

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Proposed Creation of One Permanent Chief Architect Post in the Housing Department for Coping with the Additional Workload Arising from the Further Increase in Public Housing Production Target

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposal for creation of one permanent Chief Architect (CA) (D1) post in the Housing Department (HD)¹ with effect from the date of approval by Finance Committee (FC) to cope with the additional workload arising from the further increase in public housing production target as pledged in the 2014 Policy Address and promulgated in the Long Term Housing Strategy 2014.

JUSTIFICATION

Background

2. The Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address in January last year that the Government's housing supply target was to provide a total of 470 000 units in the next ten years, with public housing accounting for 60%, i.e. about 280 000 units. Subsequently, the Government promulgated the Long Term Housing Strategy 2014 in December last year. Under the Long Term Housing Strategy Implementation Milestones as at December 2014, the public housing supply target for the ten-year period from 2015-16 to 2024-25 will be 290 000 units, comprising 200 000 public rental housing (PRH) units and 90 000 subsidised sale flats. To meet this target, the Government aims to provide an average of about 20 000 PRH units and about 9 000 subsidised sale flats (mostly Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) units) per year. The increase in the production of PRH and HOS units is far more than what was pledged by the Government previously (i.e. an average of 20 000 PRH units and 5 000 HOS units per year).

¹ HD is the executive arm of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA). HD staff (all being civil servants) are seconded to the HA, which also employs its own staff under HA contract terms. Expenditure for salaries and allowances for civil servants working in the HA is reimbursed by the HA.

3. The above increase in public housing production target has considerable workload implications for all divisions in HD, in particular the Development and Construction Division (DCD) which is tasked to produce PRH and HOS flats. With the approval of the FC, a total of 11 directorate posts have been created in DCD to cope with the additional workload since July 2012, including –

- (a) six directorate posts, namely one Assistant Director of Housing (AD of H) (D2), one CA (D1), one Chief Building Services Engineer (CBSE) (D1), one Chief Planning Officer (CPO) (D1), one Chief Quantity Surveyor (CQS) (D1) and one Chief Structural Engineer (CSE) (D1), approved by FC on 13 July 2012 (vide EC(2012-13)6) to kick-start the planning and design work relating to the resumption of the HOS as announced in the 2011-12 Policy Address;
- (b) two chief professional posts, namely one Chief Engineer (CE) (D1) and one Chief Geotechnical Engineer (CGE) (D1), approved by FC on 15 March 2013 (vide EC(2012-13)21) as the construction and development programme of HOS has moved into the detailed design and construction stages and it has become apparent that most of the sites identified for the new HOS have very complicated engineering constraints or are located in Designated/Scheduled Area² or are exposed to natural terrain hazards, which call for strengthened support for engineering input; and
- (c) three chief professional posts, namely one CA (D1), one CSE (D1) and one CE (D1), approved by FC on 6 June 2014 (vide EC(2013-14)25) to cope with the increase in workload arising from the increase in public housing production target by 5 000 PRH units per year on average from 2018-19 onwards as announced in the 2013 Policy Address and to administer and implement housing-related infrastructural projects under the Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 711³.

² As defined under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), these are areas with complex geological conditions e.g. cavities or in proximity to railway lines and sewage tunnels, which have significant impacts on the proposed foundation design, geological works and construction programme.

³ Provisions under this Head are expenditures on housing-related infrastructural projects.

In addition to the above, the directorate support of DCD has also been strengthened by the return of temporarily redeployed chief professional posts from the Independent Checking Unit, including one CA post and one part-time CSE post as mentioned in EC(2012-13)21.

4. In view of the continued and significant increase in workload for meeting the further increase in public housing production target, we need to strengthen the directorate support in DCD by creating one additional CA post. The ensuing paragraphs provide detailed justification for this proposed post.

Functions and Directorate set-up of DCD

5. DCD is responsible for the production of PRH and HOS flats. The work includes all facets of project management and production from the initial site search and feasibility studies, community engagement, planning, design, contract management, commissioning for occupation, up to the expiry of the initial maintenance period and the settlement of final accounts. DCD is also responsible for establishing operational policies on procurement, design, construction, quality performance assessment, dispute resolution, research and development, safety and environmental management for public housing development in Hong Kong.

