

10 May 2001

The Honourable TUNG Chee Hwa
The Chief Executive of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China
Chief Executive's Office
Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

**Proposed merger of the
Amenities Officer grade and the
Recreation and Sport Officer grade into a new
Leisure Services Manager grade**

We have been invited by the Administration to advise, under Clause 1(b) of our Terms of Reference, on its proposal to merge the Amenities Officer grade and the Recreation and Sport Officer grade into a new Leisure Services Manager grade.

Background

2. The delivery of leisure services under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is currently dealt with by two separate grades, viz the Amenities Officer (AO) grade and the Recreation and Sport Officer (RSO) grade. The AO grade is mainly responsible for the planning and development of recreational and amenities projects such as the annual Hong Kong Flower Show and the Green Hong Kong Campaign as well as the management of recreation venues and facilities. The RSO grade is responsible for the promotion and organization of recreational activities and public sports programmes such as training courses and sports competitions under the Community Recreation and Sports Programmes, the Healthy Exercise for All Campaign and the Corporate Games.

3. The delivery of leisure services by two separate grades is considered by the Administration to be unsatisfactory for the following reasons –

- (a) the functional roles of the AO grade and the RSO grade are closely related and tend to converge at planning, policy and management levels. This has resulted in the filling of quite a number of posts in LCSD by officers from either the AO or RSO grade, for example, the District Leisure Manager (DLM) posts are filled by either the Chief Amenities Officers (CAOs) or Senior Recreation and Sport Officers (SRSOs) and at the higher level, the posts of Chief Leisure Manager (CLM) are filled by Principal Amenities Officers (PAOs) or Chief Recreation and Sport Officers (CRSOs). As district head, a DLM is responsible for the overall management and promotion of recreation, sports and amenities services in a district. CLMs, who are the supervisors of DLMs, are responsible for overseeing the delivery of recreation, sports and amenities services in a number of districts. Other examples of cross-posting are found at the various Staff Officer posts at LCSD headquarters. These officers are responsible for policy, planning, research and development matters at various levels. Appointees to these posts from either the AO grade or the RSO grade are required to possess broad knowledge and experience in both the amenities and sports fields;
- (b) the separation of the two grades limits flexibility in staff deployment and restricts the scope for career development; and
- (c) because of the strict demarcation of responsibilities between the two grades, RSOs who are responsible for organising training courses and sport activities are not attached to the recreation venues in which such courses and activities are held. Only AO grade staff are stationed there for venue management. Participants are thus unable to contact the RSOs for speedy advice on relevant arrangements or solutions to problems they

encounter. This has hampered the delivery of leisure services to the public.

To address these issues, various studies have been undertaken since 1985 with a view to merging the two grades. The conclusion reached on all occasions was that a merger would be in the best interest of staff of the two grades and would improve operational efficiency. However, all these studies were shelved, mainly because of opposition from staff.

4. In December 1998, the joint management of the former Regional Services Department (RSD) and the former Urban Services Department (USD), under which the two grades operated before the establishment of the LCSD on 1.1.2000, decided to revisit the merger proposal. A working group comprising representatives of the two departments, the Civil Service Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau was formed to study the issue and work out detailed recommendations. This decision was reinforced by the recommendation made by the Consultant appointed by Government to study the development of a new institutional framework for the provision of arts and culture, sport and recreation in view of the then proposed dissolution of the provisional municipal councils. In his report released in March 1999, the Consultant recommended that “in the interest of operational efficiency, training and career development of the officers, and flexibility in postings for the management ... the two grades be merged into a new grade, to be called ‘Leisure Services Manager grade’ ”. This recommendation was accepted in principle by the Administration.

