

**For discussion
on 15 January 2014**

EC(2013-14)20

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 62 – HOUSING DEPARTMENT Subhead 000 Operational expenses

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following supernumerary post in the Housing Department for two years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016 –

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
(D2) (\$136,550 - \$149,350)

PROBLEM

The Housing Department (HD) needs dedicated staffing support at the directorate level to cope with the increased workload relating to the implementation of recommendations arising from the Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) review.

PROPOSAL

2. We propose to create one supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post for two years from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016 to cope with the increased workload relating to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the LTHS review.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

Long Term Housing Strategy Review

3. To address Hong Kong's housing issue, the Government has initiated the LTHS review, which aims to ensure optimal use of the existing land and housing resources to meet the housing needs of the community in the medium and long term. The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) was set up in September 2012 with members drawn from various sectors of the community to make recommendations on the LTHS for the next ten years. The terms of reference and membership of the Steering Committee are set out at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

4. The Steering Committee published an LTHS consultation document and kicked off a public consultation exercise on 3 September 2013. The public consultation ended on 2 December 2013. The Steering Committee is now compiling a report on the views collected during the public consultation period for submission to the Government in the first quarter of 2014. The Government will take into account all the views expressed as it formulates the LTHS and related policies.

Need for setting up a Special Duties Unit with a new supernumerary AOSGC post for two years

5. During the three-month public consultation period, the secretariat and Members of the Steering Committee attended over 50 meetings with interested parties, including six open fora organised by the Steering Committee for the general public and stakeholders; a meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo)'s Subcommittee on LTHS and its public hearing; meetings of the 18 District Councils; a meeting of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA); and other meetings/discussion fora upon invitation from concern groups and organisations. In addition, some 800 written submissions were received during the consultation period. Views received cover a wide range of housing issues involving policy and operational matters on both public and private housing, many of which are highly controversial. Considerable effort will be required to work out practical ways forward on many of these issues. There is thus a practical need to set up a dedicated Special Duties Unit (SDU), to be headed by an officer with appropriate experience and seniority, to co-ordinate efforts among all relevant bureaux and departments to evaluate the views received and to help formulate the Government's strategy on the LTHS.

6. As the head of the SDU, the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post-holder is expected to play a key role in co-ordinating efforts both among different divisions in HD, and with relevant policy bureaux/departments to kick start and see through the implementation of the necessary policy reviews on the range of housing issues detailed in paragraph 5 above, with a view to formulating revisions to existing policies or measures in a timely manner. He will also need to liaise with other stakeholders such as the HA, the Urban Renewal Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society to follow up on the agreed initiatives so as to take forward the LTHS. Furthermore, he will be responsible for setting up the framework and plan for the conduct of future LTHS reviews. These are important duties which have to be taken up by a dedicated officer with appropriate experience and seniority.

7. Currently, an LTHS Sub-division, comprising seven posts temporarily redeployed from other divisions of HD on a full-time basis, provides secretariat support to the Steering Committee in view of the pressing need to support the work of the Steering Committee. The Sub-division will be disbanded after 31 March 2014. When the Sub-division was set up in September 2012, it was headed by the Assistant Director (LTHS), which was a supernumerary post created on 19 September 2012 for six months. Following the lapse of the post in March 2013, the existing Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Policy Support)/Assistant Director (Policy Support) (PAS(PS)/AD(PS)) in HD was assigned to take up the relevant duties in addition to his own as a stop-gap arrangement. As the head of the Policy Support Sub-division, PAS(PS)/AD(PS) is responsible for all housing-related LegCo business including the preparation of speeches and replies to motion debates and LegCo questions. Moreover, he has to deal with cross-divisional matters within HD and act as the co-ordinator for HD with relevant policy bureaux and departments on matters related to housing. Given the heavy workload on his existing schedule in the Policy Support Sub-division, PAS(PS)/AD(PS) is fully stretched with his original duties already. He has taken on additional duties relating to supporting the Steering Committee given the importance of the work as a stop-gap measure and does not have the capacity to take on further responsibilities in the long run.