6. DCD is headed by a Senior Assistant Director of Housing (D3) designated as the Deputy Director (Development and Construction) (DD(DC)), who is now underpinned by four ADs of H (D2) and 24 chief professionals⁴ (at D1 level). DCD works as a fully integrated multi-disciplinary matrix organisation to deliver the Public Housing Construction Programme (PHCP) and to provide input from all professional disciplines as required under each and every housing development. The existing organisation chart of DCD is at **Annex A**.

⁴ The 24 chief professionals include eight CAs, two CBSEs, three CEs, two CGEs, two CPOs, two CQs and five CSEs.

Need for a Permanent CA Post

7. DCD is working against a severely compressed timetable on both PRH and HOS developments. The further increase in public housing production by about 4 000 HOS units annually poses a pressing challenge and will stretch the existing manpower beyond the limit. There is thus an urgent need for an additional chief professional post in DCD in order to ensure timely delivery of the increased public housing production target. Given that CA plays a leading role in the entire public housing development from planning to completion, we propose to create one CA post.

8. There are currently eight CA posts in HD, all are put under DCD, namely CA/1, CA/2, CA/3, CA/4, CA/5, CA/6, CA/Development and Standards (CA/D&S) and CA/Procurement (CA/P). CA/1, CA/2, CA/3, CA/4, CA/5 and CA/6 are responsible for handling new public housing developments and monitoring of the works. CA/D&S is responsible for handling central functions including development and standards matters, while CA/P is responsible for handling corporate functions including management of the list of contractors, procurement/tendering and other support functions for the HA. Both CA/D&S and CA/P are fully stretched due to substantial increase in workload in recent years as a result of the increase in production quantum, housing stock, product type (including HOS) and the associated procurement activities, new line of client requirements for sale of flats, plus other subsisting enhancement of design standards (such as, Carbon Labelling Scheme, Barrier Free Access provision, Sustainable Design, etc.), specifications (e.g. for implementation of environmental initiatives such as Building Environmental Assessment Method Plus (BEAM Plus)⁵) and procurement systems (e.g. an enhanced system to interview and quarantine contractors involved in site safety accidents or incidents that may cause potentially serious consequences or serious accidents, increasing briefings and experience sharing for contractors, etc.), and increased tendering due to the increase in public housing production projects.

9. The other six CAs act as Project Managers of the HA and are responsible for co-ordinating the public consultation and community engagement exercises from the planning stage. The CAs are also responsible

⁵ BEAM Plus is a locally devised mechanism developed by the Hong Kong Green Building Council for comprehensive green building assessment, certification and performance labeling.

for acting as the equivalent to Authorised Persons under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), functioning as the co-ordinator and Contract Manager for supervision and delivery of the completed buildings. Despite the creation of two additional CA posts (i.e. CA/4 and CA/6) and the return of one CA (i.e. CA/5) in the past two years or so to handle the new HOS (by CA/4 and CA/5) and the additional 5 000 PRH (by CA/6) developments, and oversee the conduct of site potential and feasibility studies, the six CA Teams are fully engaged as a result of the increased complexity of projects, rising public expectation, and the need to comply with the latest statutory requirements and various initiatives that have been implemented over the years (such as Gross Floor Area (GFA) Concessions⁶, implementation of BEAM Plus Requirements and management of BEAM Plus Site Measurement Consultancies, Air Ventilation Assessments, Visual Impact Assessment Studies, Surprise Safety Inspection Scheme, etc.).

10. Furthermore, according to the PHCP, there is a significant increase in site formation, housing-related infrastructures and supporting community facilities like community halls, open spaces, public transport interchanges, etc. included in or associated with the public housing projects. All these must be completed as early as 2017-18 and executed as an integral part of the public housing projects. These have substantially increased the workload of the project teams under the leadership of CAs. With a further increase in the public housing production in the coming ten years, additional manpower is required urgently. We therefore propose to create an additional CA post to strengthen the directorate support.

11. With the creation of the proposed CA post (to be designated as CA/7), seven CAs (i.e. CA/1 to CA/7) will serve as the project managers for public housing projects for the annual average housing production of about 20 000 PRH and 9 000 HOS units in ten years, including all associated housing-related infrastructures and supporting community facilities, providing steer and leadership for the project from inception to post-construction stages of the development, leading community engagement and implementation of associated improvement works in the development (such as footbridges, lift towers, community halls, welfare and community facilities, etc.), and overseeing the provision of architectural services for the potential site studies, planning, design and construction of the additional public housing development.