Benefits of the Merger

5. The Director of LCSD considers that the benefits to be reaped from the merger are three-fold –

- (a) the merger will make it possible for LCSD to put in place a new mode of operation whereby officers of the AO and RSO grades will be deployed on both amenities management and sports programming responsibilities. This will significantly improve the delivery of leisure services to the public at district level. Instead of having two groups of staff attending to venue management and sports programming separately, a single team

will be assigned to take care of both areas of work in every recreation venue and facility, thereby providing a one-stop service to the public. DLCS considers that such a breakthrough in service improvement is essential to keep pace with public demand and expectations;

- (b) the merger will also help control cost through efficiency enhancement and productivity gain. To deliver a one-stop service as mentioned in (a) above requires managers with expertise in both the amenities and sports areas to be stationed in each recreation venue. Without the merger, this would be extremely costly in that a resident AO II and a ARSO II would have to be provided for each of the about 220 recreation venues across the territory to attend to venue management and sports programming separately. With the merger, only one Assistant Leisure Services Manager (ALSM) II would be required to cover both areas of responsibility. The cost needed to achieve the service improvement can thus be contained; and
- (c) from the staff management perspective, the merger will help develop a multi-skilled work force able to handle both facility management and sports programming by removing the historical demarcation of duties between the AO and RSO grades. Such a multi-skilled work force is in line with the practice of running recreation clubs in the private sector. This will not only provide greater flexibility in the deployment of staff to meet operational requirements, but will also help improve the career development of staff.

In consideration of the benefits set out above and on the basis of the recommendations of the Working Group, DLCS proposes that the AO and RSO grades should be merged to form a new grade with the title “Leisure Services Manager”.

The Administration’s Views and Proposals

6. The Administration fully supports the DLCS’s proposal for the merger of the AO and RSO grades because –

- (a) the functional roles of the two grades are closely related and tend to converge at planning, policy and management levels. The existence of two separate grades is redundant. Merging the two grades would improve operational efficiency;
- (b) a merger will help develop a multi-skilled work force which provides greater flexibility in the deployment of staff to meet operational requirement, thus further improving the career development of staff; and
- (c) the proposed merger will enable LCSD to deliver a one-stop service at the venues in the most cost-effective way. Without it, implementation of this philosophy to service provision would only be possible by putting two officers one each from the AO and RSO grades at the venue which would be a much more costly approach : clearly not an effective way to deploy resources.

7. The Administration's proposal for the entry qualification and the pay structure of the new LSM grade are set out below.

Entry Qualification

8. The AO grade belongs to the Matriculation Grades qualification group. The requirements for entry to the basic recruitment rank are two passes in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) and three other subjects at Grade C or above in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) together with a pass in Chinese Language and English Language (Syllabus B) in the HKCEE. Of the subjects passed, at least one must be in a relevant science subject. The RSO grade, on the other hand, is grouped under the Other Grades category with requirements for entry to the basic recruitment rank pitched at full-time teacher's certificate with physical education as one of the subjects studied or diploma in recreation and sports management from a registered post-secondary college (RPSC). Having regard to the nature and requirements of the work of the new grade, the Administration recommends the following basic qualifications for direct entry to the basic recruitment rank –

- (a) (i) a full-time teacher's certificate with physical education as one of the subjects studied; or
- (ii) a diploma from a RPSC issued after its registration in management of recreation, sports, leisure or horticulture, or equivalent; and
- (b) Grade E or above in both English Language (Syllabus B) and Chinese Language in the HKCEE, or equivalent.

These entry qualifications are essentially similar to those for the existing RSO grade, except that leisure management and horticulture management have been added as relevant subjects of the requisite diploma courses to reflect the more diversified nature of duties. Similar to the RSO grade, the new LSM grade will be grouped under the Other Grades category.

9. To provide an avenue for civil servants (including Amenities Assistants) of the right calibre and potential to pursue a career in the new grade, the following requirements for in-service appointment to the basic recruitment rank are also proposed –

- (a) two subjects at Grade E or above in the HKALE and three other subjects at Grade C or above in the HKCEE with English Language (Syllabus B) and Chinese Language as two of the subjects passed;
- (b) a part-time graduate certificate in management of recreation, sports, leisure or horticulture, or equivalent; and
- (c) five years of supervisory experience in the field of recreation and sports.

