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Panel on Public Service

Meeting on 12 July 2021

**Background brief on the grade structure review for
the disciplined services grades**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the grade structure review ("GSR") for the disciplined services grades,¹ and gives a brief account of the past discussions of the Panel on Public Service ("the Panel") on the matter.

Background

2. The civil service pay policy is to offer sufficient remuneration to attract, retain and motivate staff of a suitable calibre to provide the public with an effective and efficient service; and to maintain broad comparability between civil service and private sector pay. To implement this policy, the Administration devised the Improved Civil Service Pay Adjustment Mechanism in 2007, under which civil service pay is compared with private sector pay through different pay surveys. However, as it is difficult to identify comparable posts and jobs in the private sector for the disciplined services, and individual disciplined services grades are also facing recruitment or retention difficulties, the Chief Executive ("CE")-in-Council decided in October 2018 to conduct a GSR for the disciplined services² to ensure that the grade structures and remuneration of the disciplined services are effective in attracting and

¹ The disciplined services grades are in seven departments/agency, namely, the Correctional Services Department, Customs and Excise Department, Fire Services Department, Government Flying Service ("GFS"), Immigration Department, Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") and Independent Commission Against Corruption.

² The last GSR for the disciplined services was conducted in 2008. Please see the Legislative Council Brief ([File Ref.: CSBCR/PG/4-085-001/57-58](#)) for details.

retaining talents. CE-in-Council also decided that GSR for the disciplined services grades should be conducted once every ten years.³

3. The Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service completed the GSR for the disciplined services and submitted its findings and recommendations to CE on 23 June 2021 in the Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grades ("the Report").⁴ The Report also covers the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service's advice on the salary structures of the heads of the disciplined services departments/agency. CE has tasked the Civil Service Bureau to study and examine the Report in detail in consultation with stakeholders concerned. Upon receiving feedback from stakeholders concerned, the Civil Service Bureau will submit recommendations on how to take forward the Report to CE-in-Council for a decision.

Discussions at the Panel since 2018-2019 session

4. The Panel discussed the issue at the policy briefing cum meeting on 15 October 2018 and met with relevant staff unions/associations ("the deputations") at the meeting on 20 January 2020. The major views and concerns expressed by Panel members and deputations, and the Administration's responses are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Pay scales, working hours and benefits of the disciplined services

5. Some deputations considered that starting salaries of new recruits, incremental points and pay scales of disciplined services should be aligned. Some members had shared the deputations' views and considered that various disciplined services had their own difficulties and risks in performing duties, no individual disciplined service should be treated more favourably in terms of salaries or benefits. The Administration should align the pay scales, benefits and conditioned working hours of all disciplined services for the sake of equity. On the other hand, there was an opinion that the Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") had the unique role

³ This arrangement would be in addition to the existing GSR policy guidelines which will continue to apply to individual grades (for civilian and disciplined services alike) facing recruitment and retention difficulties, or having experienced substantial changes in job nature or responsibilities.

⁴ The Report has been uploaded to the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service. The Report is available at https://www.jsscs.gov.hk/reports/en/scds_gsr_2021_eng.pdf.

of maintaining law and order of society, which justified a separate pay scale for the Police.

6. The Administration explained that the Review Committee on Disciplined Services Pay and Conditions of Service (commonly known as the Rennie Committee) and the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service endorsed, in 1988 and 2008 respectively, to have a separate pay scale for HKPF to recognize the uniqueness of HKPF, in particular their role as the law-enforcement agency of first and last resort.

7. Some members and deputations suggested that the Administration should review or relax the three pre-requisites, namely (a) being cost neutral; (b) not involving additional manpower; and (c) maintaining the same level of service to the public; for the reduction of the working hours of individual disciplined services. In addition, concern was raised that the five-day week pattern was not fully implemented for all staff in the disciplined services.

8. Some members also expressed concern about the shortfall of quarters for the disciplined services. The Administration said that it had been exploring the feasibility of constructing departmental quarters when taking forward redevelopment of disciplined services' facilities.

Matters relating to individual disciplined services departments

9. Members were aware of the manpower wastage situation in HKPF, the Correctional Services Department and the Government Flying Service ("GFS"). In particular, some members pointed out that the present establishment of GFS was slim and GFS Controller was not provided with the necessary assistance in administration and management. The rank of GFS Controller was also lower than the head of other disciplined services. As such, there were suggestions that a position of Deputy Controller should be created for better manpower and resources management, and that new tiers of assistant directorate ranks in GFS should be created for better career progression pathway.

10. Having regard that several new boundary control points were opened in the past few years and a number of junior positions were created for the Customs and Excise Department and the Immigration Department, a member raised concern about the competition for promotion among staff in these two departments and called on the Administration to monitor the overall promotion prospects for staff in these two departments.

A member and some deputations also suggested creating an additional Deputy Commissioner in the Customs and Excise Department to manage the department's mounting workload.

Conducting GSR for disciplined services

11. A member shared the views of some deputations that in view of the fast changing working environment, GSR for disciplined services should be conducted once every five years instead of ten. The Administration advised that CE-in-Council decided it appropriate to conduct a GSR for the disciplined services once every ten years after considering all relevant factors.

Relevant questions raised at Council meetings

12. During the Council meetings from 2019 to 2021, Members raised a number of questions on matters relating to GSR for the disciplined services. The hyperlinks to the questions and the Administration's responses are in **Appendix**.

Latest position

13. The Administration will brief members on the Report at the Panel meeting on 12 July 2021.

Relevant papers

14. A list of relevant papers is set out in Appendix.

Grade structure review for the Disciplined Services Grades

List of relevant papers

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Public Service	15 October 2018 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	20 January 2020 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Council meeting	20 March 2019	Question raised by Hon Mrs Regina IP on "Grade structure review for disciplined services grades"
	3 April 2019	Question raised by Hon Elizabeth QUAT on "Remuneration packages for disciplined services staff"
	17 June 2020	Question raised by Hon CHAN Hak-kan on "Grade structure review for the disciplined services"
	24 March 2021	Question raised by Hon Mrs Regina IP on "Disciplined services quarters"