⁶ GFA Concession refers to GFA of those features or areas that can be exempted or disregarded in the overall GFA calculation. Studies on new measures have to be conducted in accordance with the Practice Notes for Authorised Persons, Registered Structural Engineers and Registered Geotechnical Engineers (PNAP) No. APP-151 and APP-152.

The division of work among these seven CAs will be by project basis, taking into consideration the different stages of works, and possibly location of the projects. This arrangement will allow flexibility in staff deployment to best suit the operational requirements which may change from time to time. The proposed job description of CA/1-7 is at **Annex B**. There will not be any major changes to the responsibilities of the other two existing CAs.

12. With the proposed creation of the CA post, each of the four ADs of H will oversee and supervise five to seven Sections. Together with one Section under direct supervision of DD(DC), there will be a total of 25 Sections in the matrix organisation delivering the PHCP. The proposed organisation chart of DCD is at **Annex C**. The proposed organisation chart of HD is at **Annex D**.

Alternatives Considered

13. We have critically examined whether the additional workload can be absorbed through internal redistribution of work, redeployment of resources or re-engineering of work processes. Having regard to the reasons as set out in paragraphs 7 to 11 above, we consider it not feasible for the existing CAs in DCD to take up the additional duties without affecting the discharging of their own duties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The proposed creation of the permanent CA post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,552,800. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, will be \$2,100,000.

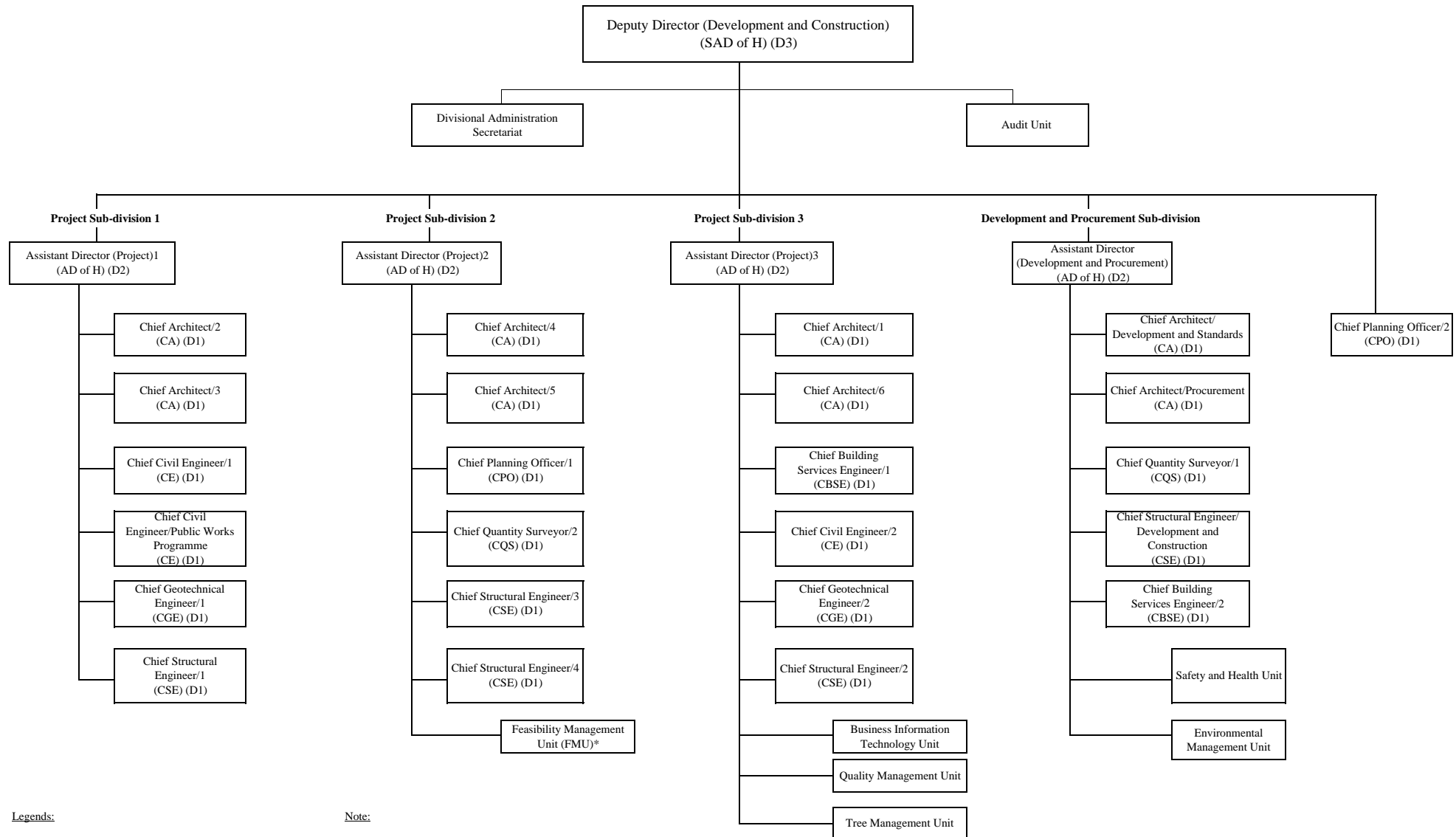
15. About 150 non-directorate civil service posts will also be created in various divisions of HD in 2015-16 to meet the further increase in public housing production target. The additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, are about \$68,000,000 and \$102,000,000 respectively. The full cost for these posts, together with the proposed CA post, will be recovered from the HA under the established arrangement for HD staff seconded to the HA.

