For Discussion on
12 November 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Proposed Creation of One Chief Systems Manager Post
in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Purpose

        This paper informs Members of our proposal to create a permanent Chief Systems Manager (CSM) (D1) post in the Information Technology (IT) Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The proposed CSM post will replace the non-civil service Chief Information Technology Manager (CITM) position at D1 level.

Background

2.   Upon the dissolution of the two Municipal Councils in 2000 and the formation of LCSD, an IT Office was established in LCSD to develop IT in the Department which was essential in supporting its operation and service delivery. The IT Office took charge of all IT matters including formulating departmental IT policies, devising strategic IT plans, providing consultancy services to internal users, developing and maintaining computer systems and IT infrastructure, selecting computer equipment and software, and operating three computer centres[1].

3.   On 8 December 1999, the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) of the Legislative Council endorsed vide EC(1999-2000)26 the creation of a non-civil service position of CITM at D1 level at LCSD to head the IT Office (departmentally known as Head (IT)) with effect from 1 March 2000. A

---

[1] *One is located in the LCSD Headquarters (Shatin) to operate systems mainly for internal use, one is in the Lockhart Road Municipal Services Building (Wanchai) for mission critical systems supporting public services, and one in the Hong Kong Central Library (Causeway Bay) dedicated to the Multi-media Information System.*

non-civil service position instead of a civil service post was proposed as it was of the view that the Department would have the flexibility of recruiting the most suitable person to meet its up-to-date IT requirements.

4.   Over the years, the Department followed the direction for e-government development set by the E-government Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Financial Secretary, in implementing its IT initiatives. To ensure that its IT projects align with the strategy for e-government service delivery, the Department has regularly reviewed the operation and management of the IT Office in supporting its business objectives and missions.   While it is necessary to retain the flexibility of recruiting professionals from the market to bring in new and up-to-date IT expertise, it is considered more appropriate for such knowledge transfer to be achieved at the operational level to meet project-based or specific service needs.   Given the strategic importance of IT services to the smooth and effective operation of the Department, as well as the increased number of IT projects and the substantial funding involved, it is important that the head of IT Office should be a directorate civil servant with IT background, a good understanding of Government policies and domain knowledge of the Department.   He/She can provide effective leadership in aligning IT strategy with the objectives of government services, as well as strategic planning for the continuous development of IT in the Department.   A directorate civil servant can also assure that the quality of the IT programmes and services are in line with government standards and regulations.   It is therefore proposed to create a permanent CSM post to replace the CITM as the Head of the IT Office.

Justifications

Formulation of IT strategy and strategic plans

5.   The services provided by LCSD are multifarious and cover many facets of the daily life of the general public.   These include booking of leisure and sports venues and activities, use of public library services, purchase of tickets of cultural and entertainment programmes, etc.   LCSD is committed to capitalising on the use of IT and other advanced technologies to further enhance its business operations and enhance its service delivery.

6.   Given the strategic importance of IT to achieving the business objectives and missions of LCSD, coupled with the rising public expectation for better and more efficient delivery of services through multiple channels, the IT Office has to constantly review and update the departmental IT strategic plans and infrastructure, as well as develop IT applications to support the daily business operations.

Capitalisation of IT to improve public services and internal operation

7.   Over the years, three mission-critical computer systems have been developed by the IT Office in conjunction with the user divisions to support the major business objectives/operations of LCSD.   Head (IT) plays the key role of overseeing the implementation of these systems and providing strategic advice.   These systems are –

(a)   the Library Automation System (LAS): providing automated library services to the public, such as searching, reservation, borrowing and renewal of library materials through different platforms.   Some 61 million transactions went through the LAS in 2009-10 for checking out, renewal and reservation of library materials;

(b)   the Leisure Link System (LLS): enabling the public to book a wide range of LCSD-run leisure facilities (e.g. badminton courts, turf pitches, golf facilities, etc.) and enroll in recreational and sports activities (e.g. training courses, water sports activities) organised by the Department through four channels including counters, internet, self-service kiosks and telephone.   In 2009-10, around five million of transactions on the booking of leisure and sports facilities and activities were conducted through the LLS; and

(c)   the Urban Ticketing System (URBTIX): providing ticketing services for cultural and entertainment programmes.   It is running on an IT infrastructure developed and provided by a contractor under the Public Private Partnership model.   Four million tickets were issued through URBTIX in 2009-10.

8.   In addition to the three mission-critical systems mentioned above, over 80 essential computer systems, such as the Multi-media Information System (MMIS) in public libraries and the Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) for internal use[2], are in operation supporting LCSD's services for the public and its internal operations.   These systems are supported by a complex IT infrastructure comprising about 80 mid-range computers and about 320 personal computer servers located in the three computer centres, and accessed by around 8,000 desktop computers connected with different networks.   The systems have to be maintained, upgraded and enhanced from time to time in order to meet the public expectation and the latest technological developments.

