

**For discussion
on 1 March 2021**

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Creation of a supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post in the Housing Department

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposed creation of a supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post to oversee the implementation of the Funding Scheme to Support Transitional Housing Projects by Non-government Organisations (NGOs) (Funding Scheme) and the operation of the Task Force on Transitional Housing (TFTH).

BACKGROUND

2. The proposal to create a supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post as the Deputy Head of the TFTH was considered by the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing in November 2019, and the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) of the Finance Committee (FC) in May 2020. During the discussions, LegCo Members' concerns mainly rested on the implementation of the transitional housing projects such as financial and technical capability of the NGOs to carry out the projects, the rent level, the application procedures and the use of funding by NGOs, site selection, construction method, production level of transitional housing each year, transport and community facilities, etc. They also raised views on the structure of the TFTH. The proposal was then put to vote at the meeting of FC held on 13 July 2020. However, as the votes for and against the proposal were equally divided, the proposal was rejected upon application of Rule 45¹ of the Finance Committee Procedure.

3. Notwithstanding the FC's voting result, it was the general view of Members of the Panel on Housing as well as the ESC that for efficient implementation of transitional housing projects within the tight schedule in order to expedite the supply of transitional housing units, high-level leadership and coordination is essential to pull together efforts of various Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds) to take a proactive role in assisting NGOs concerned by addressing issues

¹ Rule 45 of the Finance Committee Procedure stipulates that the Committee makes decisions on all matters by a majority of the members present and voting. Neither the Chairman nor any other member presiding shall vote, unless the votes of the other members are equally divided, in which case he shall have a casting vote [Rule 71(5B)], but the casting vote shall not be exercised in such a way as to produce a majority vote in favour of the question put.

from policy perspective and ironing out technical/practical problems (such as the identification of suitable sites, especially vacant Government, Institution or Community sites, for building transitional housing, and also the pressure on infrastructure and community facilities brought about by transitional housing projects) as the related public consultation and town planning procedures could be complex and time-consuming. There is also a need to have proper steer and oversight of the administration of the Funding Scheme, as well as to review the policies on transitional housing and the approach for implementing new transitional housing projects with reference to operational experience gathered and the views of stakeholders collated. Having considered the above and the latest operational need, we consider it necessary to put forward this proposal for creating a supernumerary AOSGC post in TFTH.

PROPOSAL

4. We propose creating a supernumerary AOSGC (D2) post in Head 62 Housing Department (HD) to work under Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) with immediate effect on the date of approval of the FC up to 31 March 2025.

JUSTIFICATIONS

5. Facilitation of the provision of transitional housing is one of the six new housing initiatives announced by the Chief Executive on 29 June 2018. TFTH under THB has been actively participating and facilitating various short-term initiatives proposed and implemented by the community with a view to increasing the supply of transitional housing to relieve the pressure of families living in unpleasant conditions and those waiting for Public Rental Housing for a long time.

6. On 25 November 2020, the Chief Executive announced in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government had identified land for providing 13 200 transitional housing units for the coming three years from 2020-21 to 2022-23. As at February 2021, we have identified additional land sufficient to slightly increase the provision of transitional housing to about 14 000 units, which fall short of the target of 15 000 by only 7%. We would continue to look into various possible options with a view to further increasing the provision of transitional housing.

7. Following FC's approval of the allocation of \$5 billion to set up the Funding Scheme on 6 March 2020², details of the Funding Scheme were drawn

² Paper No. FCR(2019-20)45 refers.

up and announced in June 2020, the Assessment Committee³ for the Funding Scheme was also formed and has been considering applications from NGOs for subsidy for their proposed transitional housing projects. During the period from July 2020 to February 2021, the Assessment Committee held four meetings and approved funding for ten projects, which were targeted to provide about 4 800 transitional housing units. The total funding amount is \$2,615.2 million. A proposed injection of additional \$3.3 billion funding to the Funding Scheme was also supported by the Panel at the recent meeting held on 14 January 2021⁴. LegCo's approval on the proposed injection will be sought in accordance with the established mechanism.

