

**For discussion
on 20 July 2015**

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Re-grading of the Post of Director of Protocol to a Post of Senior Principal Executive Officer in the Protocol Division of the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposal to re-grade the post of Director of Protocol (D of P) to a post of Senior Principal Executive Officer (SPEO) (both are at D2 level) in the Protocol Division (PD) of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office.

BACKGROUND

2. Prior to Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, there had been an arrangement of filling the D of P post, which was the only post in the one-rank departmental D of P grade created in 1963, by retired officers from the British Forces. Upon the anticipated departure of the then D of P in 1997, efforts were made to identify a suitable local candidate to fill the post which would become vacant by 1 July 1997. In-service and open recruitment exercises were conducted in 1996 and 1997 but no suitable candidate could be identified.

3. In the latter part of 1997, the Administration Wing of the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office conducted a review of the organisation of PD in view of its expanded roles and responsibilities. The findings and recommendations of the review were reported to the Panel of Public Service of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 22 December 1997. The Panel agreed with the recommendations of the review to upgrade the post of D of P from D1 to D2 level, designating it as an open directorate post within

the civil service; to create a supernumerary departmental post of Deputy Director of Protocol (DD of P) at D1 level; and to “executivise” the Protocol Officer (PO) grade¹ in the long run.

4. In February 1998, the Finance Committee (FC) approved, among others, the upgrading of the D of P post from D1 to D2 level to make the ranking of the post commensurate with the level of responsibility required of the post holder. A supernumerary SPEO post held against the D of P post was created under delegated authority on 1 March 1998 to accommodate the SPEO deployed to fill the D of P post. This arrangement of filling the D of P post by an SPEO has been maintained with the re-creation of the supernumerary SPEO post since then. The FC also approved in February 1998 the creation of a supernumerary departmental post of DD of P at D1 level for a period of three years to cope with the expanding and increasingly complex workload of PD. In light of the long-term operational needs, the FC approved in February 2001 the permanent retention of the DD of P post which was re-graded to a PEO post.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Roles and Responsibilities of PD

5. The current roles and responsibilities of PD include protocol-related duties like extending courtesies to overseas dignitaries and planning and coordinating visits; managing consular affairs; liaising with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (OCMFA); overseeing the operation and the management of the Government VIP Lounge (GVIPL) at the Hong Kong International Airport; and administering the Honours and Awards System of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). This range of services that PD has been delivering involves a significant amount of administrative, executive, event management, co-ordination and liaison duties. For example –

¹ The review considered that candidates from the private sector were unlikely to have the required expertise in handling protocol matters and there was a strong case to “executivise” the PO grade in the longer run to enable Executive Officers to fill posts in the PD as this would resolve career development and succession problems, and to improve staff management and promotion opportunities for staff in the long run. The proposal was in line with the established principle that whenever possible, smaller grades should be merged with larger grades. In 1997, there were two members in the PO grade. The last member of the PO grade retired in May 2014.

- (a) administration of Consular Corps affairs and liaison with OCMFA require frequent interface with seasoned diplomats and representatives of foreign missions and OCMFA;
- (b) administration of the Honours and Awards System calls for strong executive and secretariat support to the Honours and Non-official Justices of the Peace Selection Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and its sub-committees;
- (c) planning and co-ordination of visits by state visitors and National leaders require extensive contact and co-ordination with bureaux and departments and outside organisations. Programme planning and event management duties are also involved when organising official ceremonial events;
- (d) advising on the use of the National and Regional flags and emblems and protocol matters requires assurance of compliance with the related statutory provisions, rules and guidelines; and
- (e) management of the GVIPL services calls for efficient and responsive co-ordination and liaison with different parties in the airport, including the Airport Authority Hong Kong, airline companies and law enforcement departments.

6. PD currently has a complement of 17 staff, including the D of P post who is underpinned by the DD of P. The D of P and the DD of P are the only two directorate staff in PD. There are eight other Executive Officers at different ranks and seven supporting staff². The last PO post was re-graded to a Senior Executive Officer post in May 2014 following the retirement of the last member of the PO grade. In other words, all core duties of PD are now performed by the Executive Officer (EO) grade staff. The existing organisation chart of PD is at **Enclosure 1**.