ADVICE SOUGHT

16. Members are invited to comment on the proposal. Subject to Members' support, we will seek the approval of the Establishment Subcommittee and FC.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
February 2015**

Existing Organisation Chart of Development and Construction Division, Housing Department



Legends:

- AD of H - Assistant Director of Housing
- CA - Chief Architect
- CBSE - Chief Building Services Engineer
- CE - Chief Engineer
- CGE - Chief Geotechnical Engineer
- CPO - Chief Planning Officer
- CQS - Chief Quantity Surveyor
- CSE - Chief Structural Engineer
- SAD of H - Senior Assistant Director of Housing

Note:

* FMU has been put under AD(P)2 wef 1.9.2014

**Proposed Job Description
Chief Architect/1-7**

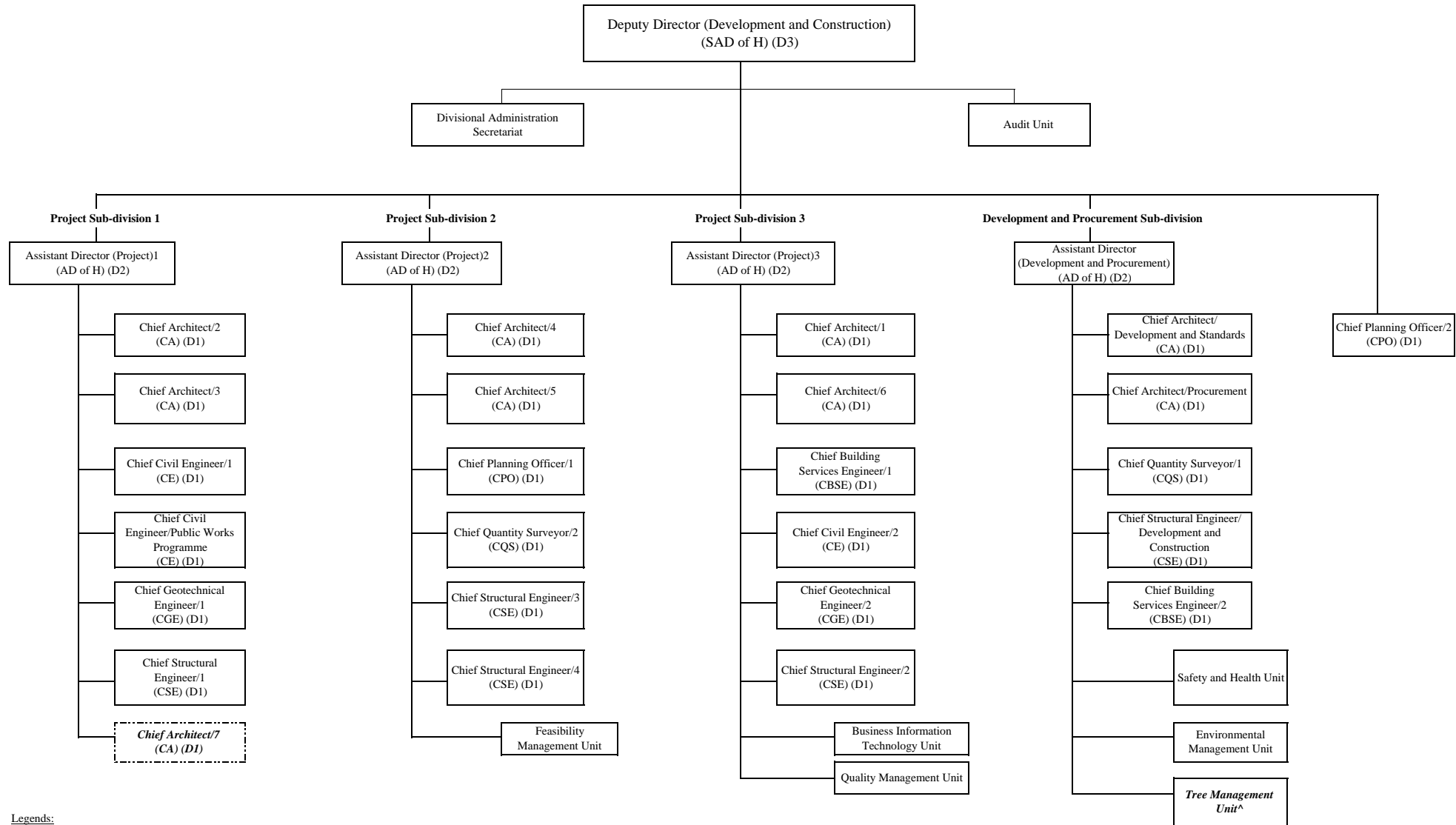
Rank : Chief Architect (D1)

