

For information

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

**Proposed Conversion of Six Supernumerary Posts
in Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau,
Lands Department and Planning Department to Permanent Posts**

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the Administration's plan to submit to the Establishment Sub-committee of the Finance Committee at its first meeting in the 2002-03 legislative session a proposal to convert six supernumerary posts to permanent posts to cope with the heavy workload and responsibilities in the policy areas relating to urban renewal, building safety and land registration, as well as to facilitate the implementation of the urban renewal programme. The six supernumerary posts are -

Expiry Date

Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (HPLB)

Planning and Lands Branch

Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)2

(Administrative Officer Staff Grade B) (AOSGB) (D3) 1 January 2003

Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)3

(Administrative Officer Staff Grade C) (AOSGC) (D2) 1 January 2003

Expiry Date

Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)4
(Administrative Officer Staff Grade C) (AOSGC) (D2) 9 November 2002

Lands Department (Lands D)

Chief Estate Surveyor (Urban Renewal)
(Chief Estate Surveyor) (CES) D1) 9 November 2002

Planning Department (Plan D)

Assistant Director (Urban Renewal)
(Government Town Planner) (GTP) (D2) 9 November 2002

Chief Town Planner (Urban Renewal)2

(Chief Town Planner) (CTP) (D1) 9 November 2002

BACKGROUND

2. In November 1999, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the retention of the supernumerary posts of one AOSGB (D3) and one AOSGC (D2) in the Urban Renewal and Buildings (URB) Division of HPLB for three years up to 31 December 2002 to provide directorate support in the formulation of urban renewal and building safety policies. In November 2001, the Committee approved the retention of four supernumerary posts of AOSGC (D2), CES (D1), GTP (D2) and CTP (D1) for urban renewal teams in HPLB, Lands D and Plan D until 8 November 2002 to provide the necessary steer, support and monitoring over the work of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA).

Posts of one AOSGB and two AOSGC in HPLB

3. The Planning and Lands Branch of HPLB, which is headed by the Permanent Secretary for Planning and Lands (PSPL), is currently organized into two divisions, each headed by a Deputy Secretary, as follows -

- (a) Lands and Planning Division, under the charge of an AOSGB1 (D4), designated as Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)1 (DS(PL)1). The post holder is responsible to PSPL for policy work on planning, development, land supply, land use, co-ordinating with the Mainland on cross-boundary infrastructure development, resource management and branch administration; and
- (b) URB Division, under an AOSGB (D3), designated as DS(PL)2. The post holder is responsible to PSPL for policy work on urban renewal, building safety and land registration; and for developing legislation, programmes and initiatives for implementing the above policies. DS(PL)2 is assisted by PAS(PL)3 on building safety and land registration matters and PAS(PL)4 on the urban renewal schedule. All the three posts are supernumerary and we propose to make them permanent in the present proposal.

4. The Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance was brought into operation on 1 May 2001 and the URA was established on the same day to implement the urban renewal programme. The URA submitted its first draft Corporate Plan and Business Plan to the Financial Secretary on 18 March 2002, and the plans were approved on 28 March 2002. Under the approved Corporate Plan and Business Plan, the URA would implement 42 new projects in the next 5 years. The urban renewal work to be undertaken by the URA would increase manifold when compared to that previously done by the Land Development Corporation (LDC). In view of the framework of co-operation agreed between the URA and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS) recently whereby the URA would entrust some of the projects to the HS, the implementation of the urban renewal programme would be expedited.

5. To provide the necessary financial support for the implementation of the urban renewal programme, we have put in place various measures including the grant of land required for the implementation of URA's projects at nominal premium, and a \$10 billion commitment for capital injection into the URA in 2002-03 to 2006-07. Besides a new legal and institutional framework and Government's financial support, the success of the urban renewal programme is highly dependent on appropriate support and policy steer from the Government. In this regard, the retention of AOSGB, AOSGC, CES, GTP and CTP is crucial to the effort to renew our urban fabric.

6. DS(PL)2 is currently working closely with the URA to ensure the smooth delivery of the urban renewal programme in accordance with the approved first corporate plan and business plan and Government policy, including those set out in the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). The URS has to be reviewed and updated regularly (tentatively every two to three years) to take into account any change in circumstances and the changing needs of the community. DS(PL)2 also has to scrutinize the draft five-year corporate plans and draft annual business plans submitted by the URA annually. In addition, DS(PL)2 is responsible for coordinating Government efforts in facilitating the URA's work, in overseeing the efficient handling of URA's land resumption applications and in monitoring the work of the URA in general.