8. In addition to identifying land and resolving relevant issues relating to government policies and facilitate NGOs to conduct feasibility studies, the TFTH also assists and supports NGOs to construct transitional housing units, as well as actively provides comments to NGOs on different aspects of transitional housing projects, including the architectural layout, environmental matters, traffic, fire services and infrastructure provisions, etc. There is a pressing need for strengthening directorate support to oversee the operation of TFTH, including the implementation and enhancement of the Funding Scheme in the light of the experience gained so far especially in relation to coordination with various B/Ds, and feedback received from NGOs on the assistance they require in carrying out the projects to meet the latest target of supplying 15 000 transitional housing units within a tight schedule, and also implementation of other initiatives in facilitating transitional housing projects proposed and implemented by NGOs.

9. The holder of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post will be responsible for –

- (a) supervising the TFTH in facilitating the transitional housing projects by NGOs, including the provision of secretariat support to the Assessment Committee in considering applications for the Funding Scheme, and development of a framework that is conducive to effective operation of approved transitional housing projects, in particular the large-scale projects in the New Territories, such as the approved projects at Kong Ha Wai and Tung Tau, Yuen Long. Both of which can provide about 2 000 transitional housing units;
- (b) overseeing the development of policy on transitional housing (including exploring new/more initiatives for supplying additional transitional housing units, coordinating policy inputs from B/Ds,

³ The Assessment Committee is composed of six non-official members and two official members from the HD and Social Welfare Department, with the Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) as the Chairman. Three of the six non-official members are the representatives of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, and the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors.

⁴ Panel on Housing LC Paper No. **CB(1)299/20-21** refers.

etc.) and a procedural framework to facilitate the implementation of new initiatives on transitional housing;

- (c) liaising with relevant B/Ds concerning planning, land, infrastructural and environmental issues in the application for temporary change of use for land, and also supervising necessary consultancy work for feasibility study of potential sites;
- (d) playing a key role in co-ordinating efforts both among different teams of TFTH comprising mainly multi-disciplinary professional staff as well as with other relevant B/Ds in order to achieve the latest supply target of transitional housing; and assisting the NGOs in their discussions with various stakeholders (e.g. B/Ds and developers) and in determining the framework of the transitional housing projects;
- (e) overseeing the operation of the Funding Scheme having regard to its scope, the complexity and sensitivity of the funded projects; as well as handling LegCo business and public/media enquiries in relation to transitional housing; and
- (f) overseeing the review of the transitional housing policy including the Funding Scheme as and when necessary, and making recommendations for improvements and adjustments as appropriate.

10. In view of the pressing need of the above work and the transitional housing projects are normally expected to be in service for not fewer than three years, a supernumerary AOSGC post will be required immediately on the date of approval by the FC up to 31 March 2025 to take charge of the whole range of work above. We will review the requirement of the post, together with the non-directorate time-limited posts of TFTH, nearer the time having regard to the development of transitional housing in the next four years.

11. The post holder of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post, to be designated as the Deputy Head of TFTH established under THB, will work closely with and provide support to the USTH (who is the approving authority for transitional housing projects under the Funding Scheme) regarding matters of TFTH, monitoring individual projects as well as performing any other duties that may arise in relation to transitional housing. The Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) (DSTH(H)) will be his/her direct supervisor and responsible for appraising his/her performance. He/She will be supported by three teams, namely the Facilitation/Advisory Team, the Policy Team and the Vetting/Audit Team as follows –

- (a) The Facilitation/Advisory Team will co-ordinate efforts from various B/Ds in facilitating transitional housing proposals. This

Team will liaise with and provide support to NGOs for conducting feasibility studies for various short-term initiatives on transitional housing, monitor the implementation progress of the relevant projects, and provide advice/suggestions. This Team will also provide technical support and prepare the policy support agreement⁵ in respect of the proposed project for signing between the project proponent and the Government.

- (b) The Policy Team will handle policy matters relating to the facilitation of transitional housing projects and prepare submissions to LegCo and District Councils, etc. This Team will also handle referrals and enquiries received, as well as coordinate various matters in relation to the policy on transitional housing.
- (c) The Vetting/Audit Team will oversee the Funding Scheme. This Team will conduct the technical and financial assessments of the proposals in respect of their cost-effectiveness and viability. They will provide technical advice for the consideration of the Assessment Committee; prepare the funding agreement in respect of the approved projects for signing between the project proponent and the Government; and establish provision standards and tendering requirements for the projects. It will also be responsible for checking/auditing the approved transitional housing projects at key milestones to ensure that they are implemented and operated in accordance with the signed funding agreement; overseeing the checking of records submitted by grantees as evidence of compliance in the procurement and reimbursement procedures and other requirements of the approved projects.