8. As PAS(PS)/AD(PS) is already fully occupied with his own heavy schedule, he would not be able to take on the additional duties of the head of the SDU. It is therefore proposed that a supernumerary AOSGC post be created, designated as PAS(Housing) (Special Duties)/AD(Special Duties), to head the SDU to ensure that the LTHS review and related tasks will be taken forward in a timely and effective manner. Having taken into account the nature of the duties required, we propose that the post be created for two years. The job description for the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post is at Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

/Non-Directorate

Non-Directorate Support

9. Currently, the LTHS Sub-division is manned by staff redeployed internally from different divisions in HD on an ad-hoc basis. As indicated in paragraph 7 above, the Sub-division will be disbanded after 31 March 2014 and the staff will return to the permanent positions. Given the importance to take forward the initiatives under the LTHS review, there is a need to set up the SDU to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the tasks. To this end, we propose to create eight time-limited non-directorate posts to replace the current ad-hoc staff in the LTHS Sub-division to support the supernumerary AOSGC post. The proposed organisation chart of the SDU is at Enclosure 3.

Encl. 3

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

10. The proposed supernumerary AOSGC post will be put under the Strategy Division. Currently, the Strategy Division is headed by the Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)/Deputy Director (Strategy)(D4). There are at present four Assistant Directors (ADs) (three AOSGCs and one departmental D2 officer) under the Strategy Division. In addition to PAS(PS)/AD(PS), the other ADs are PAS(Housing) (Private Housing)/AD(Private Housing); AD(Strategic Planning); and AD(Housing Subsidies). We have critically examined the possibility of re-deploying these existing ADs to take up the duties of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post. However, as these officers are already fully stretched with their own duties including the processing of public rental housing (PRH) applications and allocation; the sale of the Home Ownership Scheme flats; conducting the biennial rent review and the annual review on the Waiting List income and asset limits of PRH applicants; monitoring the property market and the Government's measures to stabilise the property market; etc., they are not able to absorb the additional workload. Details of the work schedules of the four AD posts under the Strategy Division are at Enclosure 4.

Encl. 4

11. Apart from the above four AD posts in the Strategy Division, there are another 11 AD posts at D2 level in HD. We have also critically reviewed the possibility of redeploying these ADs to take up the tasks of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post. However, these officers are already fully occupied with their own schedules which span extensively across a wide range of areas. AD(Administration), who is the Departmental Secretary, is responsible for the overall administration of HD. AD(Finance) is responsible for the finance and accounting matters of HD/HA. AD(Legal Service) is responsible for the provision of legal advice to HD and HA. The remaining eight ADs are departmental grade officers responsible for professional areas of work including construction and project management, as well as estate management and maintenance. It is not possible for them to absorb the additional workload arising from the implementation of the LTHS recommendations.

Encl. 5 12. The proposed organisation chart of HD having taken into account the proposed SDU is at Enclosure 5.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposed creation of the supernumerary AOSGC post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,739,400. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,503,000.

14. The additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point for the non-directorate posts is \$4,901,400 and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$6,893,000. Subject to the Finance Committee's approval of the proposed supernumerary directorate post, we will include sufficient provision in the draft Estimates of the relevant financial years to meet the cost of the proposal.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Encl. 6 15. We consulted the LegCo Panel on Housing on the above staffing proposal on 2 December 2013. Panel Members sought supplementary information on the duties and responsibilities of the proposed supernumerary post and information on changes in staff establishment of HD. The relevant information was provided to Panel Members. A copy of the supplementary information is at Enclosure 6. The proposal was further discussed at the Panel meeting on 6 January 2014 and Members in general supported to submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee. Nevertheless, Members requested additional information about the duties of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post. Relevant information will be submitted to the Panel Members and all other LegCo Members before 15 January 2014 for reference.

ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

16. The establishment changes in HD for the past two years are as follows –

/Establishment

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 December 2013)	As at 1 April 2013	As at 1 April 2012	As at 1 April 2011
A	62#	62+(1)	50+(2)	50
B	1 351	1 329	1 183	1 175
C	7 794	7 802	7 608	7 603
Total	9 207	9 193+(1)	8 841+(2)	8 828

Note

- A - Ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent (including equivalent HA contract posts)
- B - Non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is above MPS Point 33 or equivalent (including equivalent HA contract posts)
- C - Non-directorate ranks the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent (including equivalent HA contract posts)
- () - number of supernumerary directorate posts created with the approval of the Establishment Subcommittee/Finance Committee
- # - as at 1 December 2013, there was no unfilled directorate post in HD

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

17. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the supernumerary AOSGC post in HD to cope with the increased workload relating to the implementation of the recommendations arising from the LTHS review. The grading and ranking of the post is considered appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities required.

