

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Human Resources Committee

Evaluation of the Development of Human Resource Management Programmes (1999/2000)

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the findings of the annual evaluation of the development of the Human Resource Management (HRM) programmes included in the Housing Authority's (HA) HRM Plan Update (1998/1999 to 1999/2000).

BACKGROUND

2. The HA's first HRM Plan was developed in 1997 covering the five years from 1997/1998 to 2001/2002 with a view to helping the organisation to achieve its mission and strategic objectives. The first update of the HRM Plan (HRM Plan Update) covering the 2-year period from 1998/1999 to 1999/2000 was completed in May 1998 having regard to the changing circumstances since 1997.

3. With the assistance of an HRM Consultant¹, an HR system evaluation framework was developed in 1997 for assessing the programme development and applications covered in the HRM Plan and its subsequent Updates. In accordance with the planning and evaluation process, the Consultant conducted three rounds of annual evaluation exercise since 1997² on the level of development and applications of the respective driver programmes based on the system evaluation framework he developed. The latest annual

¹ Dr. Iain McCormick of the then Renwick, McCormick & Maule Ltd. was appointed to develop an HR system evaluation framework for assessing the HRM programme applications.

² The findings of the Consultant's evaluation in 1997 and 1998 are covered in HRC Paper No. 6/98 and HRC Paper No. 5/99 respectively.

assessment was conducted in December 1999 and the findings are covered in the ensuing paragraphs.

THE HRM SYSTEM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK REVISITED

4. The HRM system evaluation framework consists of four levels of assessment viz. basic, intermediate, competent and advanced, against a number of pre-defined dimensions for each driver programme and initiative under the HRM Plan and the HRM Plan Update. Evaluation is based on the level of programme development over time, covering the initial position as at November 1997, the development and the latest progress as at November 1998 and November 1999 respectively.

5. The Consultant then made assessment based on document reviews and interviews with the owners of the driver programmes. He also conducted interviews with the major stakeholders including some members of the senior directorate, heads of branch administration secretariats and some line managers involved in HRM. Moreover, the Consultant conducted two focus group discussion sessions with HRM key players as part of his evaluation in order to get feedback on the level of development and application of the HRM programmes.

6. A survey was originally scheduled to be launched in mid-1999 to measure staff views on development of certain HR issues. However, given staff's negative sentiments arising from HA's decision on increasing private sector involvement (PSI) in estate management and maintenance services which will likely impact on their satisfaction levels of HR issues, it is considered not opportune to conduct staff surveys on HRM development at this juncture.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Overall Assessment

7. The results of the assessment have indicated that our overall system development is at a competent to advanced level and users' satisfaction is generally high. Some areas of significant achievement include:

- implementing a career development framework for directorate officers;

- reviewing the remuneration and the terms and conditions of employment of HA staff;
- implementing comprehensive training and development systems;
- continuing competency development for departmental grade officers;
- enhancing staff communication systems;
- tackling the problem of over-assessment in the annual staff appraisal reports; and
- introducing Intranet and Internet based self-development systems for training and development.

8. The Consultant has commented that overall, we have continued our sound progress in the implementation of our programmes and initiatives as covered in the HRM Plan Update despite the apparent difficulties of implementing some long term HRM programmes under a rapidly changing external and internal environment. The turbulences arising from greater PSI in estate management and maintenance services and the consultancy study on streamlining organisational structure have significant impact on the implementation of HRM programmes. The executive summary of the Consultant's report is at **Appendix I**. His assessment of individual programme areas is highlighted in **Appendix II**.

Comparisons with other organisations

9. We are pleased with the Consultant's observation that HA has one of the better developed HRM systems compared to other private sector organisations with particular strengths in :

- (1) Strategic HRM planning
- (2) Competency development
- (3) Training and staff communication

(4) HRM systems evaluation

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF HRM PROGRAMMES

10. By appointing an independent consultant to conduct assessment of our current HRM programme applications, we have demonstrated our commitment to an objective and impartial monitoring of our HRM system development. We believe we are on the right track but consider that there is much more we can and have to do on the HR front to support the organisation in meeting the particular challenges posed by PSI and the need to enhance housing quality. We have taken note of the Consultant's recommendations and will follow-up on those areas by incorporating, where appropriate, new initiatives in the next update of the HRM Plan³. We believe a regular review of the programme applications can help to further improve our HRM systems and hence enable us to continue with the good progress as outlined in the Consultant's assessment.

INFORMATION

11. This paper is issued for Members' information.

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³ The HRM Plan Second Update covering planned programmes and initiatives for the next two years from 2000/2001 to 2001/2002 is the subject of a separate HRC paper to be discussed by HRC at the meeting on 16 March 2000.