12. The proposed AOSGC post will be supported by a team of 26 non-directorate time-limited posts comprising professional, administrative service, executive, clerical and secretarial grades that have been created in the above three teams under TFTH.

Annex 1 13. The job descriptions of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post
Annex 2 are at **Annex 1**. The proposed organisation chart of TFTH is at **Annex 2**.

14. Currently, there are 14 Assistant Director posts at D2 level in HD funded by the Housing Authority, and only one Assistant Director post at D2 level in HD (i.e. Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing)(Private

⁵ A policy support agreement is signed between the Government and the NGO to set out the operational details, including rental arrangement, management and service responsibilities, as well as the exit arrangement at the end of the project, for the implementation of the transitional housing project.

Housing)/Assistant Director (Private Housing))⁶ which is funded by the Government to perform government function. We have critically examined the possibility of redeploying this D2 post in HD to take up the duties of the proposed supernumerary AOSGC post but consider it not feasible as the officer is already fully stretched with existing duties and cannot absorb the additional workload. We therefore consider it necessary to create a supernumerary AOSGC post dedicated to taking forward the initiatives on transitional housing the soonest possible to ensure their smooth implementation, and to continuously monitor the situation with a view to reviewing the initiatives as and when necessary in the coming few years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. The proposed creation of one supernumerary AOSGC post under Head 62 HD to work under TFTH of THB will involve an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$2,283,600. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is about \$3,106,000. HD has included the necessary provision in the 2021-22 Estimates and will reflect the resources required in the Estimates of subsequent years.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

16. Subject to approval by the FC, the proposed creation of a supernumerary AOSGC post will take immediate effect on the date of approval of the FC.

ADVICE SOUGHT

17. Members are invited to provide comments on the staffing proposal. Subject to Members' views, we will proceed to seek the endorsement of the ESC and the approval of the FC.

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⁶ Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing)(Private Housing)/Assistant Director (Private Housing) 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; and handling LegCo business and public and media enquiries in relation to the aforementioned subjects.