7. Other than urban renewal, building safety is another priority area for which the Government has an ongoing commitment. In particular, the Government has to periodically review the policy on building control in order to enhance building safety in response to changing societal needs and the latest development. Moreover, the Government is committed to improving, *inter alia*, the safety of aged buildings through stepping up enforcement action against unauthorised building works. DS(PL)2 is spearheading the implementation of various proposals to promote building safety and timely maintenance. A case in point is the package of amendments of the Buildings Ordinance to rationalize our building control regime

and strengthen building safety requirements. On top of this, the report on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing (RIFPH report) has recommended bringing Housing Authority projects under the control of the Buildings Ordinance. This is a new major exercise involving complex legal, administrative, financial and staffing implications. DS(PL)2 and PAS(PL)3 have to provide continuous policy input in formulating implementation proposals, steer through the various preparatory tasks and see to the full implementation of the recommendation.

8. On land registration, we aim to establish a fully computerized and integrated land registration system in Hong Kong to offer convenient, speedy and cost-effective services through the implementation of the Strategic Change Plan (SCP) for the Land Registry. We also plan to introduce a title registration system which will provide the public better assurance of land titles and simplify conveyancing procedures. This is again a major Government commitment and will involve the introduction of an important piece of new legislation. DS(PL)2 and PAS(PL)3 have to oversee these efforts and monitor the implementation of the SCP which has commenced in mid-2002. In particular, the legislative amendments and subsequent implementation will require close attention and continuous input of the post holders.

9. Two AOSGC posts are required to underpin DS(PL)2 and to head the Buildings Unit and the UR Unit respectively. PAS(PL)3 assists DS(PL)2 in the full range of policy work on building safety and land registration matters (see paragraphs 7 and 8), provides input to and co-ordinates the drafting of the Land Titles Bill and amendments to the Buildings Ordinance, and monitors the implementation of the SCP. The post holder also assists in advising various Government bureaux/departments on the applications of the prevailing policies on building safety and land registration. The post holder is responsible for monitoring the implementation of various initiatives to enhance building safety, and providing input to and co-ordinating the tasks of bringing Housing Authority projects under

the Buildings Ordinance. PAS(PL)4 provides support to guide the operation of the URA, carry out regulatory functions vis-à-vis the URA, process the URA's land resumption applications and deal with the related political and public relations issues. The post holder co-ordinates with relevant policy bureaux and Government departments to assist the URA's work, keeps close liaison with the URA management to support and monitor the implementation of the urban renewal programme, oversees the URS study and the public consultation exercise in the regular review process of the URS.

10. In view of the above commitments, the continued support of posts of one AOSGB and two AOSGC is needed.

Post of CES in Lands D

11. The CES heads the Urban Renewal (UR) Section in Lands D. The UR Section carries out land resumptions for URA projects; approves the release of statutory compensation and/or ex-gratia allowances to affected property owners and tenants; closely interacts with the District Councils, various concerned groups as well as those directly affected by land resumptions to explain the land resumption procedures and compensation package; co-ordinates and liaises with various government departments to identify and resolve clearance problems to ensure that the sites will be handed over to the URA on the scheduled dates; and addresses any problems encountered by the residents as a result of URA projects.

12. The workload of the UR Section will continue to grow with the implementation of the urban renewal programme. The workload will be particularly substantial in cases where the resumption involves negotiations on the assessment of compensation and where the cases are brought before the Lands Tribunal or the court. The continued support of the CES is required to lead the UR Section in fulfilling the above commitments and any land resumption matters

relating to URA projects so as to ensure the timely and smooth implementation of the urban renewal programme.

Posts of GTP and CTP in Plan D

13. AD/UR heads a dedicated UR Division in PlanD to monitor and facilitate implementation of the urban renewal programme. The post holder has to undertake planning studies to provide the necessary planning input to the HPLB in reviewing and updating the URS. The post holder needs to work closely with the URA in the selection of urban renewal projects for inclusion in the corporate and business plans and in the investigation of suitable modes of operation for building rehabilitation. The post holder is instrumental in developing a geographical information system to facilitate the sharing of information on building conditions among various Government departments for building rehabilitation and review of the urban renewal programme. The post holder would need to deputise for the Director of Planning in executing his statutory duties as a non-executive director of the URA Board and participates as a member of some of the sub-committees of the Board. In addition, AD/UR is taking a leading role in the urban re-structuring studies in collaboration with relevant Government departments. The post holder provides planning advice on the preservation of buildings and areas of architectural, cultural, and historical interests.

