

**For discussion
on 8 December 1999**

EC(1999-2000)25

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 186 - TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT Subhead 001 Salaries

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the retention of the following supernumerary post in the Transport Department for a period of six months with effect from 1 January 2000 -

1 Chief Engineer
(D1) (\$98,250 - \$104,250)

PROBLEM

The Commissioner for Transport (C for T) needs continual dedicated directorate support to complete the outstanding tasks associated with the Feasibility Study on Electronic Road Pricing (the Study), to examine the recommendations of the Study and to formulate a strategy to take forward the recommendations. The existing supernumerary Chief Engineer/Electronic Road Pricing (CE/ERP) (D1) post for handling these duties will lapse on 1 January 2000.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to retain the CE/ERP post for a period of six months up to 30 June 2000.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

3. The Study examines the need for and the feasibility of implementing ERP in Hong Kong. It started in March 1997 and was originally scheduled for completion in early 1999. In view of the changes in Hong Kong on the social, political and economic fronts during the past two years and the uncertainty of future development, particularly in respect of the growth of private vehicle and goods vehicle fleets, C for T decided in March 1999 that the Study should cover more scenarios. These scenarios should be based on different assumptions about the growth in population, Gross Domestic Product and cross-boundary traffic. As a result, the Study has been lengthened and completion is now expected in January 2000.

4. By now, a large part of the Study has been completed. The major outstanding task is to examine two technology options¹ for the ERP system field-tested by contractors appointed by the Transport Department (TD). CE/ERP is now critically assessing the applicability of the options to Hong Kong, taking into account various factors including cost, ease of installation, flexibility in adapting to changes in requirements, potential use in other Intelligent Transport Systems and other technical aspects. Such an examination is complex and requires input of an officer at Directorate level, particularly to resolve satisfactorily the important issues identified during the tests and to decide whether additional tests are required if ERP is to go ahead. There are other outstanding tasks associated with the Study such as assessment of the environmental impact of ERP, which also requires the attention of a Directorate officer.

5. Upon completion of the Study, we shall need to consider the way forward in light of the findings and recommendations, and the responses from all concerned parties. We shall have to conduct consultation, co-ordinate inputs from relevant policy bureaux, Government departments and other organisations, consolidate comments received and respond to queries and suggestions. As it is anticipated that the ERP issue will generate substantial interest and extensive discussion, an officer at Directorate level with expertise in traffic engineering is essential for handling these tasks. He must be knowledgeable about the study processes, elaborate transport modelling techniques, and advanced transport telematics and computer technology for automatic vehicle detection and identification. He must also be conversant with the advantages and disadvantages of different traffic restraint measures and the arguments for and against electronic road pricing in order to help steer the way forward.

/6.

¹ The two options are the Vehicle Positioning System and the Dedicated Short Range Communications. The latter is currently being adopted in Singapore.

6. C for T has reviewed the staffing situation and the workload of Directorate officers in TD. He has concluded that the continual support of CE/ERP is required as no other Directorate officers have the capacity to absorb the above responsibilities. We therefore propose to retain the supernumerary CE/ERP post for six months up to 30 June 2000 to see through the completion of the Study and to steer the way forward. We will review the continual need for the post at the end of June 2000. Should there be changes in the way forward for ERP, we will review the post for earlier deletion.

7. The job description of the CE/ERP post and the organisation chart of TD are at Enclosures 1 and 2 respectively.

Encls.1&2

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. The additional notional annual salary cost of this proposal at mid-point is \$1,213,200. The full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-costs, is \$2,119,008. We have included sufficient provision in the 1999-2000 Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal. There are no other additional financial or staffing implications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9. On 7 June 1996, Finance Committee approved a commitment of \$90 million for engaging consultants to conduct a feasibility study on ERP. The study includes developing a transport model to evaluate the effectiveness of ERP in reducing traffic congestion; formulating options for pricing strategies; examining the impact of the strategies; recommending measures to enhance potential benefits and mitigate possible adverse effects; investigating the current state of technology for vehicle detection and identification, toll debiting and system enforcement; shortlisting preferred technology options and conducting field trials to assess their suitability and reliability; and preparing a conceptual design for the ERP system. Consultants were commissioned in March 1997 to assist TD in conducting the Study and two contracts were awarded in May 1998 to carry out field tests on two selected technology options for the ERP system.

10. On 19 July 1996, Finance Committee approved the creation of one supernumerary CE/ERP (D1) post for the period up to 31 December 1999 to head the ERP Division in TD to manage and steer the Feasibility Study on ERP.

/CIVIL

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

11. The Administration has considered carefully other alternatives including redeployment bearing in mind the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. We are satisfied that the proposal contained in this paper is functionally justified. The Civil Service Bureau considers the grading, ranking and duration of the proposed post appropriate, having regard to the level of responsibility and professional input required.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

12. As the post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, we will report its retention, if approved, to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedures.

