

Legislative Council Panel on Housing
Supplementary Information

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

At the meeting of the Panel on Housing on 1 March 2021, the Government was requested to provide information on how the proposed creation of the supernumerary AOSGC post would enhance the Government's work related to transitional housing. Our response is as follows.

2. The Task Force on Transitional Housing (TFTH) has been collaborating with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on the provision of transitional housing units, spearheading and expediting various initiatives proposed and implemented by them with a view to increasing the supply of transitional housing to alleviate the hardship faced by families living in inadequate housing while waiting for public rental housing for a long time, as well as actively providing advice and comments to NGOs on different aspects of transitional housing projects, including the application for funding under the Funding Scheme implemented in June 2020. As at mid-May 2021, we have identified land sufficient for the provision of about 14 000 transitional housing units by 2022-23, many of these projects have yet to commence construction or are still under in-depth study.

3. The proposed supernumerary AOSGC post, to be designated as the Deputy Head of the TFTH, is expected to play a crucial role in working with the stakeholders both within and outside the Government in pursuit of these transitional housing projects, including identifying scope and possibilities for expediting their future development. The TFTH also needs to continue to examine the feasibility of using other temporary vacant government or privately-owned land or premises for transitional housing, as well as to look into various possible options with a view to meeting the target soonest.

4. While TFTH has been making its best endeavours to spearhead the development of transitional housing projects over the past two years, workload has been increasing as a result of an upsurge in the number of projects in the pipeline, and the urgency of expediting the commencement of works of nine activated projects involving over 3 000 transitional housing units which have entered the planning and/or design stage. There is therefore an imminent need for the creation of the post of Deputy Head of the TFTH to provide policy and administrative support at directorate level, especially in optimising the existing limited manpower resource of TFTH comprising multi-disciplinary professionals to cope with the anticipated surge of workload in the coming years.

5. It is critical to build on the experience gained and efforts made so far with a view to achieving the objective of providing 15 000 transitional housing units by 2022-23. The Deputy Head would help facilitate the coordination with various bureaux/departments (B/Ds), consider how to enhance the assistance required by NGOs, closely monitor their implementation of projects, review and adjust various policy and supporting measures in a timely manner in light of the feedback from relevant stakeholders and teething issues encountered in the course of implementation. He/She would also liaise with different professional organisations, such as the Hong Kong Construction Association and the Urban Renewal Authority, etc., to support NGOs to take forward and complete the transitional housing projects the earliest possible. Given the tight schedule and complexity that many of these projects are facing, the early creation of the post of Deputy Head of TFTH is highly essential in ensuring that the progress in implementing these projects will not be compromised. In addition, directorate support is essential for the exploration and formulation of initiatives to increase the provision of transitional housing, including implementation of pilot schemes such as the one on using suitable rooms in hotels and guesthouses with relatively low occupancy rates as transitional housing.

6. It is also important to have directorate oversight of financial control matters in respect of transitional housing projects. The Deputy Head of TFTH would lead TFTH to assess and monitor the budget and expenditure of all the transitional housing projects subsidised under the Funding Scheme, as well as supervise the control mechanism which includes a set of comprehensive vetting procedures and auditing measures to ensure prudent and proper use of public funds to achieve the defined targets. He/she would also steer the review and necessary revision of guidelines for NGOs on procurement and execution of consultancy and building contracts for transitional housing projects.

7. The proposed Deputy Head of TFTH will need to work with stakeholders from different backgrounds including the directorate officers of various B/Ds, District Councils, stakeholder groups in districts, professional institutes, NGOs and the private sector. He/She should possess the necessary experience, management ability and knowledge in leading TFTH to interact and collaborate with parties within and outside the Government, fostering liaison with local communities and stakeholders. He/She should also have extensive experience in policy formulation and secretariat support. Given the breadth and depth of the duties involved, we propose that the post should be taken up by an AOSGC officer.