

**For discussion
on 23 February 2000**

EC(1999-2000)41

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 70 - IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT Subhead 001 Salaries

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the retention of the following supernumerary post in the Immigration Department for one year with effect from 19 April 2000 -

1 Deputy Director of Immigration
(GDS(C)3) (\$127,900 - \$135,550)

PROBLEM

The Director of Immigration (D of Imm) requires an officer of Deputy Director (DD) (GDS(C)3) level to continue to steer and monitor a feasibility study on introducing a new identity card (ID Card) and its new supporting computer system, and to start the related planning and preparatory work. The present supernumerary DD post created under delegated power for the purpose will lapse on 19 April 2000.

PROPOSAL

2. The D of Imm, with the support of the Secretary for Security, proposes to retain the existing supernumerary DD post for one year from 19 April 2000 to 18 April 2001 to continue to steer and monitor the feasibility study, and to lead the ensuing planning and preparatory work.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

The existing ID Card

3. The existing ID Card was introduced in July 1987, and the computer system supporting the issue of ID Cards [i.e. the Registration of Persons (ROP) system] was installed in 1982. With the passage of time, the design of the current ID Card as well as the ROP system have become aged and outdated. With the advance of technology, the existing ID Cards are no longer as secure and forgery-proof as they were ten years ago. The use of counterfeit or unlawfully obtained ID Cards has been detected from time to time. This calls for a detailed study to assess the opportunities in strengthening the security features of the ID Card and replacing the ROP system.

Feasibility study on the new ID Card system

4. Meanwhile, the overall information technology system of the Immigration Department (ImmD) is becoming obsolete, necessitating a comprehensive review of the Department's information systems strategy. As reported in the 1999 Policy Address, ImmD commissioned a consultancy study in May 1999 to review its computer systems and to formulate a strategy for optimising the use of information technology to meet the operational needs of the Department, such as the use of smart cards storing biometric identification data and the issue of electronic visas. In the course of the review, the consultant alerted ImmD that the existing ROP system will reach the end of its life expectancy by 2002 and must be replaced.

5. On the recommendation of the consultant, D of Imm commissioned a separate feasibility study in November 1999 to examine and recommend options for the introduction of a new ID Card and a new ROP system. The objectives of the feasibility study are to identify the most cost-effective means of implementing a state-of-the-art, secure Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) ID Card and its supporting system with a view to delivering an efficient and customer-focused service.

6. Given the complexity and importance of the project, D of Imm considers it necessary to have a dedicated officer at sufficiently senior level to steer and monitor the feasibility study. In leading the study, this officer has to give directives to and monitor the performance of the study consultants.

/Moreover

Moreover, he has to deal with directorate officers in the policy bureaux as well as counterpart departments including the Department of Justice, Information Technology Services Department and Hong Kong Police Force. He also has to liaise with senior officials of Mainland and Macau to ensure that existing arrangements on travel to these two places will not be interrupted by the introduction of the new ID Card. In fact, having regard to the complexity and importance, the last ID Card replacement exercise launched in 1983 was also led by a DD. In view of the above, D of Imm created under delegated authority a supernumerary DD post, designated as Deputy Director (Special Assignment) [DD(SA)], for six months with effect from 19 October 1999 to oversee and manage the feasibility study.

7. Since the creation of the DD(SA) post, the incumbent has been playing a pivotal role in steering the study. For instance, he chairs a project steering committee to give overall directions on how the feasibility study should proceed. He also chairs an inter-departmental working group to plan and coordinate action to pave way for the possible launch of the new system and the Region-wide ID Card replacement exercise. In addition to his role as the Project Director, he also undertakes extensive liaison work within ImmD and with outside agencies and vendors to canvass their views on the design and functions of the new ID Card and related matters. Since the design of the new ID Card will have significant and wide ranging impact on ImmD's future operations, such liaison work is of paramount importance to the success of the project. In discharging his duties, DD(SA) is supported by a team of 12 members redeployed from within ImmD. The composition of this ad hoc team is set out at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

8. Based on the present progress of the feasibility study, we expect that the consultant's recommendations on the business and technical options will be available by March 2000. After that, the consultant will undertake an in-depth analysis of the costs and benefits of the preferred options in April and May 2000 which will be the final stage of the feasibility study. The project steering committee led by DD(SA) will then make an independent assessment of these recommendations to enable the Administration to deliberate on the options and select the best one for implementation.

Need to retain the supernumerary DD(SA) post

9. D of Imm anticipates that a policy decision on whether and how to proceed with the implementation of the ID Card project will need to be made in the second half of 2000. In view of the scale and complexity of the project and

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the tight time-frame for the ID Card replacement exercise (as the existing ROP system will reach its life expectancy by 2002), it is essential that the necessary planning and preparatory work should start immediately upon completion of the feasibility study. Such work includes the acquisition of funds for implementation, preparation of detailed tender documents and identification of the most suitable information technology services supplier. The existing supernumerary DD(SA), who is charged with the responsibility to oversee the feasibility study of the project, is best placed and would have the necessary knowledge and experience to take the project forward to the planning and preparatory phase. These processes are expected to be completed by April 2001. In the meantime, there is also a need to start planning for the Region-wide ID Card replacement exercise and drafting the physical design of the new ID Card in conjunction with expert departments.