Responsible to : Assistant Director (Project)1/2/3

Major Duties and Responsibilities –

1. to prepare, update and monitor the programme and budget of public housing projects assigned at all stages of the development process;
2. to take up specific responsibilities of public housing developments such as Authorised Person and Contract Manager;
3. to facilitate the preparation of development parameters, to carry out feasibility studies and to prepare master layout plan, scheme design and detailed design on sites included in the Public Housing Construction Programme and Public Housing Development Forecast for all types of public housing developments including those for rental, sales and redevelopment;
4. to oversee and manage the performance of professional services providers/contractors employed in public housing developments to ensure the standard of service and production meeting the specified requirements;
5. to assist in the formulation of departmental policies, and to initiate and contribute to special studies/researches relating to the design and construction of public housing and ancillary facilities; and
6. to liaise with the concerned government departments and bureaux on the implementation of public housing development and ancillary facilities, and to monitor the progress of works.

Proposed Organisation Chart of Development and Construction Division, Housing Department



Legends:

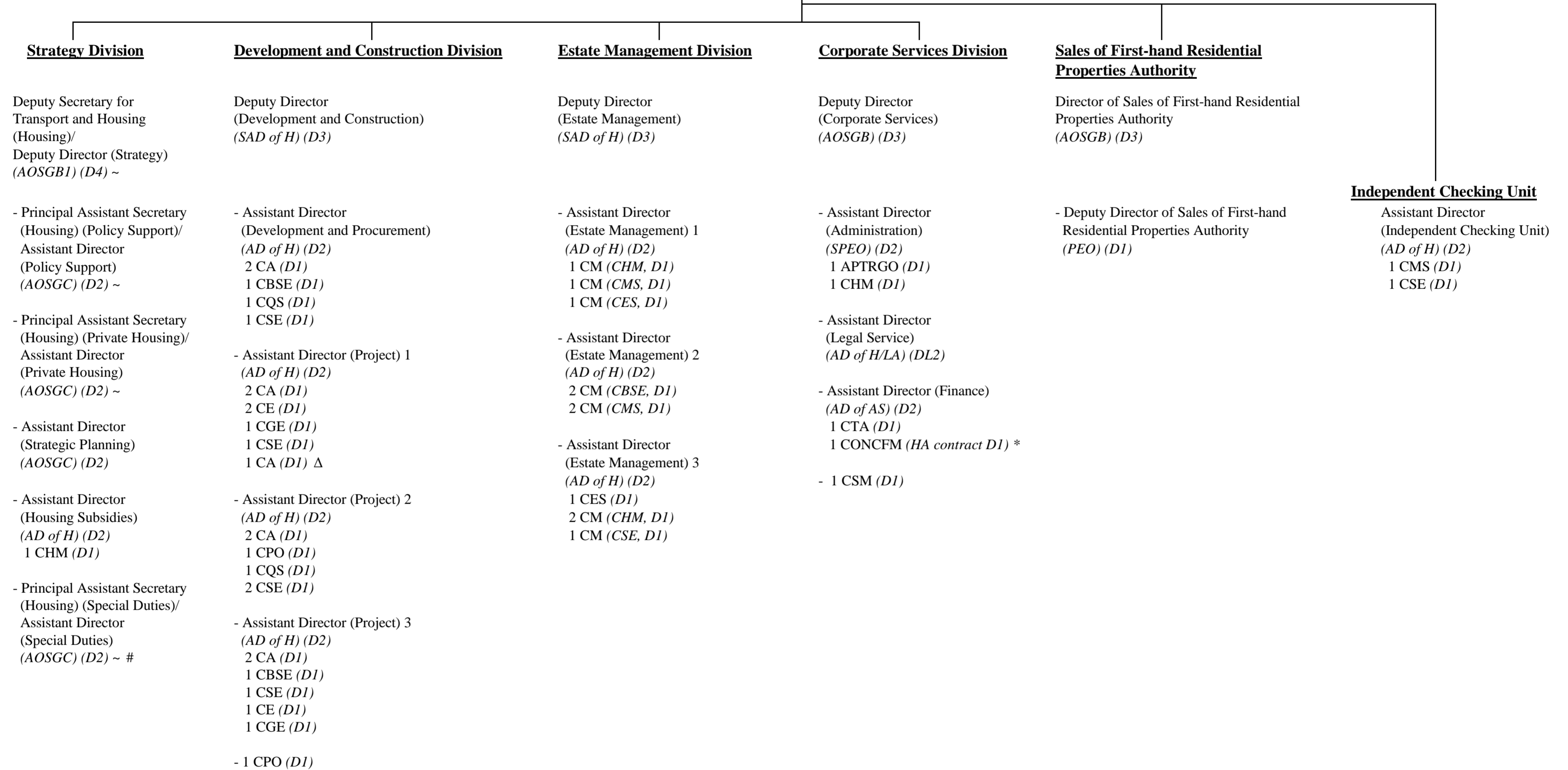