Upcoming major projects

9.   Most of the mission-critical and essential systems will undergo major upgrading and enhancement in the next few years.   Insofar as the public libraries are concerned, the LAS is undergoing a major upgrading and replacement exercise, with an estimated commitment of $196 million approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (FC) for completion by 2013-14.   The new LAS will include new and customer-oriented functions such as virtual reference services, online reservation for workstations, e-notification, e-payment, etc.   An add-on Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) sub-system will also be integrated with the new LAS on a pilot basis. With the use of RFID to support library operations, it is anticipated that the efficiency of staff operations on check-in and check-out of library items will be further improved.

10.   Another project approved by the FC was the MMIS which will also be upgraded by replacing the obsolete hardware and software, upgrading the digital library system, extending the scope of services and enhancing the functions of the system.   It will cost about $93 million and will be completed in 2013-14.   On the leisure services side, feasibility studies for upgrading the LLS have been conducted and the LLS will undergo major infrastructural enhancement which is scheduled for completion in mid 2013.

---

[2] *The MMIS facilitates the public to retrieve the multi-media materials in the Hong Kong Central Library such as audio/video collections and digitised documents of old newspapers and books.   The HRMIS maintains various human resources records of the Department such as establishment and strength, appointment, posting, performance appraisals, etc.*

11.   Apart from maintaining and upgrading the mission critical and essential systems, LCSD continuously explores the possibility of applying IT and other technology to different facets of its internal operations as well as those with interface with the general public.   Such projects include the Civic Centre Management System (CCMS) which was launched in July 2009 to support the operation of venue hiring, payment transaction handling and other hiring related functions for all the 15 civic centres / performing arts venues managed by LCSD, the Self-Service Kiosk System (SSKS) that was launched in March 2008 to provide users with an additional channel of access to the LLS for booking sports facilities and recreational activities, and the Library Management System of the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (HKHDC) that was completed in April 2006 to provide library cataloguing functions for the Reference Library of HKHDC with RFID technology.

12.   The annual expenditure for supporting the IT activities and services under the management of Head(IT) amounted to $119 million in 2009-10 and will increase to about $127 million in 2010-11.

13.   All the above-mentioned projects are highly complex in nature, both in technical and project management terms, and involve substantial funding.   They therefore require the personal attention and steer from a senior and experienced IT professional at the directorate level to ensure that they will be carefully thought out and successfully implemented.   It is also essential to have the on-going leadership of an experienced IT professional at the directorate level, as opposed to a contract staff or a consultant, to ensure that the systems are rolled out successfully and operated smoothly to achieve the business objectives of LCSD.

Management of the IT Office

14.   At present, the IT Office has a core team of about 60 IT professional staff and more than 20 executive and clerical staff as well as computer operators.   The IT Office has also engaged the services of some 30 IT staff through technical service providers under a term contract centrally administered by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to support specific IT projects.

Permanent need for the post

15.   Given the scale and complexity of the IT systems in LCSD and the mission critical nature of the computer infrastructure, it is considered that an experienced government IT professional at the directorate rank will be required to formulate, review and implement LCSD's IT policies and strategic plans, as well as to oversee the development of the major projects which are critical to efficient public service delivery. Against this background, it is necessary to create a permanent CSM (D1) post to provide professional steer on the complex and complicated IT systems of LCSD.

16.   The CITM has been put under the direct supervision of Assistant Director (Finance) [AD(F)], who is ranked at Assistant Director of Accounting Services (D2) level, since June 2006 after the permanent creation of the AD(F) post. The proposed CSM will continue to be accountable to AD(F) and the departmental organisation structure will remain unchanged. He/She will be responsible for the management of the IT Office, in addition to providing IT-related technical advice and support to AD(F). The CSM will be tasked to set priorities and optimise resource utilisation as well as to balance the technological, economical and strategic factors involved in all major decisions.

Annexes 1 & 2

The job description of the CSM post as well as the proposed departmental organisation structure of LCSD are at Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

Alternatives Considered

17.   LCSD has critically examined the feasibility of identifying a directorate post within the Department to absorb the duties of the Head(IT). However, such an alternative is considered not feasible. As Head(IT) is the only IT professional officer at the directorate level in LCSD, other existing directorate officers do not have the required professional knowledge and competence. Moreover, they are already fully occupied with their existing responsibilities relating to leisure, sports, culture and arts as well as financial and administration support.

18.   The option of allowing the IT Office to operate without a directorate officer in heading the office (e.g. by asking the only civil service Senior Systems Manager to head the Office) is highly undesirable. There is

an essential need for the leadership of a directorate officer to ensure effective delivery of services and continuous improvement of existing large-scale and complex IT systems in LCSD on a permanent basis.   It is also important to continue the implementation of new IT project initiatives to cope with the dynamic business environment of the Department, advancement in technology and rising public expectation.