10. A diploma from a RPSC, a teacher's certificate or a part-time graduate certificate in a relevant subject is proposed to be the entry qualification because it is considered necessary for recruits to the new grade to have a reasonably good academic background in the field before appointment. This will help ensure that recruits are fully functional after a short period of induction training and familiarisation.

Pay Structure

11. The proposed structure and pay scales of the new LSM grade as compared with those of the AO and RSO grades are as follows –

Rank in New Grade	Corresponding Rank in AO Grade	Corresponding Rank in RSO Grade
Principal Leisure Services Manager (PLSM) (D1)	—	Principal Recreation and Sport Officer (PRSO) (D1)
Chief Leisure Services Manager (CLSM) (MPS 45 – 49)	Principal Amenities Officer (PAO) (MPS 45 – 49)	Chief Recreation and Sport Officer (CRSO) (MPS 45 – 49)
Senior Leisure Services Manager (SLSM) (MPS 40 – 44)	Chief Amenities Officer (CAO) (MPS 40 – 44)	Senior Recreation and Sport Officer (SRSO) (MPS 37 – 44)
Leisure Services Manger (LSM) (MPS 34 – 39)	Senior Amenities Officer (SAO) (MPS 34 – 39)	Recreation and Sport Officer (RSO) (MPS 31 – 36)
Assistant Leisure Services Manager I (ALSM I) (MPS 24 – 33)	Amenities Officer I (AO I) (MPS 27 – 33)	Assistant Recreation and Sport Officer I (ARSO I) (MPS 24 – 30)
Assistant Leisure Services Manager II (ALSM II) (MPS 11 – 23)	Amenities Officer II (AO II) (MPS 4 – 26)	Assistant Recreation and Sport Officer II (ARSO II) (MPS 11-23)

12. In proposing the above pay structure for the new grade, a fundamental factor considered by the Administration is that the majority of AO and RSO grade staff are responsible for organising district operation activities and under the new one-stop mode of leisure services delivery to be implemented at the district level upon the merger, the scope of responsibilities will be broader and the nature of work will be more diversified for most ranks. On this basis, the Administration considers that the overall pay structure should not be lower than the current levels. Since the pay scales for the AO grade are higher than the corresponding pay scale of the RSO grade for most ranks, the Administration considers it appropriate

to follow the AO grade pay scales wherever this is operationally justifiable. Where this is not, the pay scale proposed should not in any case be worse than that currently in force for the appropriate RSO rank. For the basic recruitment rank, the pay scale should also be appropriate to the proposed entry qualifications and the level of responsibility involved. It should also be sufficient to attract qualified candidates with the right calibre and potential for development to join the grade. It is on these principles that the proposed pay structure for the new grade has been worked out. The justifications for the proposed pay scale for each rank of the new grade are elaborated at the Annex.

Staff Consultation

13. DLCS has consulted staff and staff unions of the AO and RSO grades extensively on the merger proposal through consultation documents, staff briefings, meeting with staff unions and correspondence with individual officers over the last 18 months. The Administration has, as far as practicable, accepted staff suggestions in fine-tuning its proposals on merger package, regrading arrangements and post-merger grade management. These suggestions include –

- (a) changing the Chinese title of the new grade from “康樂主任” to “康樂事務經理”;
- (b) allowing serving AO IIs to elect to retain their personal pay scale;
- (c) maintaining three separate seniority lists in each rank of the new grade so as to preserve staff’s relative seniority in their former grade until they are promoted;
- (d) giving staff a relatively long option period of 12 months;
- (e) providing comprehensive cross-stream training for staff both before and after the merger;

- (f) creating a Chief Leisure Services Manager post rather than a Chief Executive Officer post to head the future Grade Management Support Section;
- (g) conducting promotion exercises to select officers for filling existing vacancies before the merger;
- (h) working out a system for fair selection of officers for promotion after the merger, including co-chairmanship of promotion boards, assessment panels for reconciling any differences in reporting standards applied by the two grades before the merger, etc; and
- (i) adopting a manning scale for the new LSM grade.