10. The introduction of a new form of ID Card is a sensitive, complex and mammoth project involving every member of the community. The magnitude and complexity of the upcoming HKSAR ID Card project will be greater than the last one in 1983 which was also led by a DD. The overall command of this project should therefore be assumed by an officer of no less seniority. However, the existing supernumerary DD(SA) post, which was created on 19 October 1999 under delegated authority, is due to lapse on 19 April 2000. Having reviewed the progress of the feasibility study and the ensuing policy approval, funding acquisition and other planning and preparatory processes, D of Imm considers that there is a functional need to retain the DD(SA) post for one year until 18 April 2001. A review will be conducted in early 2001 on the need for further retention of the post having regard to the progress of the project at that time and the complexity of the remaining work.

11. At present, ImmD has only one permanent DD post, designated as DD(Administration and Operations). The incumbent commands six Branches, each headed by an Assistant Director of Immigration (GDS(C)2), namely, Administration and Planning Branch, Control Branch, Information Systems Branch, Enforcement and Liaison Branch, Personal Documentation Branch, and Visa and Policies Branch. DD(Administration and Operations) is already fully engaged in managing and directing all aspects of the Department's operations. He therefore has no capacity to take on the additional heavy workload generated by the new ID Card project which will require the full and undivided attention of an officer of the same rank.

12. The organisation chart of ImmD and the job description for the DD(SA) post are at Enclosures 2 and 3 respectively.

/FINANCIAL

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The additional notional annual salary cost of this proposal at MID-POINT is \$1,580,400. The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-costs, is \$2,291,000. We have included the necessary provision in the 2000-01 draft Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal.

14. This proposal has no direct consequences on the non-directorate establishment of ImmD.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

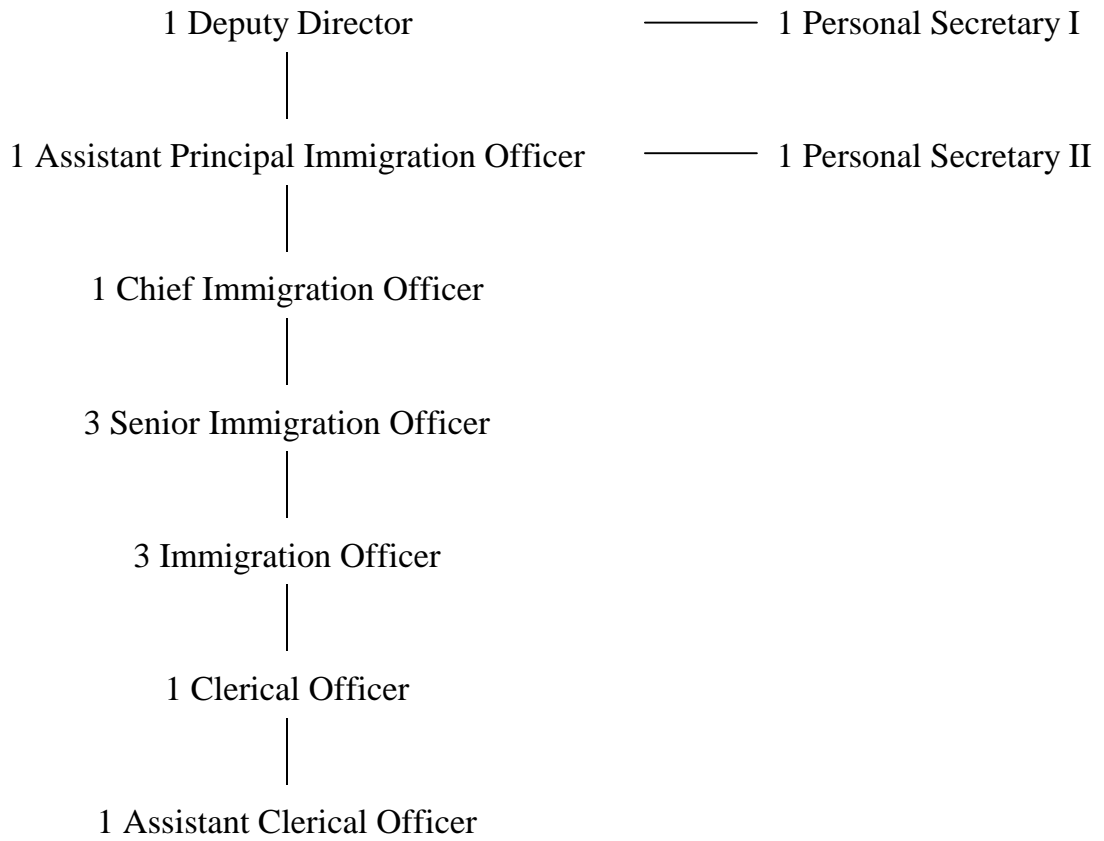
15. The Administration has considered carefully other alternatives including redeployment bearing in mind the need for greater efficiency and effectiveness under the Enhanced Productivity Programme. We are satisfied that the proposal contained in this paper is functionally justified. The Civil Service 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 DISCIPLINED SERVICES SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