14. CTP/UR2 is responsible to AD/UR to manage a dedicated section of professional and technical staff in facilitating and processing urban renewal schemes related to the URA. The post holder scrutinises individual URA projects by providing planning advice and development parameters to the URA in the preparation of development schemes and projects in accordance with the corporate plan and statutory planning requirements. Furthermore, the post holder needs to formulate guidelines for the provision of infrastructure, Government/Institution/Community facilities and public open space in the URA's renewal projects and

oversees the application of the guidelines. The post holder has to resolve the land use, planning and design issues with the URA and various Government bureaux/departments to ensure smooth implementation of the projects.

15. The continued guidance and professional support of the GTP and CTP are required to handle the complex and important tasks relating to planning work on URA projects.

PROPOSAL

16. We propose to convert the supernumerary posts of one AOSGB and two AOSGC in HPLB, one CES in Lands D as well as one GTP and CTP in Plan D to permanent posts in view of Government's long-term commitment to urban renewal, building safety and land registration. The Bureau needs to have an appropriate directorate structure to carry out strategic planning on urban renewal, buildings and land registration issues and to cope with the changing level, scope and complexity of the services and activities under the purview of the Bureau. If the posts of AOSGB and AOSGC cannot be made permanent or retained beyond their current expiry dates, HPLB will cease to have the necessary senior directorate support to oversee the work relating to these important policy areas. We will have great difficulties in steering through the implementation of the urban renewal programme, as well as various important legislative amendment exercises scheduled to commence from the latter half of 2002. The Bureau's policy input and steer in respect of building safety, land registration and urban renewal initiatives will be seriously hampered.

17. There is also a continuing need for directorate support in the urban renewal teams in Lands D and Plan D to assist their respective Directors in discharging their statutory duties as non-executive directors of the URA Board; to provide adequate support and assistance to HPLB for undertaking regular review of

the URS; and to monitor/facilitate the implementation of the urban renewal programme. Without the said directorate posts, it would be difficult for the two departments to render the necessary planning and land administration inputs to URA and HPLB in implementing the urban renewal programme.

18. The organisation charts of PL Branch of HPLB, Lands D and Plan D are at Annexes A, B, C respectively. The job descriptions for the posts of the AOSGB, two AOSGC, the CES, the GTP and CTP are at Annexes D to I.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

19. As explained above, there are genuine operational needs for the concerned directorate posts to be created on a permanent basis. The Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (SHPL) is highly conscious of the need to manage his resources prudently and to control the size of the civil service establishment within his purview. To this end, he will identify a corresponding number of permanent directorate posts from within his portfolio for offsetting the six permanent posts proposed for creation in this paper. He has to date identified the following three permanent directorate posts for deletion in the early half of 2003-04 –

Lands Department

1 Chief Estate Surveyor (D1)

Planning Department

1 Government Town Planner (D2)

1 Chief Town Planner (D1)

20. The lead time is required for effecting the necessary re-distribution of responsibilities within the concerned departments and to tie in with the organizational review that SHPL is now undertaking in respect of HPLB and its

group of departments. The review is still on-going, with a target completion date of June 2003. LegCo Members will be consulted on the full results in due course. In the meantime, we have already drawn up a preliminary combined management structure to merge the functions of the Housing Branch and Housing Department for implementation on a provisional and trial basis. We have also sought to streamline the work of directorate staff in Lands D and Plan D to effect some savings. Based on the initial results of the ongoing organisational reviews, SHPL envisages that he will be able to delete another three permanent directorate posts in Housing Branch/Housing Department with the necessary re-engineering and re-prioritization. The present proposal may, therefore, be considered now without waiting for the completion of the overall review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

21. The additional notional annual salary cost of this proposal to convert the six supernumerary posts to permanent posts at mid-point is \$8,364,840. The full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-costs, is \$14,599,000.

