we expect that the West Rail project would be substantially completed for commissioning by end 2003. Before the completion of West Rail, CE/WR will continue to oversee the implementation of the project and associated EPIW and monitor their programme and progress. CE/WR will have to vet KCRC's technical proposals and assist in resolving construction interface issues. He will also need to formulate maintenance and operation schedules for the completed works and to work with KCRC and the relevant departments on temporary traffic management schemes. He will also vet gazettal plans and other technical submissions from KCRC to Government.

4. After the completion of West Rail by end 2003, CE/WR will continue to oversee and monitor the programme and progress of the outstanding works of West Rail and associated EPIW within the one-year maintenance period. He will have to finalize with KCRC the project accounts for the EPIW within the 18-month period after the issuance of the substantial completion certificates for the EPIW works. This would involve settlement of all cost apportionment issues, finalization of the final measurements of all the changes to the design as well as agreement on the claims submitted by the contractors for the EPIW works. He will also need to work with KCRC in resolving outstanding maintenance and operation issues with other departments concerned, with a view to finalizing the maintenance and operation schedules for West Rail, the associated EPIW and reprovisioning works. West Rail works and the associated EPIW aside, CE/WR will have to vet KCRC's technical proposals on property developments above or adjacent to West Rail stations which will be implemented in phases after the opening of the railway.

5. According to past experience, contractual claims often come up in the latter part of a project delivery cycle, particularly in finalizing the project accounts. The claim resolution process would involve detailed and in-depth analysis of the circumstances, which is a difficult and delicate exercise. The complexity and sensitivity of any such tasks will call for the involvement of a directorate officer. Apart from claims relating to the EPIW, CE/WR would also need to handle claims relating to West Rail works if they are related to government works. Retention of the CE/WR post will allow any such issues to be tackled by an experienced officer who would be conversant with the relevant procedures and details of the West Rail project and the associated EPIW.

6. Given the mammoth scale of the West Rail works (at \$46.4 billion) and the associated EPIW (at \$3.4 billion), and the complex interface with the infrastructural projects along the West Rail project, it is necessary to retain the CE/WR post up to 12 months after the scheduled completion of the West Rail project in December 2003.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

7. The Director of Highways has reviewed the current directorate structure and manpower resources of the department and concluded that it is impracticable to redeploy directorate staff from other offices in HyD to take up the West Rail project. The reasons are as follows -

- (a) at present, the existing directorate staff of the Railway Development Office (RDO) of HyD are fully engaged in the implementation of the committed projects, the planning of the new railway projects as well as the setting up and management of a computerised railway planning system. They have no spare capacity to take up the West Rail project;
- (b) the staff in the Major Works Project Management Office are fully occupied in taking forward the new major highway projects. It is therefore not feasible for them to be redeployed to undertake the additional railway projects; and
- (c) it is also not feasible to redeploy the directorate officers from the Regional Offices of HyD to the RDO as the Regional Office staff are already fully stretched in implementing the policies and procedures on road maintenance in the territory. They are also heavily involved in undertaking maintenance, roads and highway network improvement works.