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

18. The creation of the supernumerary directorate post, if approved, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

**Long Term Housing Strategy
Steering Committee**

Terms of Reference

- (a) To review, ascertain and define the changing housing needs and priorities of the community, including those in specific groups such as young people, the elderly, inadequately-housed households and first-time home buyers, and recommend measures to address these housing needs;
- (b) to review the forecast of housing demands for both public and private sectors; and
- (c) having regard to the overall supply of land for housing, to advise on the current planning and land use, as well as public and private housing policies and practices, and to recommend changes, where appropriate, to ensure that the policies and practices contribute efficiently and effectively to the policy objectives and priorities of the Chief Executive.

Membership List

	Name	Occupation/Professional Background
Chairman:	Secretary for Transport and Housing	
Members:	Mr. Horace Cheung Kwok-kwan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner, Cheung & Yeung Solicitors• District Councillor of Central and Western District
	Mr. Michael Choi Ngai-min	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Henderson (China) Investment Company Limited• Member, Hong Kong Housing Authority
	Professor Fung Ho-lup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
	Professor Eddie Hui Chi-man	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professor, Department of Building and Real Estate, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University• Member, Town Planning Board

Name	Occupation/Professional Background
Dr. Andy Kwan Cheuk-chiu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Associate Professor, Department of Economics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Mr. Andrew Lam Siu-lo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, AN Group (Holdings) Limited• Chairman of Antiquities Advisory Board
Mr. Lau Ping-cheung	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Property Development, Shui On Group• Fellow, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Mr. Fred Li Wah-ming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Fred Consultancy Company Limited• Member, Consumer Council
Professor Raymond So Wai-man	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dean, School of Business, Hang Seng Management College• Chairman, Finance Committee of the Hong Kong Housing Authority
Mr. Wan Man-yee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, M Y Wan & Associates Limited• Member, Hong Kong Housing Authority
Mr. Augustine Wong Ho-ming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director, Henderson Land Development Company Limited
Mr. Wong Kwun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman, Federation of Public Housing Estates
Mr. Stanley Wong Yuen-fai	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman, Subsidised Housing Committee of the Hong Kong Housing Authority• Vice-chairman, Town Planning Board
Mr. Marco Wu Moon-hoi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman, Hong Kong Housing Society

Ex-officio
Members:

Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)

Government Economist

**Job Description of the proposed
Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Special Duties)/
Assistant Director (Special Duties)**

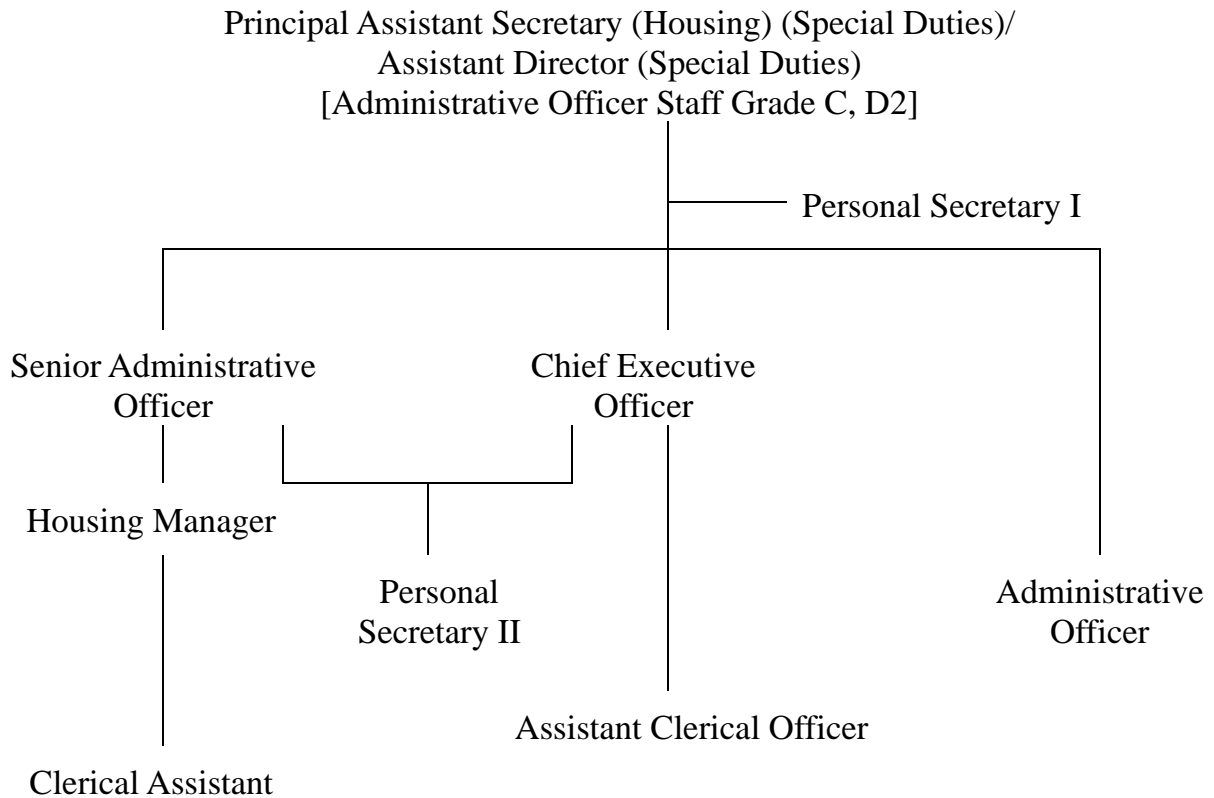
Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)/Deputy Director (Strategy)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To help formulate the Government's strategy on the Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) having taken into account the consultation report of the LTHS Steering Committee and other views received.
 2. To conduct policy reviews and to implement initiatives agreed by the Government arising from the LTHS review.
 3. To co-ordinate both within the Housing Department and with other relevant government bureaux/departments on the implementation of the new housing-related initiatives under the LTHS.
 4. To set up the framework and plan for the conduct of future LTHS reviews.
 5. To carry out any other duties.
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**Proposed Organisation Chart of the
Special Duties Unit**



