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Panel on Security

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 3 January 2017**

**Construction and provision of departmental quarters for
disciplined services departments**

Purpose

This paper summarizes past discussions of the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on issues relating to the construction and provision of departmental quarters ("DQ") for disciplined services departments ("DSDs").

Background

2. According to the Administration, it is the Government's policy to provide quarters for eligible civil servants as a type of housing benefits or for operational needs. DQs are provided, subject to the availability of resources, for married officers of the rank and file, local married officers in the rank of inspectors and superintendents of the Hong Kong Police Force and comparable ranks in the Correctional Services Department, the Customs and Excise Department, the Fire Services Department, the Government Flying Service, the Immigration Department and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The policy objective on the provision of DQs is to maintain morale in these DSDs.

Deliberations of the Panel

3. The Panel had been briefed on the funding proposals for construction of DQs at a number of meetings. In general, members expressed support for the proposals and their major views and concerns are summarized below.

Location and design of DQs

4. Noting that the construction sites for new DQs were located at remote areas instead of proximity to the workplaces of DSDs as in the past, some members raised concern as to whether the new DQs would be well received by disciplined services staff. The Administration explained that DQs might be built at locations in the vicinity of the workplace or at a site identified by the Planning Department. In general, there were two ways to identify a lot for the construction of DQs, i.e. a DSD to identify a suitable lot and seek policy support from the Security Bureau ("SB"), or alternatively, the Planning Department to inform SB of the availability of a suitable lot and SB to liaise with the relevant DSD after considering the percentage of shortfall in DQs among DSDs.

5. Some members were concerned about the inadequacy of car parking spaces at new DQs and sought information on the basis for determining the number of parking spaces. According to the Administration, the number of car parking spaces were determined in accordance with the provision standards in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and calculated on the basis of the number of DQ units to be constructed and other adjustment factors.

6. Some members also enquired about the environmental-friendly and energy-saving measures for the new DQs. The Administration advised that DQs would adopt green and sustainable building features, such as the provision of green roofs. In addition, renewable energy technology would be applied and energy efficient features would be incorporated into the lighting systems, lifts, air conditioning systems and power supply systems.

Policies governing allocation of DQs

7. Regarding the allocation of DQ units, members were advised that all DSDs had their own policies which had been accepted by their respective staff members. In general, a scoring system would be adopted in allocating DQs, which took into account the staff member's rank and salary, seniority, household size, etc. Staff members with different pay points would be eligible to apply for units for the corresponding grades and priority would be accorded in accordance with the score. The Administration further advised that the rent of DQ units, which generally fell within the range of 5% to 7.5% of the staff's monthly salary, would be determined based on the rank of the staff and the size of the unit.

8. Some members sought clarification as to whether housing allowance would be provided to those eligible staff while awaiting DQ allocation. The Administration explained that disciplined services staff would either receive housing allowance (normally for 10 years) for buying their own flats or be allocated with DQs, subject to the option of the housing benefits they had taken.

Disciplined services staff on the waiting list of DQs would not be entitled to receive housing allowance so as to avoid enjoyment of double benefits.

Shortfall of DQs

9. Members were advised that the average waiting time of staff of DSDs for DQ allocation was about four years. Some members called for the construction of more DQ units to cope with the increased demand arising from a possible increase in the number of disciplined services staff. According to the Administration, it had been stated in the Chief Executive's 2014 Policy Address that the construction of DQs for the disciplined services would be expedited. The relevant government departments were collaborating to expedite the progress of eight construction projects with a view to providing over 2 200 quarters to six disciplined services by 2020.

10. In response to some members' suggestion of constructing more units and maximizing the plot ratio in the construction projects in order to shorten the waiting time of DQ allocation, the Administration assured members that the land use and plot ratio had already been fully utilized. Members also noted that some DSDs would continue to explore with the Government Property Agency the feasibility of identifying more DQ units vacated by other government departments.

11. Some members expressed the view that public rental housing should be provided to DSD staff eligible for DQs so as to alleviate the demand for DQs. According to the Administration, DSD staff who were living in DQs and would be retiring within 10 years were eligible for the Civil Service Public Housing Quota Scheme. Alternatively, eligible DSD staff could also apply for public rental housing in the capacity of a Hong Kong resident.

12. The Administration will brief the Panel on the proposal to redevelop the Junior Police Officers Married Quarters at Fan Garden, Fanling at the meeting on 3 January 2017.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Relevant papers on the construction and provision of departmental quarters for disciplined services departments

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| Panel on Security | 6.6.2006 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 7.4.2009 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 5.5.2009 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 3.4.2012 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 18.3.2014 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 3.3.2015 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 2.6.2015 | Agenda Minutes |
| Panel on Security | 3.5.2016 | Agenda Minutes |