

For information

PFC Staff Side GSR Paper 1 / PPS

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE**

Grade Structure Review – Police

PURPOSE

This paper by the Police Force Council Staff Side seeks to draw Members attention to the sentiment and views of the Police Force Council Staff Side and seeks views and comments on the reports submitted by SCDS to the Administration.

2. The Police Force Council Staff Side, represents the majority of the serving 27,000 men and women of the Hong Kong Police from Constable to Chief Superintendent rank, has carefully reviewed the Reports on the Grade Structure Review (GSR), dated 27th November 2008. We continue to actively consult with our members on their views ahead of further action.

BACKGROUND

3. The Pay Level Survey (PLS) (2006) for general civil service grades and job survey comparisons to the private sector in that survey could not be applied to the unique role and responsibilities of the Hong Kong Police Grades. In 2003 the Administration committed to complete the Grade Structure Review–Police on conclusion of the PLS. The review commenced with an invitation to SCDS in October 2007.

4. Police officers have been waiting for a proper structure review for over twenty years (since the Rennie Review in 1988). We have been patient in anticipation of the support of an effective grade structure to provide recognition, career progression and sufficient value for the job we do. We have risen to numerous operational challenges and excelled to meet efficiency targets and savings these past years. The police are an organisation that continually evolves with ever-complex roles and responsibilities. We now need a Grade Structure that will provide the incremental scales to fit and support our modern force and the proper management of the 27,000 men and women of the Hong Kong Police in

the years ahead. We have been patient through delays in the commencement of this Review, since its was first promised to us in 2003 and throughout the last year of study by the SCDS.

GSR Process and Report

5. The Review started in financial year 2007/8 and needs to be completed within the current year 2008/9. Force Management met SCDS on three occasions, made two submissions and provided 27 information papers. The Commissioner of Police, in a letter to SCDS dated 13th October 2008, summarized the key issues that need to be addressed in this GSR. The Police Staff Side has made its submission in six papers and supplementary letters to SCDS and also provided a detailed incremental structure proposal. The Staff Side met SCDS on six occasions but there was limited dialogue in the consultation process. The SCDS members have declined to outline their rationale or thinking in the determination of a new Police Grade Structure. Following the standing aside of the current Chairman SCDS Mr. Henry FAN, the acting Chairman SCDS Mr. Barry Cheung was approached with the suggestion of separate presentations and meetings with both the Police Commissioner and Police Staff Side. Mr. Cheung declined to meet with representatives ahead of issuing the GSR Report. A letter campaign in was launched in October 2008 with 19,220 signatures that expresses the depth of feeling and support within Police ranks for a fair and reasonable outcome.

6. Both Management and Staff have put a great deal of experience and thorough research effort into the detail of various submissions that were made in good faith to the SCDS members. The Committee has not included these. SCDS has not fully addressed the summary of issues that need to be resolved in this GSR as outlined in the Commissioner of Police's letter to the Chairman of SCDS, dated 13th October 2008. The Police Staff Side Grade Structure proposals deserve proper analysis and discussion.

7. Police Force Council Staff Side is now actively consulting with our members on both the GSR Report – Police and the GSR Directorate reports issued on 27th November 2008. These views will be considered ahead of further action.

8. We are seeking an early meeting with the Secretary for the Civil Service during the three-month consultation process commencing 27th November 2008 to: -

- Seek clarification on the report where the recommendations or lack of them, in particular for Sergeant and then again IP to SSP and Directorate ranks simply do not work to fit the existing career progression and fail to recognize the changes and increase in special factors in policing.
- Seek clarification in some disparities and disadvantages that the GSR Report introduces and now need to be resolved. (For example, the disparity in approach within JPO ranks, lack of special factor recognition SIP to SSP, increment arrangement for CSP and above suggested to change to 0,2,4,6 years but we would suggest be no more than five years for Police namely increments in 0,1,3,5 years)
- Explore in more depth the state of morale and in the force and the submissions on this by Staff Side and also the Staff Opinion Surveys in 2004 and 2007.
- Explore the impact on the morale of Police Force whilst waiting for completion of the GSR in 2008/9 and the risks of downgrading the Force with the **‘suitable calibre with sufficient remuneration’** one solution fits all approach.
- Seek clarification on the implementation and conversion arrangements a revised police incremental structure (PPS).
- Clarify the conditions of the Administrations deferral proposal to wait for a ‘steady state’ in the local economy against the existing background of fundamental stability as Government resources and spending continues on new infrastructure, buildings, new directorate civilian posts and the long delay since the last review (Rennie Review in 1988).

Sentiment of Police Officers

9. Hong Kong Police officers consider that this long-awaited Grade Structure-Police needs to offer a workable and sustainable package for the years ahead. It must provide the leadership and guidance to resolve the current low morale and resolve the dispute we continue to have with the Administration on the deficiencies in incremental structure of the Police ranks.

10. We are sorely disappointed and very angry about the gap between the SCDS recommendations and the Force Management and Staff submissions. We are seeking a fair and reasonable outcome. The Report content and recommendations have failed to outline a package of measures that can support the effectiveness of the Police for the coming years, say 3 to 6 years.

11. The Report does not live up to its claims to be pragmatic, providing best judgment for having considered all relevant factors. The Report is in some areas superficial and unclear and does not provide sufficient relief to the current deficiencies in the incremental structure of the Police compared to our complex role and responsibilities, both job factors and our special job factors. It fails to provide sufficient logic and rationale for the adjustments or the SCDS findings on the Police Grade Structure. It fails to appreciate the requirement for best calibre of staff within our organisation as is already required by Force management and the high demands being placed on staff and distinguish the Police within the civil service. It prefers to recommend pursuit of a damaging course towards mediocrity recommending a Police service staffed by **only suitable calibre staff on sufficient remuneration.**

12. The Report if acted upon in its present form would be a retrograde step for professionalism in our organisation.

13. We therefore find the GSR Report on the Police in its present form to be unacceptable. The Report publication only serves to exacerbate the depth of negative feeling within our ranks at this time.

14. We have been waiting for a proper review for over twenty years. We have been patient in anticipation of the support of an effective grade structure to provide recognition, career progression and sufficient value for the job we do. We have risen to numerous operational challenges and excelled to meet efficiency targets and savings these past years.

15. The GSR report has been completed on 27th November 2008 and following clarifications and revisions should be implemented in financial year 2008/9. Should there be any deferral to some future date when there is a 'steady state' in the local economy it would be fair and reasonable to implement retrospectively to the Report date. We believe the Administration has the fundamental fiscal stability to implement the GSR for the Police and make a proper investment in PEOPLE as well as infrastructure and other programmes.

16. The Report recommendations have raised serious concerns with us about the context of the deliberations by the members of the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS). It appears the SCDS has taken the macro environment of current financial upheavals, as they see it, to limit their thinking and approach in this GSR. The Report quality has been impacted and as it

stands can offer no more than a one-year approach. This does not meet the requirement of a properly conducted GSR acceptable to the Administration, Staff and the people of Hong Kong. The Report will, if pursued without necessary clarifications, result in inequities and cause all the issues and deficiencies to require being revisited once again in less than 12 months time. It will also be divisive and cause ill-feeling between certain ranks. Uncertainty and low morale in the Police will continue and officers may seek to escalate action.

Advice sought

17. We are prepared to meet with panel members to discuss the GSR Report and present our views on the Grade Structure – Police. We seek member's views and comments.

Police Force Council Staff Side
December 2008