22. Sufficient funding has been provided to meet the full staff costs of the proposed posts in HPLB and Plan D. As for the proposed post of the CES in Lands D, since the UR Section mainly deals with land resumption matters to facilitate URA projects, the URA will continue to meet the full staff cost of all the agreed posts of the UR Section, including salaries and staff on-costs.

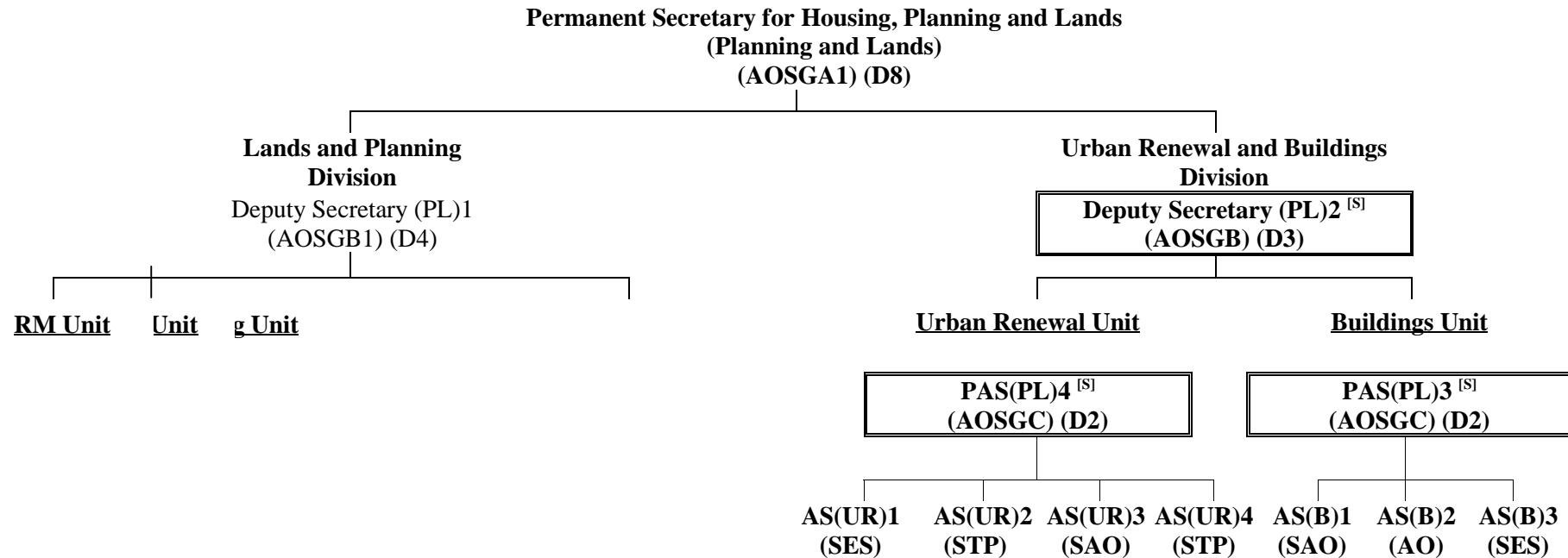
WAY FORWARD

23. We intend to submit to the Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee the proposal to convert the six supernumerary posts to