7. Given the expanding roles and responsibilities over the years, and the core competencies required, there is the call for the head of PD to have political acumen and strong communication skills to work with diplomats in the consular corps as well as officials in the OCMFA. He/she has to have strong executive experience to administer the honours system while having

² Supporting staff include secretarial and clerical grades staff.

good organisation and strong management skills to plan and coordinate visits of National leaders as well as overseas dignitaries and work with different local and overseas stakeholders. Rich experience in administration and operation matters is also required to ensure effective management and quality service of the GVIPL. A senior member of the EO grade who has wide government exposure as well as broad training, and rich experience in management and liaison is considered suitable for meeting the job requirement of the post of D of P.

Need for a Permanent SPEO post

8. When the D of P post was upgraded to D2 level in 1998, it was proposed as a departmental post open to suitable officers within the civil service, including officers from the PO grade. The post was first filled by an SPEO in March 1998. As the majority of the duties of the D of P require expertise and experience that the EO grade is well trained in, the post has been filled by an SPEO since then. It is evident over the years that PD's roles and responsibilities are delivered smoothly by EO grade officers to the satisfaction of the Director of Administration and other bureaux/departments that have regular contact with PD. The suitability of deploying an SPEO to fill the D of P post has been well demonstrated and fully tested over time. We therefore consider it appropriate to make permanent the arrangement of deploying an SPEO to fill the D of P post. Moreover, re-grading of the D of P post to a general grade post would mean better manpower planning as there is a sizable pool to source the most suitable candidate to fill the post. This will also facilitate succession planning.

9. The last PO grade officer had retired in May 2014. PD has for the first time carried out its functions entirely by a team of members of the EO grade since then. The full-year performance has been satisfactory. This has presented an opportune time to re-grade the D of P post.

10. We propose to re-grade the D of P post to an SPEO post, by the creation of a permanent SPEO post in the PD to be offset by the deletion of the D of P post. As a consequential arrangement, we also propose to delete the one-rank D of P grade, which will become obsolete upon the proposed re-grading. The new SPEO post will keep the post title of D of P. The job description for the proposed SPEO post is at **Enclosure 2**.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

11. We have critically examined the directorate support in PD. The D of P, being the head of the Division, is the only D2 officer in the Division. Since past experience has demonstrated that SPEO is suitable for taking up the duties of D of P, it is appropriate to re-grade the current departmental post to an SPEO post. In formalising the long term arrangement for filling of the D of P post, re-grading the D of P post to an SPEO post is the only option.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

