

Legislative Council Panel on Development

Proposed creation of one permanent post of Chief Engineer in the Drainage Services Department for cavern development projects

Follow-up Issues of the Meeting held on 27 October 2020

At the Panel on Development meeting on 27 October 2020, the Administration was requested to provide the following information:

A projection of the project loading, taking into account the timeframe for completion of on-going projects as well as those planned/in the pipeline in the coming years, and the redeployment plan upon project completion for the existing Chief Engineers of the Drainage Services Department in order to provide full justifications on the long-term need for creating the proposed permanent post of Chief Engineer (D1)/Cavern Projects post.

This note sets out our response to the request.

2. On 27 October 2020, we consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Development on our previous proposal of creating a permanent Chief Engineer (CE) post in the Drainage Services Department (DSD) dedicated for cavern sewage treatment facility projects. Majority of Members who had spoken on this item did not oppose to the submission of the staffing proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration, while some Members had concerns on the need for a permanent CE post. Having considered the comments of the Members and following the Chief Executive's commitment of reviewing staffing proposals as announced in the 2020 Policy Address, we have revised the original proposal to the creation of a supernumerary CE post for five years with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee up to 31 March 2026. The supernumerary CE post will lead a new Cavern Projects Division to mainly implement the "Relocation of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works to caverns". We will review the continued need of the post beyond March 2026 nearer the time of substantial completion of the main caverns complex of this relocation project in 2026, taking into account the progress of different projects and tasks of DSD as well as the latest situation and development needs.

3. DSD has critically examined the possibility of redeploying other existing directorate officers within DSD to take on the work of the proposed post. The other incumbents are already fully engaged in their respective work schedules, including taking forward a large number of

on-going and new drainage, sewage treatment and sewerage projects, such as Shek Wu Hui Effluent Polishing Plant, Yuen Long Effluent Polishing Plant, the upgrading of Tai Po Sewage Treatment Works and the revitalisation of Tsui Ping River, Tai Wai Nullah, Fo Tan Nullah and Jordan Valley Nullah, etc., overseeing the operation, maintenance and minor improvement works of the existing drainage and sewerage systems, as well as coordinating district drainage and sewerage matters. It is operationally impossible for them to take up the new tasks without adversely affecting their discharge of current duties.

**Development Bureau
Drainage Services Department
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