The Administration has not been able to accommodate the following requests from staff -

- (a) raising the entry qualification for the new grade to degree level (for reasons vide paragraph 21(a) below);
- (b) raising the maximum pay for the ALSM II rank from MPS 23 to MPS 26 (for reasons vide paragraph 21(b) below);
- (c) creating a D1 post to head the Grade Management Support Section: this is found functionally not justifiable;
- (d) creating a D2 post to share out the duties of the directorate: this is immaterial to the merger; and
- (e) providing comprehensive details of the logistical arrangements and administrative support for the new mode of operation right away: LCSD has been working out such details in consultation with frontline staff since it took a firm decision to take the merger proposal forward earlier in the year. It needs more time to complete this task and has assured staff that such details will be available by the time they are invited to exercise their option to join the new grade. In the meantime, LCSD has provided staff with a proposed organisational structure of the Leisure

Services Branch for the post-merger era and an outline of the future mode of operation.

14. DLCS considers that it is not possible to come up with a merger package which will fully meet the demands of both the AO and RSO grades, given the financial constraints and the conflicting expectations of the two grades. He considers that the merger is essential for efficiency gain, better services to the public and greater flexibility in staff deployment. It is in the interest of the department, the public and the staff themselves to take the proposal forward. He believes that the majority of staff of the two grades will eventually opt to join the new grade. The Secretary for Home Affairs supports DLCS's position.

The Commission's meeting with staff representatives

15. Staff of the AO and RSO grades were informed by DLCS of his decision to submit the merger proposal to the Commission for consideration, following which the Government Recreation and Sport Service Staff Union (GRSSSU) requested a meeting with the Commission prior to the Commission's formal consideration of the merger proposal. This was agreed by the Commission and a meeting was arranged on 12 April 2001. Representatives from both the GRSSSU and the Amenities Officers Association (AOA) were invited to attend. The views and concern raised by the staff representatives at the meeting and the Administration's subsequent responses will be dealt with in the following paragraphs.

The Commission's Views and Recommendations

The merger proposal

16. It is frustrating for the Administration that the merger proposal, first mooted in 1985 and revived on numerous occasions since then, has to be shelved not because of its wanting in rationale but because of opposition from staff.

17. In the present submission, the Administration has clearly re-stated the benefits of the merger which is aimed at improving the delivery

of leisure services to the public, building up a multi-skilled work force in line with practices in the private sector for the management and delivery of leisure services as well as facilitating greater flexibility in the deployment of staff and enhancing their career development. All of these are laudable aims providing solid justifications for the merger proposal.

18. At our meeting with the staff representatives, we were clearly apprised of their views and concern. While the AOA supports the merger proposal, the GRSSSU indicates that RSOs are not averse to any measures to improve the delivery of leisure services but are not satisfied mainly with the pay arrangements for the new LSM grade, the lack of information on logistical and administrative support for the new mode of operation in future and queried the need for the merger at this stage.

19. In considering whether the Administration's merger proposal should be supported, we have, therefore, looked at the following issues –

(a) *functional affinity of the AO and RSO grades*

This is an important consideration, if the merger is to succeed. From a survey of the duties and responsibilities of the AO grade and RSO grade and their mode of operation and pattern of activity as required of them in discharging their function of leisure services delivery, it is evident that while AOs and RSOs are required to be knowledgeable in their respective field of activity such as sports or horticulture, to be competent in discharging their duties, they require more than this knowledge. The one important expertise both must possess is the ability to plan, organise and develop programmes, be they recreational or amenities projects, at the community level. This is common for both grades of staff. It is also evident that the functional roles of the two grades are closely related and at the Senior, Chief and Principal ranks, cross-posting of staff from either grade to fill the same post of District Leisure Manager responsible for the overall management and promotion of recreation, sports and amenities activities has already been a common practice. The need for two separate AO and RSO grades, in the circumstances, appears

to be redundant and the historical demarcation of the two grades is long overdue for a change.