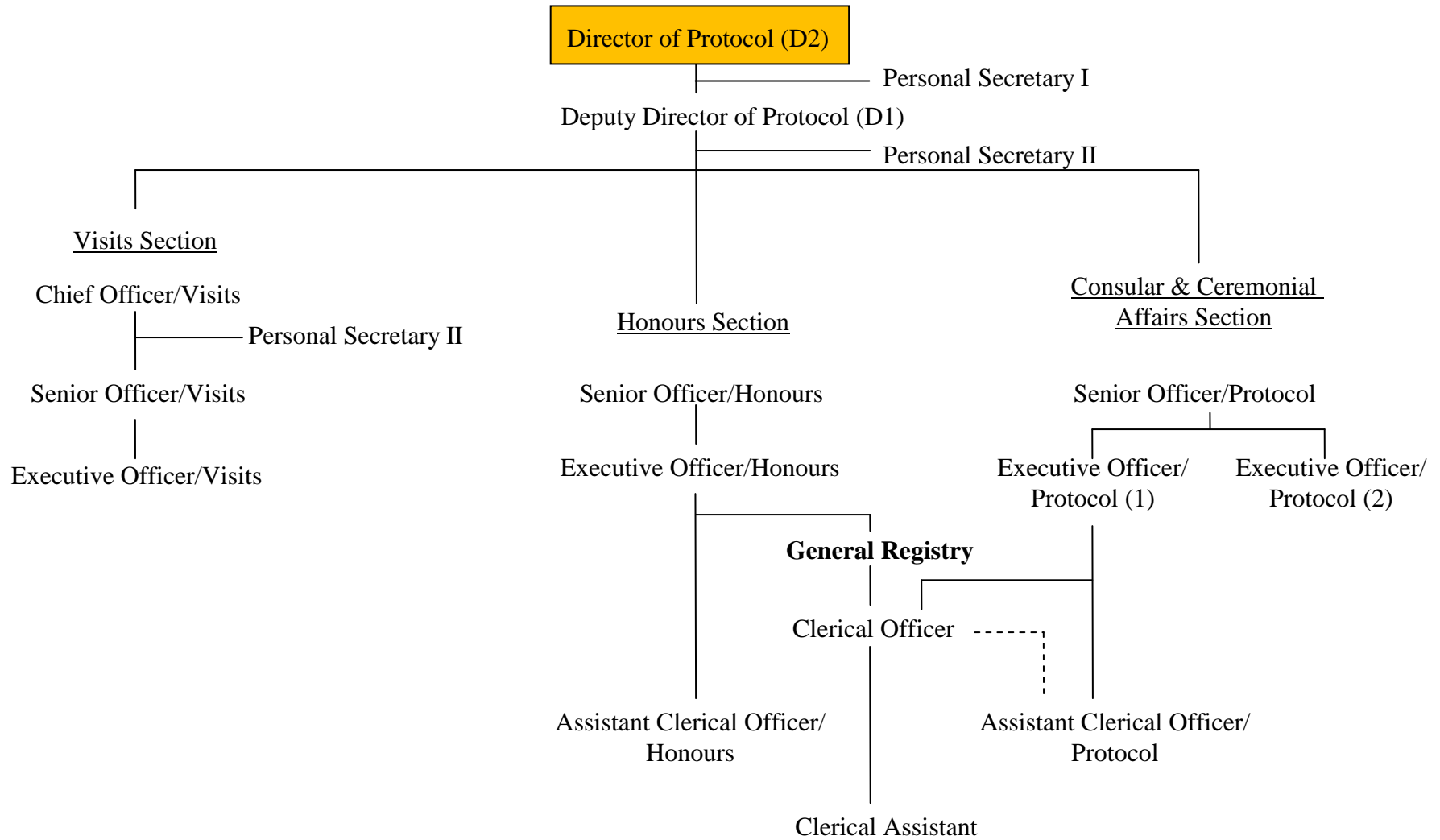
12. The proposed creation of one permanent SPEO post, to be offset by the deletion of the one-rank Director of Protocol post, is cost neutral.

ADVICE SOUGHT

13. Members are invited to give their views and indicate support for the proposal. Subject to Members' views, we plan to submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for endorsement and FC for approval in the 2015-16 LegCo session.

**Administration Wing
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office
July 2015**

Existing Organisation Chart of the Protocol Division



Existing Director of Protocol post proposed to be re-graded as a Senior Principal Executive Officer post on a permanent basis.

Note : Deputy Director of Protocol, Chief Officer, Senior Officer and Executive Officer posts are established Executive Officer posts, filled by Principal Executive Officer, Chief Executive Officer, Senior Executive Officer, and Executive Officer I/II respectively.

Job Description
Director of Protocol

Existing Rank : Director of Protocol (D2)

Proposed Rank : SPEO (D2)

Responsible to : Deputy Director of Administration

Main Duties and Responsibilities —

1. To steer and lead the Protocol Division, and to ensure its quality of work and efficiency.
2. To be responsible for all day-to-day management matters relating to the Consular Corps and other foreign missions in the Hong Kong Special Administration Region, including their privileges and immunities
3. To liaise with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in respect of consular relations matters pertaining to the Consular Corps in Hong Kong.
4. To receive, and where appropriate as in the case of state visitors and PRC leaders, devise and organise visit programmes for important visitors.
5. To be responsible for the efficient and effective provision of Government VIP facilities, operated through the Airport Authority Hong Kong.
6. To advise all Government departments, and where requested, non-government organisations on the use of the National and Regional flags and emblems, and on matters of precedence, protocol and etiquette.
7. To administer the HKSAR honours and awards system.
8. To organise official ceremonial events such as the honours and awards presentation ceremony, the annual ceremony to commemorate those who died in the defence of Hong Kong and the ceremony held on the Nanjing Massacre National Memorial Day.
9. To compile and maintain a Precedence Table for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.