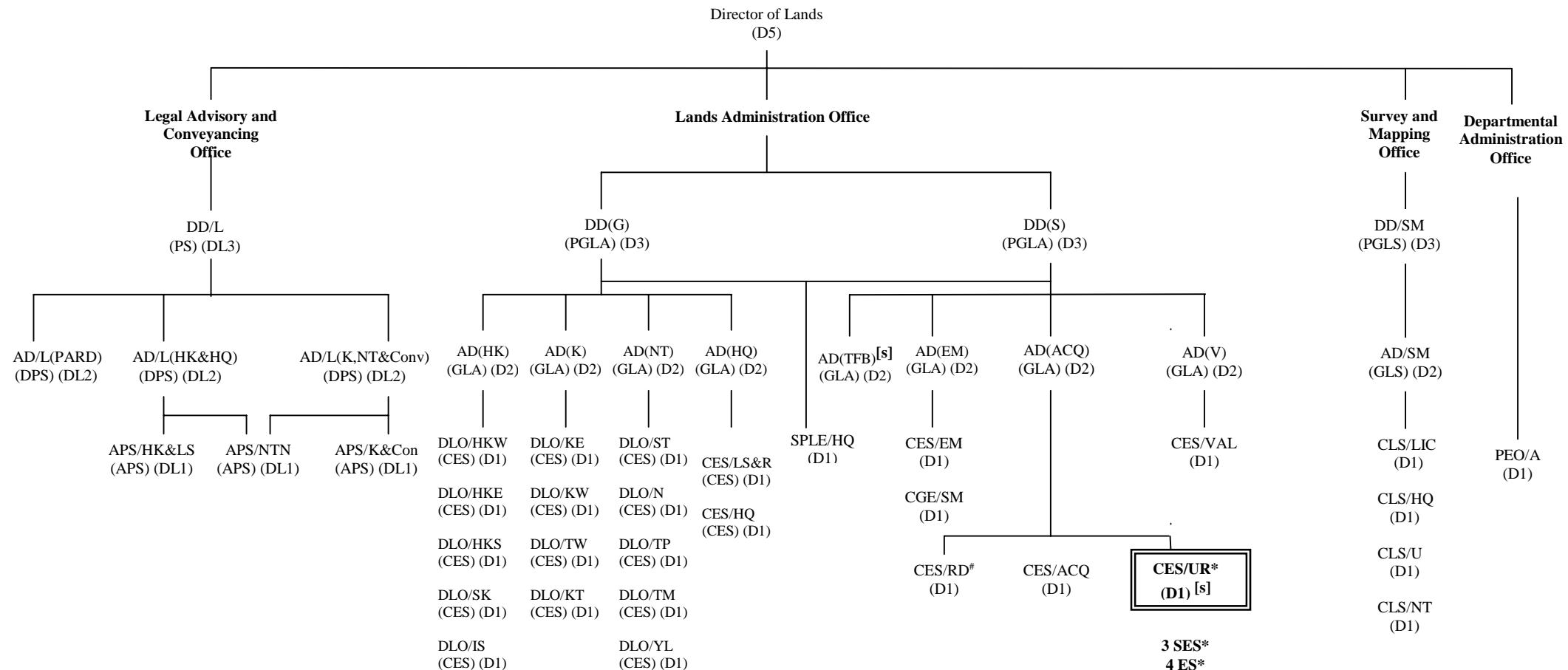
permanent posts before the expiry date of the six posts.

Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
October 2002

**Organisation Chart of the
Planning and Lands Branch of Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau**



Organisation Chart of the Urban Renewal Section, Lands Department

**Legend:**

DD	Deputy Director
PS	Principal Solicitor
DPS	Deputy Principal Solicitor
APS	Assistant Principal Solicitor
AD	Assistant Director
PGLA	Principal Government Land Agent
GLA	Government Land Agent
CES	Chief Estate Surveyor
SES	Senior Estate Surveyor

ES	Estate Surveyor
SPLE	Senior Principal Land Executive
CGE	Chief Geotechnical Engineer
PGLS	Principal Government Land Surveyor
GLS	Government Land Surveyor
CLS	Chief Land Surveyor



