

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Official Residence and Office for the Chief Executive and his Staff

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the works and budget involved in renovating Government House (GH) as the official residence and the office for the Chief Executive (CE) and his staff.

CE's Official Residence

2. In June 2005, the Independent Commission on Remuneration Package and Post-office Arrangements for the CE of the HKSAR recommended that the Administration should identify a suitable location as a permanent official residence for the future CEs. The Administration has no plan to build a new residence for the CE, and it would be very difficult to identify a site, more strategically located than GH, for accommodating the CE's residence and his office. The additional costs involved would be another disincentive to rebuild GH. For all practical purposes, the present GH at Upper Albert Road remains the only suitable and practical option for the purpose.

3. The CE has since announced his decision to move into GH after its renovation. For operational efficiency, his private office and all essential staff of the CE's Office will be accommodated within the GH compound.

4. At the Constitutional Affairs (CA) Panel meeting on 20 June 2005, Members requested information on the renovation of GH as the official residence for CE. This Information Note is accordingly prepared. In addition to informing Members of the works and budget involved in renovating GH as the official residence for CE, information on the works and budget for renovating the office areas and on other overdue refurbishment works is also provided.

Scope of works

5. The whole project includes:
- (a) Renovation works for the residence area on the first floor, including ventilation, carpeting, draperies, built-in furniture, sanitary fittings, and other alterations to meet current security and safety requirements;
 - (b) Renovation works for the office areas on ground floor and basement, including office partitioning and sound-proofing provisions, carpeting, improved electrical, electronic, audio

visual and access control installations, and other alterations to meet current security and safety requirements;

- (c) Conversion of certain staff quarters and barracks into office premises for accommodating essential staff of the CE's Office; and
- (d) Provision of trunking for IT enhancement and telephone system, and ancillary landscaping in the garden.

Justification

6. GH has not been used as the official residence for the CE for eight years. The last major renovation for the residence was in 1993, while the office area has not been renovated since 1992. We need to improve the existing building facilities and furnishing in order to provide a respectable and presentable environment for use as an official residence and an office for the CE and his staff, and meet current office IT and communication standards as well as up-to-date security and safety requirements. The CE has instructed that the structure, layout and partitioning of the building should be preserved as much as possible in order to retain the historic character of GH and to reduce the costs of renovation required. Much of the works planned has arisen because of disrepair and lack of maintenance that has occurred on the upper floor over the past eight years, and the modern security works required in order

to allow official business to be conducted there in the midst of intensive urban development around GH.

Financial implication

7. We have included an item under the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRP) block allocations Subhead 3101GX *Minor Building Works for items in Category D of the Public Works Programme* at an estimated cost of \$7.3 million for renovating GH as the official residence and offices for the CE and his staff. A breakdown of the estimate is as follows:

	\$'000
(a) Building works	
(i) Residence floor	1,900
(ii) Office areas on ground floor and basement	880
(iii) Conversion of staff quarters into offices	600
(iv) Miscellaneous works at external areas	300
Sub-total	3,680
(b) Building services	2,920
- Electrical, electronic, audio visual and access control installations, and underground cabling works	
(c) Contingency (10%)	<u>700</u>
Total	<u><u>7,300</u></u>

8. Moreover, we will enhance or replace the existing primitive local area telecommunications network at GH in order to meet the contemporary user requirements and provide higher service level with better security protection. The Government Chief Information Officer has included the IT enhancement for GH under the CWRP Computerization Block Vote at an estimated cost of \$2.2 million.

9. The additional recurrent expenditure arising from the works set out in paragraphs 7 and 8 above will be absorbed by the CE's Office.

Implementation plan

10. The renovation commenced in July 2005. The tentative target completion date is around November 2005 with move-in to be arranged thereafter. GH will be temporarily closed for renovation works, and events such as Open Day will be suspended for the remainder of 2005.

11. Also during this period, to make full use of this rare opportunity when GH is closed for renovation, the Architectural Services Department has decided to carry out overdue refurbishment works for the normal building maintenance of GH. Such works are required for up-keeping GH, independent of whether CE resides at GH or houses his private office at GH. These works would have been completed earlier if we had had an opportune time to carry them out in the past. If we do

not make use of this opportunity, the works would have to be conducted in phases at higher costs. These works include, for instance, replacing the malfunctioning components of the boundary security system, renewing the end-of-service-life air conditioning installations, as well as repairing and refurbishing parts of the interior flooring, wall, ceiling and fixed cabinets. The cost of such refurbishment works is \$5 million and will be funded under the CWRP block allocations Subhead 3004GX *Refurbishment of Government Buildings for items in Category D of the Public Works Programme.*

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Chief Executive's Office

August 2005