(b) *a multi-skilled work force*

By removing the demarcation of duties between the AO and RSO grades, the merger will help develop a multi-skilled work force able to handle both facility management and sports programming. Multi-skilling is a management concept widely practised in the private sector to create synergy in streamlining the structure of the work force and to enhance deployment flexibility and operational efficiency. We appreciate that elimination of the current demarcation between the AO and RSO grades will entail the need for staff in both grades to acquire new knowledge or skills in order to become fully functional in the new setup. While this adjustment process may cause concern to some staff, the process, in our view, can be properly managed through suitable training and sensitive deployment to be provided by LCSD. In our view, apprehension about the adjustment process is no justifiable cause for not implementing the merger proposal.

20. On account of (a) and (b) above, we think that there is a prima facie case to support the Administration's merger proposal. The proposal, if implemented will, of course, bring about other benefits, such as the introduction of the one-stop mode of service delivery which will be beneficial to the public and the enhancement of career development beneficial to staff. However, these are secondary to the prime consideration of modernising the organisational structure of LCSD in the interest of upgrading its service delivery capacity.

21. We now turn, specifically, to the issues raised by the staff representatives and the Administration's responses –

(a) **upgrading of entry qualification to Degree**

Both the AOA and the GRSSSU have made this request. The Administration has seriously considered their

proposal but concluded that a teacher's certificate in physical education or a RPSC diploma is appropriate, having regard to the fact that while the duties of the new LSM grade will be more diverse in nature, they are not necessarily more complex or of a higher level than those discharged by the current AO and RSO grades.

The Administration is aware that the Hong Kong Institute of Education is planning to cease running teacher's certificate courses in 2002 and the various tertiary institutions are running more degree courses in recreation and sport. However, LCSD's enquiries show that the School of Professional and Continuing Education of the University of Hong Kong still has a graduate diploma programme and the City University still runs an associate degree (equivalent to a higher diploma) course in relevant subjects with an outturn of some 80 graduates every two years. This number of graduates will be more than sufficient to meet LCSD's requirement. The Administration undertakes, however, to keep the staff proposal under review in the light of future development.

We agree with the Administration's approach.

(b) Pay issues

(i) *maximum pay for the ALSM II rank*

Both the AOA and GRSSSU have suggested that in view of the new duties of the ALSM II rank, its maximum should be pitched at MPS 26 (similar as that for AO II at present) instead of MPS 23 (the current maximum for ARSO II), as proposed.

The Administration has considered this suggestion but found it functionally unjustifiable. Under the present mode of operation, an AO II is responsible for overseeing the management of a number of recreation venues while an ARSO II is responsible for

organising sports programmes on a district-wide basis. In future, an ALSM II will be required to manage and organise sports activities for only one recreation venue. Viewed in this light, the duties and responsibilities of the ALSM II rank will be wider in scope and more diverse in nature, but will not necessarily be of a higher level than those of the ARSO II rank. Considering the present pay scales of MPS 4-26 and MPS 11-23 for the AO II and ARSO II ranks respectively and drawing reference from the normal pay scale for the basic recruitment ranks of grades requiring a diploma from a RPSC or a higher diploma for entry, the Administration is of the view that on balance, the ARSO II pay scale is appropriate for the ALSM II rank. This is in line with the majority of grades with a benchmark qualification of higher diploma or RPSC diploma and a starting salary at MPS 11. The proposed pay scale is considered to be sufficiently attractive to candidates with the right calibre to discharge the duties of the rank competently and the potential to advance to higher ranks in the LSM grade.

We agree, on account of the Administration's view that the responsibilities of the new ALSM II rank will not necessarily be of a higher level than that of the ARSO II rank, that MPS 23 is appropriate as the maximum point for the new ALSM II rank.