Note

At present, secretarial support for Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Policy Support)/Assistant Director (Policy Support) for matters relating to Long Term Housing Strategy review is provided on a part-time basis.

**Duties and Responsibilities of
Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing)(Policy Support)/
Assistant Director (Policy Support),
Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Private Housing)/
Assistant Director (Private Housing),
Assistant Director (Strategic Planning) and
Assistant Director (Housing Subsidies)**

**Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Policy Support)/
Assistant Director (Policy Support) (PAS(PS)/AD(PS))**

PAS(PS)/AD(PS) is responsible for handling Legislative Council (LegCo) matters in relation to housing; providing support for the attendance of the Secretary for Transport and Housing and other senior officers of the Housing Department (HD) at the LegCo and other fora; and co-ordinating policy inputs on major housing issues within and outside HD, including the Policy Address and the Annual Budget.

2. As housing is one of the major concerns in the community, the volume of LegCo-related work, including LegCo questions, motion debates, case conferences, Panel meetings, and replies to representations to LegCo Secretariat, has been increasing tremendously in recent years. As such, PAS(PS)/AD(PS) is fully stretched in his existing schedule. Moreover, since March 2013, PAS(PS)/AD(PS) has taken up the additional duties to oversee the work of the LTHS Sub-division as a stop-gap arrangement but this arrangement cannot be sustained.

**Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Private Housing)/
Assistant Director (Private Housing) (PAS(PH)/AD(PH))**

3. PAS(PH)/AD(PH) is responsible for monitoring the private residential property market; formulating and overseeing measures to ensure the stable and healthy development of the residential property market; liaising with the Estate Agents Authority on policy matters relating to the regulation of estate agents; handling policy issues in relation to the subsidised housing projects of the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS); as well as handling LegCo business and public and media enquiries in relation to the aforementioned subjects.

4. Specifically, PAS(PH)/AD(PH) oversees the analysis and compilation of reports on the projected supply of first-hand residential properties, which are published on a quarterly basis for public consumption. The post-holder also oversees the collation and preparation of various analyses to monitor private residential developments. PAS(PH)/AD(PH) is also heavily involved in the formulation and implementation of various demand-side management measures, including the Special Stamp Duty and the Buyer's Stamp Duty, and is currently providing support to the LegCo's scrutiny of the relevant bills, i.e. the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill 2012 and the Stamp Duty (Amendment) Bill 2013. PAS(PH)/AD(PH) is also working closely with the HKHS on the implementation of the subsidised housing projects undertaken by the HKHS.