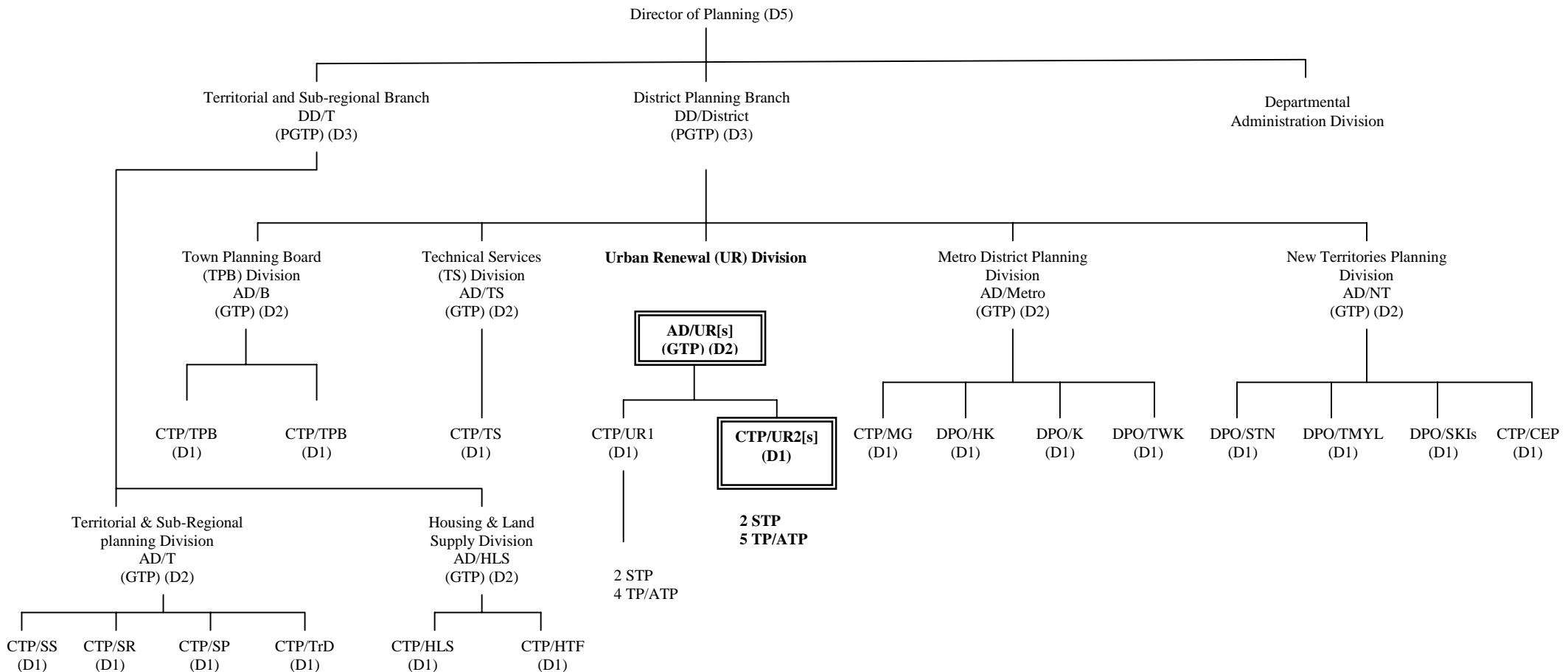
Proposed post for making permanent
Posts funded by URA
Supernumerary posts
Temporarily redeployed from NA
Section

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**Organisation Chart of the
Urban Renewal Division, Planning Department**



Legend:

DD	-	Deputy Director of Planning
AD	-	Assistant Director of Planning
PGTP	-	Principal Government Town Planner
GTP	-	Government Town Planner
CTP	-	Chief Town Planner
STP	-	Senior Town Planner
TP/ATP	-	Town Planner/Assistant Town Planner

DPO	-	District Planning Officer
		Proposed posts for making permanent
[s]		Supernumerary posts

**Job Descriptions of
Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)2**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3)

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning, and Lands (Planning and Lands) for the policy programmes relating to urban renewal, building safety and land registration matters. Duties include -

- (1) formulating policy proposals and preparing draft legislation relating to urban renewal and rehabilitation;
- (2) overseeing the urban renewal programme of the URA;
- (3) formulating policy proposals and preparing draft legislation relating to building safety;
- (4) formulating policy proposals and preparing draft legislation on the land registration system;
- (5) providing policy input to and steering through the tasks of bringing Housing Authority projects under the Buildings Ordinance; and
- (6) overseeing and steering the operation of the Land Registry and the Buildings Department.

**Job Descriptions of
Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)3**

Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)2 for the policy programmes relating to building safety and land registration matters. Duties include -

- (1) assisting in the formulation of policy proposals on building safety matters and advising various Government bureaux/departments on the application of the prevailing building safety policies;
- (2) monitoring the implementation of various initiatives to enhance building safety;
- (3) providing policy input to and co-ordinating the drafting of legislative amendments to the Buildings Ordinance;
- (4) assisting in the formulation of policy proposals on land registration matters and advising various Government bureaux/departments on the application of the prevailing land registration policies;
- (5) providing policy input to and co-ordinating the drafting of the Land Titles Bill and monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Change Plan of the Land Registry; and
- (6) providing policy input to and coordinating the tasks of bringing Housing Authority projects under the Building Ordinance.