- (ii) *maximum of ALSM II at MPS 23 being lower than that for Senior Amenities Assistant at MPS 25 who will be their subordinates*

This is considered by GRSSSU as an anomaly which will result in management difficulties.

The Administration, however, does not think that the difference in the maximum pay will cause supervisory or management problem since it is not uncommon within the civil service for the top rank of a

subordinate grade to have a maximum pay equal to or higher than that for the recruitment rank of a supervisor grade.

We note the existence of such anomalies in the civil service. We agree that they do not necessarily lead to management difficulties. In view of staff concern, however, we think that it would pay for LCSD to be sensitive about this potential in future staff deployment.

(iii) *Personal pay scale for serving AO IIs*

GRSSSU has objected to the Administration's proposal to allow serving AO IIs to retain their personal pay scale after the merger.

In the Administration's view, this proposal is based on the principle that no serving staff should suffer any financial loss as a result of the merger. Given that the pay scale of the AO II rank has a higher maximum than the one proposed for the ALSM II rank, the proposed arrangement is necessary to enable serving AO IIs to progress to MPS 26 after regrading even if they do not eventually advance beyond the ALSM II rank. This arrangement would not, in any way, jeopardise the interests of ARSO IIs.

We see no objection to this arrangement which has been an established practice in the civil service.

(c) **Need for the merger at this stage**

GRSSSU queried the need for the merger at this stage given that a review is currently being undertaken by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) on the provision of leisure services in Hong Kong.

According to the Administration, the HAB is conducting a review for the formulation of a sport development strategy for the next five years. This review focuses on the strategies for the funding of sports development, a sports administrative structure, promotion of community sports, planning and development of sport facilities, elite athlete development and training, etc. It will not cover the mode of district operation, staff management and staff development of LCSD, which the merger is seeking to improve.

On account of this, we agree with the Administration that the merger proposal and the HAB review should be dealt with separately.

(d) One-stop mode of service delivery

GRSSSU criticised LCSD for pushing the merger proposal by laying too much store on the one-stop mode of service delivery which LCSD claimed could not be introduced unless the merger had been implemented. GRSSSU considered it feasible to introduce the new mode of operation at recreation venues even at present through administrative arrangements or better use of information technology (IT) without necessarily merging the AO and RSO grades.

DLCS's assessment is that IT can no doubt improve communication between venues and district offices, thereby providing better information for facility booking and sports programmes. However, it will not provide members of the public with the professional advice and assistance they require in relation to the use of facilities or sports programme arrangement. To provide such professional advice and assistance without the merger would require the stationing of both an AO II and an ARSO II at each recreation venue at an additional staff cost of some \$61M per annum. With the merger, only an ALSM II will be required to provide the necessary professional services at each venue and the additional annual staff cost needed will be reduced to some \$9M. The Administration is convinced that

merging the AO and RSO grades will help implement the one-stop mode of service delivery more cost effectively.

On this, our view is that the introduction of the one-stop mode of service delivery is just one of the benefits to be reaped from the merger. It is not the most essential consideration. We, therefore, see no reason why the wider application of IT at the recreation venues should delay the merger proposal.

(e) Support of Amenities Assistants (AAs)

GRSSSU doubted if the one-stop mode of service delivery could be implemented smoothly if the AAs, who provide support to the AOs for venue management, have clearly made known their intention not to provide support for the running of sports programmes.

The Administration's response is that under the new mode of operation, sports programming for a recreation venue will essentially be the responsibility of the ALSM II. Support from the AAs will be required only after the ALSM II has gone off duty. It will thus be operationally feasible for LCSD to provide professional and one-stop service at its recreation venues during the core opening hours of venue when the ALSM II is on duty even if the AAs confine themselves to venue management support duties. The one-stop service can be extended beyond the core opening hours where the AAs assist in sport-related support duties. Thus, the AAs' involvement in sports programming support is desirable but not absolutely essential to the implementation of a one-stop service at recreation venues.