Assistant Director (Strategic Planning) (AD(SP))

5. As the data and statistics co-ordinator of HD, AD(SP) is responsible for compiling and disseminating the statistics for use by HD; arranging and implementing statistical surveys; and responding to data requests within and outside HD. AD(SP) also monitors the average waiting time of the applicants on the Waiting List of public rental housing (PRH). In the light of the increasing public concern on the demand for public housing and average waiting time, AD(SP) is expected to be heavily involved in the analysis of data and formulation of projections, especially in the annual exercise of the special analysis of the Waiting List position and the investigation into cases with long waiting time.

6. AD(SP) is also responsible for overseeing the HA's corporate planning process; conducting the long term housing demand projection; formulating policies on the revitalisation of the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) secondary market including the interim scheme to extend the HOS secondary market to people with white form status; reviewing the income and asset limits for PRH and HOS/interim scheme; conducting the public housing rent review, monitoring the overall average waiting time for PRH, conducting and supervising statistical researches.

7. Looking ahead, AD(SP) will have to conduct an annual review of the long term housing demand projection by drawing on inputs from various parties, such as the Census and Statistics Department and Government Economist. The post-holder will also be heavily involved in the biennial rent review of PRH flats; the annual review on the PRH Waiting List income and asset limits; as well as the formulation of the income and asset limits before the launch of the sale of HOS flats.

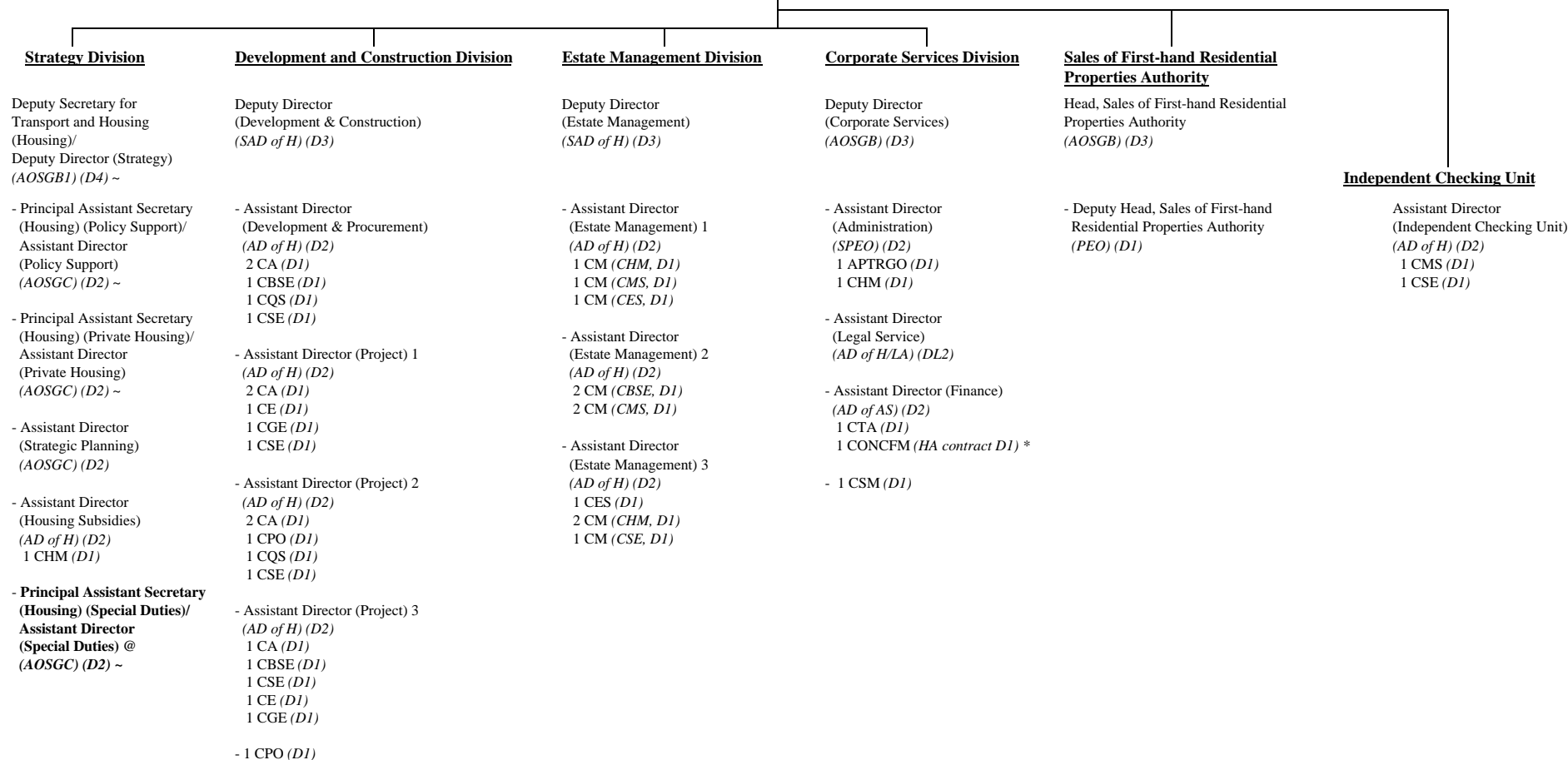
Assistant Director (Housing Subsidies) (AD(HS))