**Proposed Job Description for the Post of
Deputy Head, Task Force on Transitional Housing/**

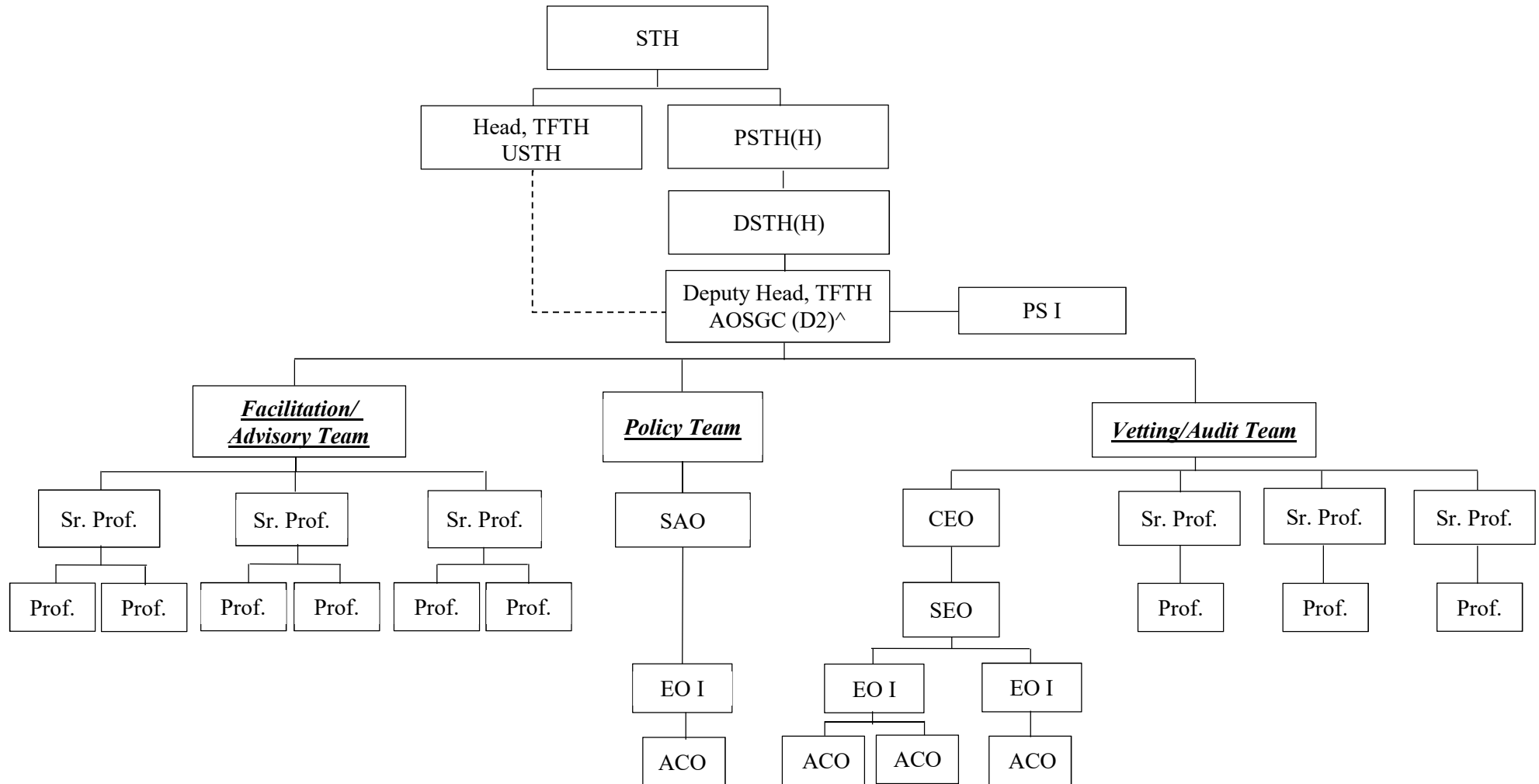
Rank : Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Main Duties and Responsibilities –

1. To serve as the Deputy Head of the Task Force on Transitional Housing (TFTH) to steer and oversee new initiatives on transitional housing for the implementation by Non-government Organisations (NGOs), and the implementation of the Funding Scheme to support transitional housing projects by NGOs (Funding Scheme);
2. To oversee policy analysis and formulate policy proposals on transitional housing, explore new/more initiatives for supplying additional transitional housing units and coordinate policy inputs on transitional housing from bureaux/departments (B/Ds);
3. To lead discussions with high level officials of relevant B/Ds and significant stakeholders to determine the framework of the transitional housing projects, supervise necessary consultancy work for feasibility study of potential sites, and engage/consult relevant stakeholders in various fields to facilitate the new initiatives on transitional housing;
4. To coordinate the consultation with and discussion at the Executive Council and Legislative Council (LegCo), as well as handle LegCo business and public/media enquiries in relation to transitional housing;
5. To oversee the operation of TFTH to support transitional housing projects by NGOs, including provision of secretariat support to the Assessment Committee in considering applications for the Funding Scheme, development of a framework that is conducive to effective operation of approved transitional housing projects in particular the large-scale projects in the New Territories; and
6. To monitor the situation after implementation and set up plan/framework for conducting review on transitional housing initiatives, including the Funding Scheme when necessary, and suitably adjusting the workflow of TFTH comprising multi-disciplinary professional staff to ensure alignment of its operation with the policy objective of transitional housing; and
7. To carry out any other duties.

Proposed Organisation Chart of Task Force on Transitional Housing (TFTH)



Legends:

- ACO - Assistant Clerical Officer
- AOSGC - Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
- CEO - Chief Executive Officer
- EO I - Executive Officer I
- PS I - Personal Secretary I
- Prof - Professional
- PSTH(H) - Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

- SAO - Senior Administrative Officer
- SEO - Senior Executive Officer
- Sr. Prof - Senior Professional
- STH - Secretary for Transport and Housing
- USTH - Under Secretary for Transport and Housing
- DSTH(H) - Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

^ Supernumerary AOSGC post proposed for creation under the establishment of Housing Department

Note: Senior Professionals and Professionals include staff of the grades of Architect, Building Services Engineer, Engineer (Civil), Structural Engineer and Quantity Surveyor