DLCS's observation is that with the ALSM II sharing out the venue management duties at each recreation venue, AAs will have spare capacity to take on sport-related support responsibilities. DLCS envisages that most AAs would be prepared to take on such responsibilities eventually and they will be provided with the training they need. According to DLCS,

the Union of Government Amenities Assistants (UGAA) has indicated an interest in maintaining a dialogue with the management on the subject. The department will continue its efforts to win the support of the AA grade for the new mode of operation.

(f) **Lack of logistical and administrative support plans**

We appreciate the concern of GRSSSU for more information from LCSD about logistical and administrative support plans in their future operation.

We have been informed by LCSD that it is now working in consultation with the frontline staff on the detailed logistical arrangements and administrative support requirements for implementing the one-stop mode of service delivery. These include office accommodation, computer systems, communication and information flow between district offices and venues, supporting staff, etc. The details are expected to be finalised in the next 2 to 3 months.

To allay the apprehension of some staff over the merger and to better manage the transition for both the staff concerned and the department, we urge LCSD to keep up communication with staff on the progress of their planning and to take into account staff sentiment in formulating the relevant plans.

(g) **Staff training**

To allay staff concern, we have been assured by LCSD that a comprehensive training programme will be drawn up to equip staff for the competent discharge of duties of the new grade. The training programme encompasses –

- (i) crash courses before implementation of the one-stop mode of service delivery (8.5 days per head for AOs and 5 days per head for RSOs);
- (ii) indepth training courses after the merger (60.5 days per head for AOs and 63.5 days per head for RSOs); and
- (iii) professional training courses (2-year part-time diploma courses).

DLCS is confident that staff of the two grades will be able to pick up the duties of the new grade after the crash courses and consolidate their skills and knowledge further with indepth and professional training after the merger.

We urge LCSD to work closely with staff to provide the necessary training to them.

Implementation

22. Subject to the endorsement by the Commission and the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, LCSD will implement the merger proposal in phases, on a district by district basis, to ensure a smooth transition.

23. Staff of the AO and RSO grades will be given a period of 12 months within which to opt to join the new grade. Those who do not opt to join the new grade will retain their status, salary scales, seniority and conditions of service unchanged within the obsolete AO/RSO grades. However, they will not be eligible for consideration for advancement. Those who opt to join will fit into the rank which corresponds to their existing rank in the AO or RSO grade. Their pay and incremental date upon regrading will be determined in accordance with CSRs 130 and 133 respectively. Based on the formula stipulated in CSR 130, the pay for staff upon regrading will be determined as follows –

Staff	Pay in LSM Grade
AO grade staff who have already attained the maximum pay of the corresponding rank in the LSM grade	The same pay point as before regrading
AO grade staff who have not attained the maximum pay of the corresponding rank in the LSM grade	One point higher than their pay before regrading
RSO grade staff who have not yet attained the minimum point of the corresponding rank in the LSM grade	Minimum point of the corresponding rank of the LSM grade
Other RSO grade staff	The same pay point as before regrading

24. We see no objection to the implementation plan and the conversion arrangement outlined above which is in line with the established civil service practice for the merging of two different grades into a new grade.

Conclusion

25. In conclusion, we support the Administration's proposal to merge the Amenities Officer grade and the Recreation and Sport Officer grade into a new Leisure Services Manager grade and the pay structure proposed for the new grade.

Yours faithfully,

(Yeung Ka-sing)
Chairman
for and on behalf of
Members of the Standing Commission
on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service

**The Administration's justifications for the proposed pay scale
for each rank of the new LSM grade**

Assistant Leisure Services Manager II

After the merger, nearly all ALSMs II will be responsible for district operations. The majority will be functioning as frontline managers and sports programme organisers at recreation and aquatic venues, sports grounds as well as major facilities such as holiday camps and water sports centres. Others will look after a number of public beaches or parks and playgrounds. Their duties will include the daily management of a venue, administration of sports programmes, liaison with mutual aid committees, sports organisations and local bodies to promote venue usage and sports programmes, supervision of amenities and clerical staff, etc. The duties of this rank will be wider in scope and more diversified, but the level of responsibility will be similar to that of the AO II and ARSO II ranks. The prevailing pay scale for the AO II rank is considered too long and would not tie in with the proposed entry qualifications. It is proposed that the prevailing pay scale for the ARSO II rank of MPS 11-23 be adopted. The maximum pay will be 3 points lower than that of the AO II pay scale, but it will adequately reflect the level of responsibility and job factors for the ALSM II rank.