8. AD(HS) is responsible for the policy and day-to-day operation of the application and allocation of PRH flats. With the rising demand for PRH and the surging growth of PRH applications, AD(HS) is required to make continuous improvement to the system to respond to public aspirations. The post-holder also needs to maintain close co-ordination with other divisions in HD to conduct regular checks to ensure that the limited housing resources are fully utilised. To cope with the redevelopment strategy of the HA, AD(HS) is also involved in managing the clearance programme and arranging for rehousing of the affected tenants.

9. In addition, AD(HS) is responsible for the policy and operation of the sale of subsidised flats, namely, surplus HOS flats; new HOS flats; HOS Secondary Market Scheme; Tenants Purchase Scheme; and the interim scheme to extend the HOS secondary market to people with white form status.

Proposed Organisation Chart of Housing Department

Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)/Director of Housing
(AOSGA1) (D8) ~



Legends:

AD of AS - Assistant Director of Accounting Services
AD of H - Assistant Director of Housing
AOSGA1 - Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1
AOSGB1 - Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1
AOSGB - Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
AOSGC - Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
APTRGO - Assistant Principal Training Officer
CA - Chief Architect
CBSE - Chief Building Services Engineer
CE - Chief Engineer
CES - Chief Estate Surveyor
CGE - Chief Geotechnical Engineer
CHM - Chief Housing Manager

CM - Chief Manager
CMS - Chief Maintenance Surveyor
CONCFM - Contract Chief Finance Manager
CPO - Chief Planning Officer
CQS - Chief Quantity Surveyor
CSE - Chief Structural Engineer
CSM - Chief Systems Manager
CTA - Chief Treasury Accountant
HA - Housing Authority
LA - Legal Advice
PEO - Principal Executive Officer
SAD of H - Senior Assistant Director of Housing
SPEO - Senior Principal Executive Officer

~ - These posts are given bureau designations in addition to normal departmental designations to better reflect the nature of their duties which are largely policy-related.

* - HA contract post

@ - Supernumerary post proposed for creation to cope with the workload arising from the implementation of the recommendations of the Long Term Housing Strategy review with effect from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016.

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

**Supplementary Information -
Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of
Administrative Officer Staff Grade C in the Housing Department
for the implementation of the initiatives under
the Long Term Housing Strategy Review**

This paper provides the additional information required by Members at the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing meeting held on 2 December 2013.

DETAILS

Comparison of staff establishment

2. Prior to July 2002, policy formulation for both public and private housing, as well as co-ordination of government actions in the execution of housing policies and programmes were undertaken by the then Housing Branch¹ (HB). HB conducted the last Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) review at the beginning of 1996 and published a consultation document in January 1997 for public consultation up to end May 1997.

3. To prepare for that consultation exercise, one supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post and one supernumerary Chief Planning Officer (CPO) (D1) post were created under the delegated power of the then Secretary for Housing from October 1996 for six months. Subsequently, upon the approval of the Finance Committee of LegCo in March 1997, the two supernumerary posts were converted to permanent posts and headed the newly established Housing Strategy Division of HB with effect from 1 April 1997 to cope with the work arising from the LTHS review. The White Paper on LTHS, entitled “Home for Hong Kong People into the 21st Century”, was subsequently issued in February 1998. It outlined a number of strategies to help achieve the targets that the Government announced in housing.

¹ The Housing Branch was renamed as Housing Bureau in July 1997.