**Job Description of
Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)4
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau**

Rank: Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)2 for urban renewal policy matters as well as the urban renewal programme relating to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Duties include –

- (1) updating the Urban Renewal Strategy from time to time to take account of any change in circumstances and the changing needs of the community to provide policy guidelines to the URA on the urban renewal programme;
- (2) consulting the public on each updating exercise of the urban renewal strategy as required under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance;
- (3) scrutinising the draft five-year corporate plans and draft annual business plans submitted by the URA annually to ensure that statutory requirements are met and policy objectives are adhered to;
- (4) monitoring the financial performance of the urban renewal programme;
- (5) overseeing the operation of the URA, and offering necessary assistance to ensure the successful and smooth implementation of its urban renewal projects;
- (6) advising on and monitoring the urban renewal programme relating to the URA, including processing land resumption applications and vetting individual urban renewal projects having regard to any objections raised against the projects under the statute; and
- (7) co-ordinating the efforts of the URA, various Government departments and public bodies, including the Housing Authority and the Housing Society, on urban renewal at the policy level.

**Job Description of
Chief Estate Surveyor (Urban Renewal)
Lands Department**

Rank: Chief Estate Surveyor (D1)

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Assistant Director (Acquisition) for all land resumption matters relating to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and the implementation of resumption work of URA projects. Duties include –

- (1) formulating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation programme of URA projects which may require land resumption in consultation with the senior management of URA;
- (2) co-ordinating and liaising with various Government departments to identify and resolve clearance problems to ensure that the sites can be handed over to the URA on the scheduled dates;
- (3) carrying out resumption and clearance for URA projects if necessary in accordance with the Lands Resumption Ordinance;
- (4) monitoring expenditure of resumption funds, approving the release of statutory compensation and/or ex-gratia allowances to property owners and tenants affected by land resumption for URA projects;
- (5) providing professional advice in case of litigation and Lands Tribunal referrals on land resumption cases arising from URA projects; and
- (6) attending meetings of Executive Council, Legislative Council, District Councils and press conferences as necessary and overseeing the handling of enquiries and complaints on URA resumption matters.

**Job Description of
Assistant Director/Urban Renewal
Planning Department**

Rank: Government Town Planner (D2)

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Deputy Director of Planning (District) for the Urban Renewal Division on urban renewal matters. Duties include –

- (1) undertaking planning studies to provide the necessary planning input to the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (HPLB) in updating the Urban Renewal Strategy;
- (2) assisting HPLB in conducting the public consultation exercise as regards the revised Urban Renewal Strategy;
- (3) providing planning advice to HPLB in processing the draft corporate plans and the draft business plans to be submitted by the URA and in scrutinising individual URA projects which are set out in its corporate plans and business plans;
- (4) working closely with the URA in the selection of urban renewal projects for implementation and in the investigation of suitable modes of operation for building rehabilitation;
- (5) providing planning advice on preservation of buildings and areas of architectural, cultural and historical interests;
- (6) developing and maintaining a building dilapidation and rehabilitation information system for sharing of information on building conditions among various Government departments for building rehabilitation and review of the urban renewal programme;
- (7) providing support to and deputising the Director of Planning in discharging his statutory duties as a non-executive director of the URA Board and participating as a member of some of the sub-committee of the URA Board;
- (8) taking a leading role in the urban re-structuring studies in collaboration with relevant Government departments; and
- (9) attending meetings of the Executive Council, the Legislative Council, the Antiquities Advisory Board and District Councils as necessary.

**Job Description of
Chief Town Planner/Urban Renewal 2
Planning Department**

Rank: Chief Town Planner (D1)

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Responsible to the Assistant Director/Urban Renewal for urban renewal matters related to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Duties include –

- (1) providing planning information to assist the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (HPLB) in updating the Urban Renewal Strategy;
- (2) providing planning information to HPLB in processing the draft corporate plans and the draft business plans of the URA;
- (3) providing planning advice and development parameters to the URA in the preparation and processing of development schemes and projects in accordance with the corporate plan and statutory planning requirements;
- (4) formulating guidelines for and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure, Government/Institution/Community facilities and public open space in URA projects with the URA and various Government bureaux/departments;
- (5) overseeing the incorporation of territorial and sub-regional planning objectives into URA projects;
- (6) assisting in the processing of development schemes submitted by the URA and objections raised against the development schemes; and
- (7) resolving land use, planning and design issues related to URA projects with the URA and various Government bureaux/departments at various stages of implementation of URA projects to ensure the smooth implementation of these projects.