PROPOSAL

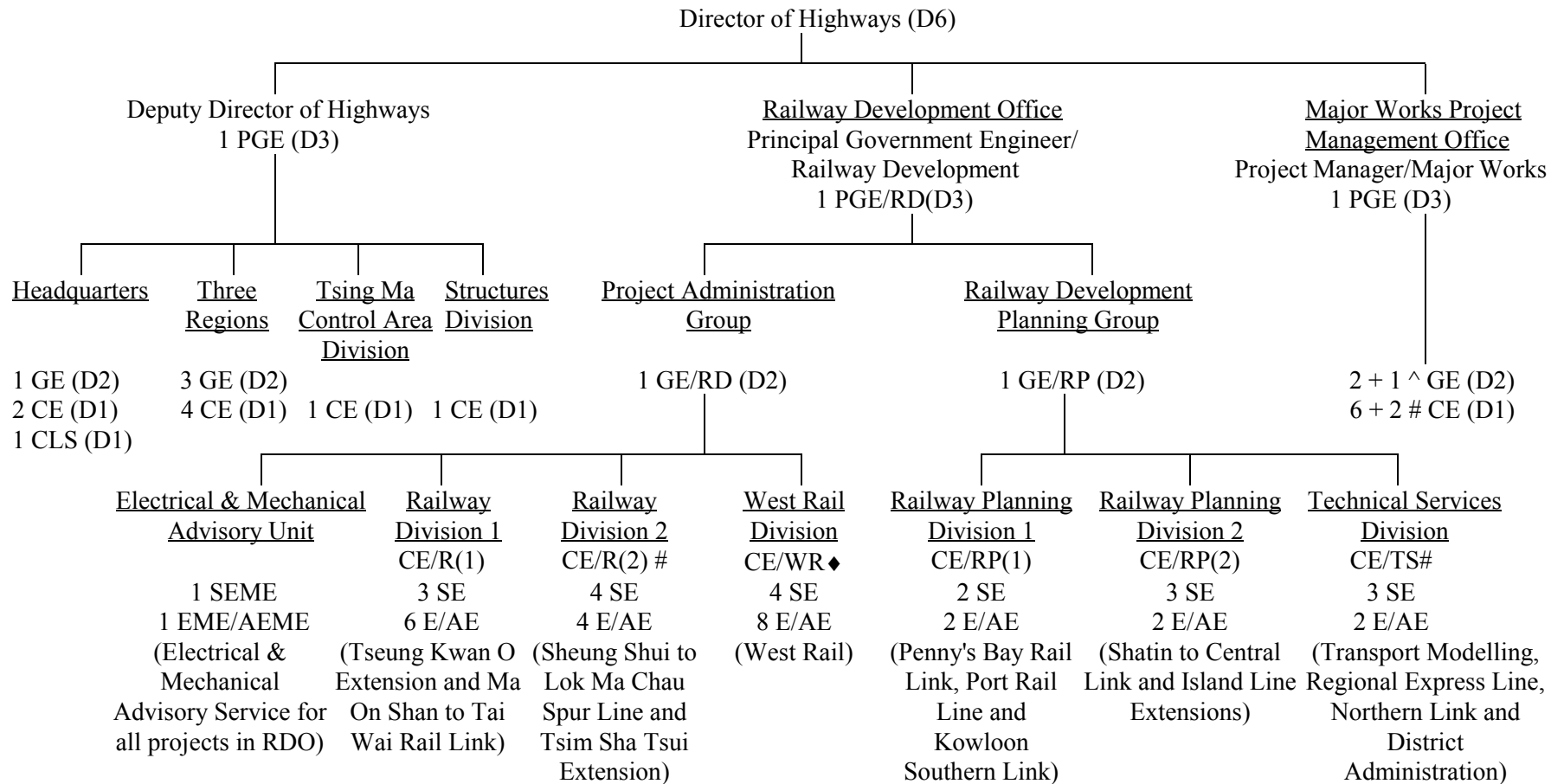
8. Having regard to the foregoing reasons described in paragraphs three to seven above, we propose to retain the CE/WR post up to 31 December 2004. The existing organization chart of the RDO and the job description of the CE/WR post are at Enclosures 1 and 2 respectively.

WAY FORWARD

9. We intend to consult the Establishment Sub-Committee on 21 November 2001 and to seek the approval of the Finance Committee on 7 December 2001 for the retention of the CE/WR post. As the directorate post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, its retention, if approved by the Finance Committee, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

Transport Bureau
October 2001

Existing Organization Chart of Railway Development Office, Highways Department



Legend

- | | | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|
| PGE | - Principal Government Engineer | CLS | - Chief Land Surveyor | ◆ | - Supernumerary CE post to lapse on 6.12.2001 proposed to be retained up to 31.3.2005 |
| GE | - Government Engineer | SEME | - Senior Electrical & Mechanical Engineer | ^ | - Supernumerary GE post to lapse on 12.3.2005 |
| CE | - Chief Engineer | EME/AEME | - Electrical & Mechanical Engineer/Assistant Electrical & Mechanical Engineer | # | - Supernumerary CE posts to lapse on 12.3.2005 |
| SE | - Senior Engineer | | | | |
| E/AE | - Engineer/Assistant Engineer | | | | |

Proposed Job Description of Chief Engineer/West Rail

Post : Chief Engineer/West Rail

Rank : Chief Engineer (D1)

Responsible to : Government Engineer/Railway Development

Main Duties :

1. Overseeing the implementation of the West Rail (WR) from West Kowloon to Tuen Mun;
2. Vetting the technical proposals submitted by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC), and assisting in the negotiation with the operations on the railway scheme;
3. Liaising with KCRC to ensure the adoption of appropriate strategy, procedures and programme in consultancies and contract management for the WR;
4. Monitoring the programme and progress of the WR;
5. Providing technical input to the financial and legal aspects of the WR;
6. Providing professional advice on railway matters related to the WR;
7. Co-ordinating with other government departments to ensure the smooth progress of the WR;
8. Overseeing the resolution of all interfacing matters between the WR and other development projects;
9. Administering route protection of the WR;
10. Administering Public Works Programme items on Essential Public Infrastructure Works (EPIW) for the WR entrusted to KCRC;

/11.

11. Monitoring the expenditure and progress of the EPIW; and
12. Serving on the following committees for the WR -
 - (a) Site Liaison Group (Chairman);
 - (b) Station and Transport Integration Committee (Member);
 - (c) Project Control Task Group (Member);
 - (d) Safety and Security Task Group (Member);
 - (e) Public Relations Task Group (Member); and
 - (f) Service Readiness Task Group (Member).