4. With the creation of these two directorate posts, the total number of directorate posts in the then HB was eight as at 1 April 1997. This included the Secretary for Housing; one Deputy Secretary for Housing (D3); two Principal Assistant Secretaries (D2) who headed the Private Housing Division and the Public Housing Division respectively; one Government Engineer (D2) and one Chief Engineer (D1) who headed the Project Management Division; and the two newly created posts referred to in paragraph 3 above (i.e. one D2 and one D1 post) who headed the Housing Strategy Division.

Re-organisation of the then HB and HD

5. In order to enhance the efficient delivery of the public housing programmes, a Committee on the Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing was set up in June 2000. In its report published in June 2002, it recommended that the then HB be amalgamated with the HD to form a single housing organisation. In parallel with this amalgamation, the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (HPLB) was set up in July 2002 with the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (SHPL) tasked to oversee all policies related to housing, planning and lands.

6. Under this new set up, the newly amalgamated housing organisation was headed by the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Housing), who was also the Director of Housing. He was responsible to SHPL on all housing policy and administration matters, including public housing and private housing.

7. Arising from the amalgamation of the then HB and the HD, there was a net **deletion** of **four** directorate posts with effect from January 2003, including the Director of Housing (D7) post and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) post. Thereafter, there was re-organisation of HD from 2003 to 2007 to streamline the organisational structure and the directorate establishment was further downsized by a net **deletion** of **24** directorate posts, including the AOSGC(D2) post and the CPO(D1) post created in April 1997 for the last LTHS review (referred to in paragraph 3 above). Hence, since the amalgamation of the then HB and the HD, there has been a **total net deletion of 28 directorate posts**.

Existing establishment under THB

8. Upon the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat with effect on 1 July 2007, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) was established and took over the housing portion (including HD) previously under the purview of the HPLB without any change in establishment and duties. From July 2007 to end December 2013, there has been a net increase of 13 directorate posts. Among them, two are general grades posts (one AOSGB (D3) post and one Principal Executive Officer (D1) post) which were created for the setting up of the Sales of First-hand Residential Properties Authority. The remaining posts are all professional grades posts created primarily to cope with the increase in workload for increasing housing production and better estate management and maintenance.

9. In short, the change in staff establishment (including both civil service and Housing Authority contract staff) following the amalgamation of the then HB and the HD since January 2003 is summarised in the table below –

	Establishment as at 1 January 2003	Establishment as at 1 July 2007[#]	Establishment as at 1 December 2013
Directorate	73 [*]	49	62
Non-directorate	12 266	8 716	9 145
Total	12 339	8 765	9 207

* After the net deletion of four directorate posts arising from the amalgamation of the then HB and the HD with effect from 1 January 2003.

There was a reduction of both directorate and non-directorate establishment of HD arising from downsizing of HD from 2003 to 2007 (due to cession of production of HOS flats, reduction in public housing production, the divestment of the HA's retail and car-parking facilities and changes in service requirements and modes of delivery over time).

Duties and responsibilities of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post

10. As stated in Panel paper CB(1)411/13-14(07), there is a need to set up a dedicated Special Duties Unit, to be headed by an officer with appropriate experience and seniority, to co-ordinate efforts of all relevant bureaux and departments to evaluate the views received and to help formulate the Government's strategy on the LTHS taking into account public views.

11. During the public consultation period, we have attended over 50 meetings with interested parties, including six open fora organised by the Steering Committee on LTHS for the general public and stakeholders; meetings of the 18 District Councils; meeting of the LegCo Subcommittee on LTHS and its public hearing; meeting of the Hong Kong Housing Authority; and other meetings/discussion fora upon invitation from stakeholders and concern groups. In addition, some 800 written submissions have been received. They cover a wide range of housing issues involving both policy and operational matters; and covering issues relating to both public and private housing, many of which are highly controversial. Considerable effort will be required to work out practical ways forward on many of these issues.

12. The proposed supernumerary AOSGC post-holder is expected to play a key role in co-ordinating efforts both among different divisions in HD; as well as with other relevant policy bureaux/departments in kick starting appropriate policy reviews on these housing issues with a view to formulating revisions to existing policies or measures in a timely manner. Furthermore, he/she will be responsible for setting up the framework for future reviews on the LTHS, such as how the annual housing demand projections should be updated to reflect any changes in policies or circumstances for deriving an appropriate housing supply target, and to monitor the progress of all follow-up actions.

13. It should also be noted that the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post will be responsible for issues on the policy side. The post-holder and his/her team will not be directly involved in the production of public rental housing or Home Ownership Scheme flats.