Assistant Leisure Services Manager I

2. The majority of the ALSMs I will be involved in district operation duties. They will mainly be responsible for supervising the operation of recreation venues and sports facilities, monitoring the running of, and evaluating, sports programmes in a district, registering and training part-time staff, supervising service contractors, etc. Each ALSM I will oversee the work of ALSMs II in one of the functional areas in a district, i.e. indoor recreation centres or indoor games halls, swimming pool complexes, beaches or parks and playgrounds. They will also assist the LSMs in planning and budgeting work at the district level. Other ALSMs I will be involved in landscaping work or required to assist in the development of recreation venues, recreation programmes, research, organisation of flower shows and exhibitions, etc. The responsibilities of this rank will be wider in scope than those of the AO I or the ARSO I rank. The proposed pay scale of MPS 24–33, which

represents a combination of the pay scales for the two ranks, is considered appropriate.

Leisure Services Manager

3. About two-third of the LSMs will be involved in district operations or major facility management. They will operate as deputy district heads, assisting the DLMs in planning, monitoring and evaluating venue management and sports programme development, co-ordinating and reviewing the implementation of operational procedures and practices, budget control, administering sports subsidy scheme, etc. Others will be deployed as assistants to SLSMs and CLSMs in the headquarters in the overall planning and development of long-term strategy for territory-wide leisure services. For such a wide range of duties and responsibilities at this middle management level, a pay scale of MPS 34-39, which corresponds to the prevailing pay scale for SAO, is considered appropriate.

Senior Leisure Services Manager

4. More than half of the SLSMs will operate as head of a district or a major facility (examples of major facilities include the Lei Yue Mun Park, the Hong Kong Stadium, holiday camps and water sports centres). They will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the overall recreation venue management and sports activities within a district or major facility, assisting in the formulation and evaluation of operational procedures and practices, providing technical input to the design and development of recreational facilities and sports programmes, attending district council and district management committee meetings, etc. Other SLSMs will be deployed as Staff Officers, being involved in the policy development, planning and programming of recreation and sports activities in a territory-wide context. Their responsibilities are comparable in level to those existing DLM posts, which are at present being performed by both CAOs and SRSOs. A pay scale of MPS 40-44, which is the same for the CAO rank, is considered appropriate.

Chief Leisure Services Manager

5. Four of the CLSMs will be deployed as CLMs, being in charge of the overall planning and supervision of the provision of leisure services in a regional (e.g. New Territories East) context as well as the development and management of major facilities. Other CLSMs will function as Senior Staff Officers contributing to the planning and policy development of leisure management and sports programming. The nature of their work and level of their responsibilities will be similar to those of the PAO and CRSO ranks. The prevailing pay scale of MPS 45-49 for both the two ranks is considered equally applicable to the CLSM rank.

Principal Leisure Services Manager

6. There is a D1 rank (PRSO) in the RSO Grade. The only post in this rank was deleted upon reorganisation of the municipal services departments in 2000. The substantive officer is being deployed to other duties. While there is no immediate need for a D1 post upon merger of the two grades, DLCS does not preclude the need for such a post in future, particularly where the general public is expecting the government to devote more attention and resources to sports development. Doing away with the directorate rank would also sour staff relations and weaken staff's support for the merger. DLCS therefore proposes to retain the D1 rank as PLSM in the new grade. Creation of a rank at this level will also enable the PRSO to be offered the option, like all her colleagues in the RSO grade, to transfer to the new grade.