19.   We have considered the option of engaging a NCSC staff or a consultant to lead and control the planning, implementation and operation of the various projects and systems in LCSD.   However, due to the permanent nature and complexity of the duties involved, we are of the view that a permanent post within the civil service should be created for the job.

Financial Implications

20.   The proposal will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of $1,245,600.   The annual staff cost, including average annual salary and on-cost, is $ 1,742,000.   The estimated amount required will be partly offset by the annual saving of $1,630,000 which is the annual staff cost (including salary and contract-end gratuity payment on a pro-rata basis) incurred for employing the current incumbent CITM.   We have included sufficient provision in the 2010-11 Estimates under Head 95 to meet the cost of the proposed creation of the CSM post.

Way Forward

21.   Subject to Members' comments, we plan to submit the proposal on the creation of the CSM post to the ESC for consideration on 8 December 2010.

Home Affairs Bureau
November 2010

**Proposed Job Description
Head (Information Technology)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)**

Rank : Chief Systems Manager (D1)

Responsible to : Assistant Director (Finance)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To oversee the computer operations and system maintenance/development within LCSD, and be responsible for the manpower planning, staff management, resource allocation and staff development of the Information Technology (IT) Office in LCSD.

2. To formulate management and deployment strategies for building the IT infrastructure, systems architecture, application systems and database management.

3. To facilitate re-engineering of the business processes of LCSD through the use of IT.

4. To formulate, recommend and execute strategies for the procurement of IT services and computer equipment.

5. To advise on matters related to the IT security policy and security framework in LCSD; assist in their maintenance and upholding; and establish appropriate checks and balances to ensure their compliance.

6. To advise on all IT related technical and policy matters and technology management; promote the government's IT standard and practices; and enhance the IT awareness and competence of staff in LCSD.

7. To act as the IT consultant of LCSD and the central liaison point between LCSD and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer on matters concerning service-wide IT standards and initiatives, technology infrastructure and IT manpower deployment.

8. To participate in the development of inter-agency systems in the government and maintain interoperability with these systems.

Proposed Directorate Structure of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Director
(AOSGA) (D6)

Cultural Services Branch
Deputy Director (Culture)
(SADMS) (D3)

Leisure Services Branch
Deputy Director (Leisure Services)
(AOSGB) (D3)

Performing Arts Division	Heritage & Museums Division	Libraries & Development Division	Grade Management & Support Section	Leisure Services Division 1	Leisure Services Division 2	Leisure Services Division 3	Grade Management Section	Support Section	Administration Division	Finance & Supplies Division	Quality Assurance Section	Information & Public Relations Section
Assistant Director (Performing Arts) (ADMS) (D2)	Assistant Director (Heritage & Museums) (ADMS) (D2)	Assistant Director (Libraries & Development) (ADMS) (D2)		Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 1 (ADMS) (D2)	Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 2 (ADMS) (D2)	Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 3 (ADMS) (D2)			Departmental Secretary (PEO) (D1)	Assistant Director (Finance) (ADAS) (D2)		
Planning & management of performing arts venues	Management of public museums	Planning and management of public libraries, indoor stadia, URBTIX, & Music Office	Administrative support, resource & grade management functions	Facilities management	Programme management	Horticulture & landscaping matters	Grade management	Administrative support & resource management	Departmental administration support services	Departmental accounting & budgetary control	Internal audit	Departmental publicity & public relations
Cultural & entertainment programmes	Heritage conservation	Research & development		Outsourcing of sports centres	Sports subvention & promotion	Greening promotion			Human resource management	Supplies & stores matters	Quality assurance	Dissemination of information
	Film programmes & archive			Coordinating matters of District Council Review	School Sports Programme	Contract management			Training	Business process re-engineering		
	Cultural exchange			Formulating standards for the development of major sports facilities	Community Sports Club Project	Management of zoos & aviaries			Transport services	Benchmarking surveys		
				Prosecution & licensing	Major events	Management of holiday camps, water sports centres, golf driving facilities & monitoring subventions to NGO camps & water sports centres			Translation & interpretation services	Research & statistics		
				Computerised booking	Management & administration of leisure facilities & recreation & sports programmes/ services in Hong Kong region	Management & administration of leisure facilities & recreation & sports programmes/ services in NT & outlying islands regions				Planning, management & development of information technology systems & services		
				Management & administration of leisure facilities & recreation & sports programmes/ services in Kowloon region	Planning of capital works projects in Hong Kong region	Planning of capital works projects in NT region						
				Planning of capital works projects in Kowloon region								

Information Technology Office
Chief Systems Manager (D1) *

Planning, management & development of information technology systems & services

Legend:
AOSGA: Administrative Officer Staff Grade A
AOSGB: Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
SADMS: Senior Assistant Director of Municipal Services
ADMS: Assistant Director of Municipal Services
ADAS: Assistant Director of Accounting Services
PEO: Principal Executive Officer

* Post proposed to be created and pitched at Chief Systems Manager (D1) rank to replace the existing non-civil service Chief Information Technology Manager position