Transport Bureau
November 1999

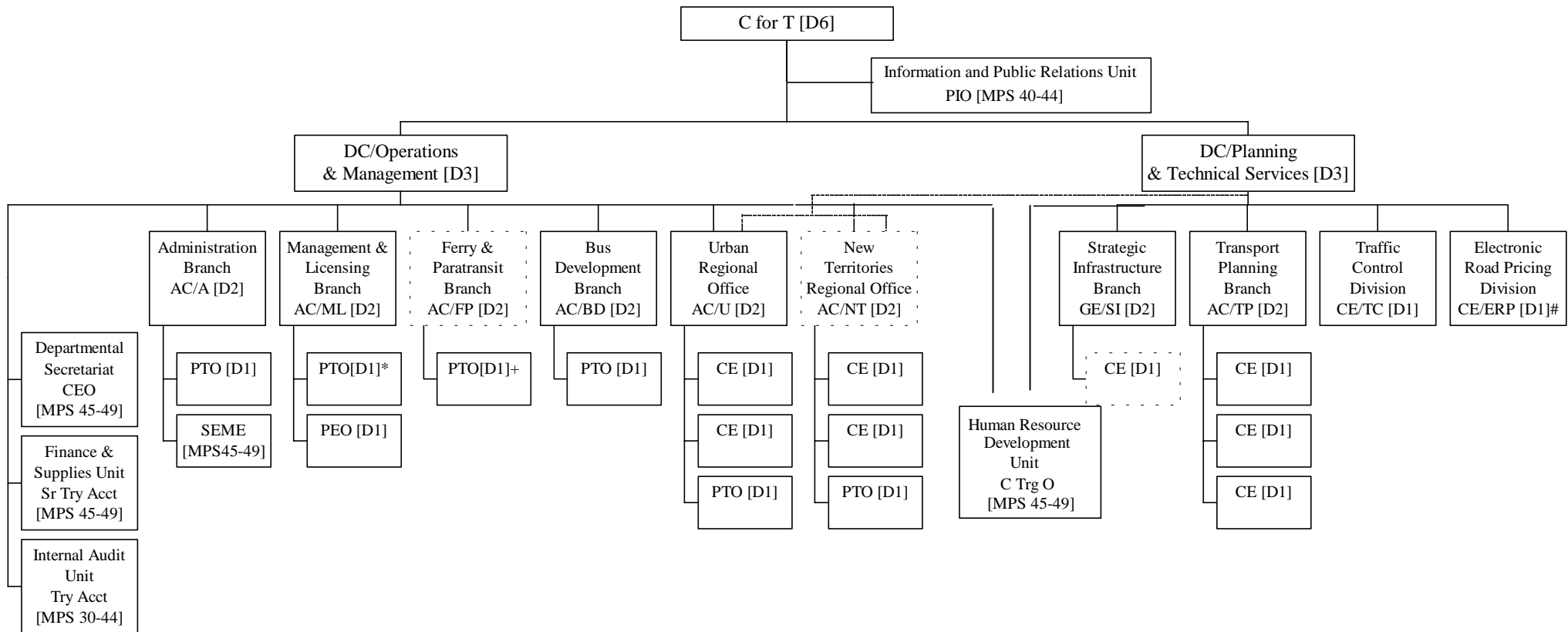
Transport Department
Job Description of Chief Engineer/Electronic Road Pricing

Rank : Chief Engineer (D1)
Office : Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) Division
Responsible to : Deputy Commissioner for Transport/ Planning and
Technical Services (D3)

Main Duties and Responsibilities -

1. Liaise with the consultants and contractors to critically examine whether the two advanced ERP technology options are suitable for application in Hong Kong.
2. Monitor and reassess the need for ERP and conduct additional testing of ERP technology options if necessary.
3. Consolidate the findings and recommendations of the ERP Study.
4. Conduct any necessary consultation on the ERP Study and consolidate the comments received.
5. Co-ordinate the input of relevant policy bureaux, relevant Government departments and other organisations on matters related to the ERP Study and respond to queries and suggestions from various concerned parties.
6. Formulate and undertake any follow up action on ERP.
7. Finalise the account for the ERP consultancy study and field test contracts.
8. Administer and direct the work of the ERP Division.

Organization Chart of Transport Department



Legend

C for T	Commissioner for Transport	Sr Try Acct	Senior Treasury Accountant
DC	Deputy Commissioner for Transport	Try Acct	Treasury Accountant
AC	Assistant Commissioner for Transport	SEME	Senior Electrical & Mechanical Engineer
PTO	Principal Transport Officer	C Trg O	Chief Training Officer
CE	Chief Engineer	PIO	Principal Information Officer
PEO	Principal Executive Officer	GE	Government Engineer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer		

* Supernumerary PTO post to lapse on 6.3.2000.

+ Supernumerary PTO post to lapse on 23.3.2000.

Proposed supernumerary CE/ERP post to be retained for 6 months w.e.f. 1.1.2000.