- AD of H - Assistant Director of Housing
- CA - Chief Architect
- CBSE - Chief Building Services Engineer
- CE - Chief Engineer
- CGE - Chief Geotechnical Engineer
- CPO - Chief Planning Officer
- CQS - Chief Quantity Surveyor
- CSE - Chief Structural Engineer
- SAD of H - Senior Assistant Director of Housing

Note:

- Post proposed to be created
- ^ - From Project Sub-division 3 to Development and Procurement Sub-division

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	CM	- Chief Manager
AD of H	- Assistant Director of Housing	CMS	- Chief Maintenance Surveyor
AOSGA1	- Administrative Officer Staff Grade A1	CONCFM	- Contract Chief Finance Manager
AOSGB1	- Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1	CPO	- Chief Planning Officer
AOSGB	- Administrative Officer Staff Grade B	CQS	- Chief Quantity Surveyor
AOSGC	- Administrative Officer Staff Grade C	CSE	- Chief Structural Engineer
APTRGO	- Assistant Principal Training Officer	CSM	- Chief Systems Manager
CA	- Chief Architect	CTA	- Chief Treasury Accountant
CBSE	- Chief Building Services Engineer	HA	- Housing Authority
CE	- Chief Engineer	LA	- Legal Advice
CES	- Chief Estate Surveyor	PEO	- Principal Executive Officer
CGE	- Chief Geotechnical Engineer	SAD of H	- Senior Assistant Director of Housing
CHM	- Chief Housing Manager	SPEO	- Senior Principal Executive Officer

Note:

- ~ - 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
- Δ - Post proposed for creation