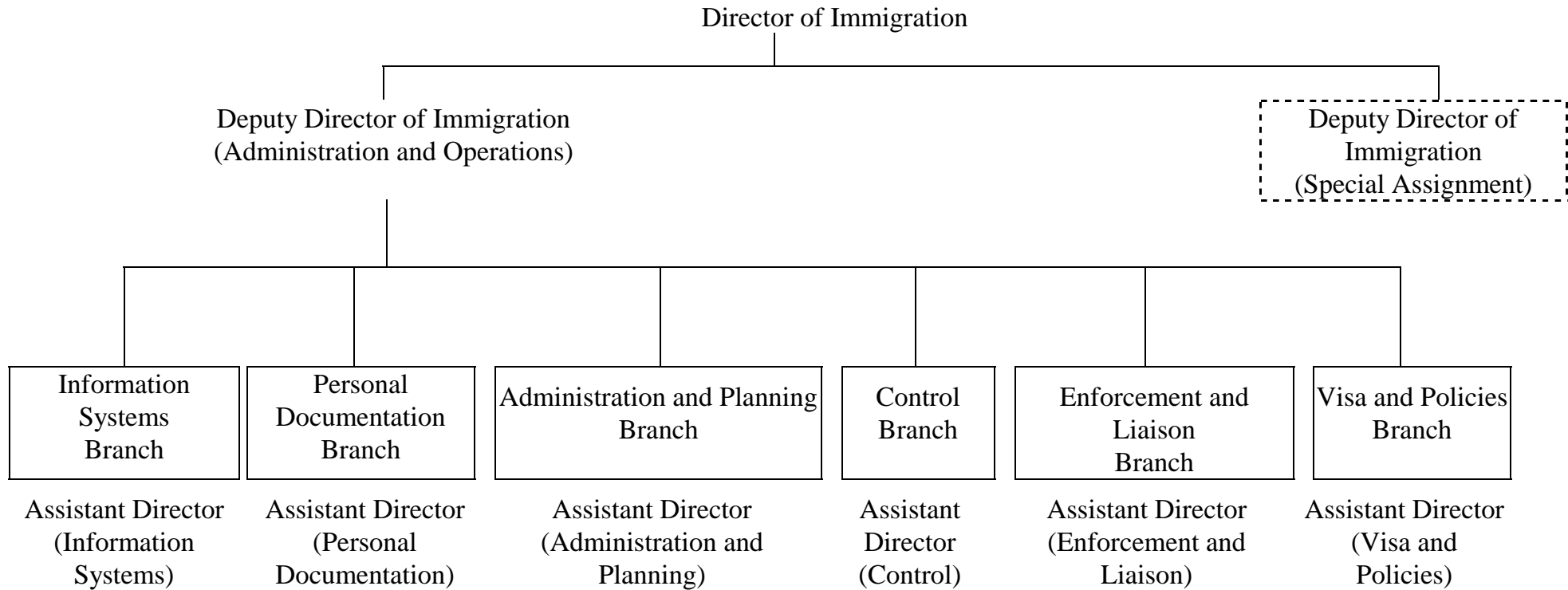
16. As the DD(SA) post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, we will report its retention, if approved, to the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

Security Bureau
February 2000

**Immigration Department
Composition of Special Assignment Project Team**



Organisation Chart of Immigration Department



 Supernumerary post proposed to be retained

Job Description of Deputy Director (Special Assignment)

As head of the HKSAR ID card project, Deputy Director (Special Assignment) will be responsible for planning, directing and organising all the related activities, including but not limited to the following -

- (a) as chairman of a project steering committee to oversee and manage the feasibility study and the implementation of the recommendations from the consultant;
- (b) as head of an inter-departmental working group to discuss and resolve major issues relating to the design of the new ID Card and matters arising from a Region-wide ID Card replacement exercise;
- (c) in close consultation with other directorate officers of ImmD, responsible for the successful implementation of the project with a view to ensuring compatibility with other operations of the Department;
- (d) liaison and negotiation with the Mainland and Macau authorities regarding issues with implications beyond the HKSAR;
- (e) liaison with vendors to obtain up-to-date information on card materials, card personalisation, printing techniques and security features;
- (f) acquisition of policy approval, funding, manpower and accommodation; and
- (g) other tasks such as legislative amendments, publicity and the call-up programme.