

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 12th meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 4 April 2001, at 8:30 am**

Members present :

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Members absent:

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Public officers attending:

Miss Elizabeth TSE	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mr S S LEE, JP	Secretary for Works
Mr Gordon SIU, JP	Secretary for Planning and Lands
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Mr James HERD	Principal Assistant Secretary of the Treasury (Works)
Miss Winnie HO	Assistant Commissioner for Tourism, Economic Services Bureau
Dr LAU Ching-kwong, JP	Director of Civil Engineering
Mr Hugh PHILLIPSON, JP	Director of Water Supplies
Mr LEUNG Mang-chiu	Assistant Director/New Works, Water Supplies Department
Mr Roy TANG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (3)
Mr H K WONG, JP	Director of Territory Development
Mr Brian GROGAN	Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Planning, Transport Department
Ms Carolina YIP	Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development, Transport Department
Mr Donald TONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food
Mr John COLLIER, JP	Director of Drainage Services
Mr YEUNG Wing-tsan	Chief Engineer/Consultants Management, Drainage Services Department
Mr Grahame R S LOW	Chief Engineer/Hong Kong and Islands, Drainage Services Department
Ms Doris CHEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6)
Mr George LAI, JP	Deputy Commissioner for Transport/Planning and Technical Services, Transport Department
Mr Anthony LOO	Chief Engineer/Traffic Control, Transport Department
Ms Michelle LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower
Mr Jack CHAN	Deputy Secretary-General, University Grants Committee
Mr K S SHUM	Chief Technical Advisor/Subvented Projects, Architectural Services Department

Clerk in attendance:

Miss Polly YEUNG

Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3

Staff in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG

Assistant Secretary General 1

Ms Anita SIT

Senior Assistant Secretary (1)8

Head 705 - Civil Engineering

PWSC(2001-02)4

660CL

Site formation, construction of associated infrastructures and provision of government, institution and community facilities for an international theme park on Lantau Island

Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Economic Services Panel on 26 March 2001.

2. Mr IP Kwok-him sought elaboration on the statement in the discussion paper that the project by itself would lead to an increase in water charges by a maximum of 0.06% in real terms by 2006. The Director of Water Supplies (DWS) explained that in every waterworks proposal, the Administration would provide an estimate on the effect of the project on water charges, based on the estimated additional recurrent expenditure arising from the operation of the facilities concerned and assuming other factors being unchanged. However, whether there would be an actual increase in water charges would hinge on a number of factors including productivity enhancement in the operation of water supplies facilities.

3. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 707 - New Towns and Urban Area Development

PWSC(2001-02)7	188CL	Public transport interchange at Hang Hau Station of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension
	72TI	Public transport interchange at Tseung Kwan O Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension

4. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Transport Panel on 30 March 2001.

5. Regarding the population to be served by the proposed public transport interchanges (PTIs), the Director of Territory Development (DTD) advised that according to the Administration's estimate, Hang Hau, Tseng Kwan O (TKO) Town Centre and Tiu Keng Leng would reach full development by 2011 and their population would increase to about 84 000, 142 000 and 80 000 respectively by that time. He also advised that the population projection was based on the assumption that local residents would use the PTI which was nearest to their residence.

6. Miss Emily LAU enquired why the design capacity of the PTIs at the Tseng Kwan O and Tiu Keng Leng Stations was the same although the projected population of TKO Town Centre was much higher than that of Tiu Keng Leng (142 000 versus 80 000). In reply, the Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development, Transport Department (PTO/BD, TD) advised that there was already a bus terminal at Sheung Tak Estate serving the TKO Town Centre at present. As the projected population increase in TKO Town Centre and Tiu Keng Leng by 2011 would be about the same (84 000 versus 80 000), the proposed PTIs to serve these two areas were designed to have the same capacity.

7. Mr Andrew WONG pointed out that along the Mass Transit Railway TKO Extension, Hang Hau Station would be the nearest MTR station from Sai Kung and Clear Water Bay. He therefore asked whether the PTI at the station had been planned to accommodate the public transport services destined for Sai Kung and Clear Water Bay.

8. Noting that only two bus bays would be provided at the PTI at Hang Hau Station, Mr IP Kwok-him questioned whether the provision would be adequate to meet the demand for bus services.

9. In response, PTO/BD,TD advised that the PTI at Hang Hau Station was planned to cater mainly for local traffic. However, bus/green minibus stops

would be provided at this PTI for public transport services destined for Sai Kung and Clear Water Bay. She further explained that at present, there was already a bus terminal in Hang Hau north, which was about a few minutes' travelling distance from Hang Hau Station. As the population of Hang Hau would increase by only 3000 from 81 000 to 84 000 by 2011, the design capacity of the proposed PTI at Hang Hau Station should be sufficient to meet the future demand for public transport services at this location.

10. Mr Albert CHAN commented that in the past, the design of PTIs often lacked flexibility and thus could not cater for further increase in bus/mini-bus routes after a short period of operation. He therefore urged the Administration to adopt a more flexible design approach for new PTIs. The Chairman concurred with Mr CHAN and suggested that more reserve capacity and greater flexibility in the use of space should be provided.

Admin

11. In response, PTO/BD,TD said that the proposed PTIs were designed to cater for service demand up to 2011. However, there was still flexibility to cater for further increase in service demand through increasing the frequency of relevant bus/mini-bus services. She agreed to take members' views into consideration in planning for future PTIs.

12. In this connection, Mrs Miriam LAU was particularly concerned that only one taxi stand would be provided at each of the three proposed PTIs and each taxi stand could accommodate only a few taxis at any one time. She enquired whether the bus/mini-bus/taxi bays at the PTIs could be flexibly deployed in the light of actual demand. In reply, PTO/BD,TD assured members that the Transport Department would monitor the actual service demand and make the necessary adjustment to the use of bus/mini-bus/taxi bays at the proposed PTIs.

Admin

13. In reply to Mrs Miriam LAU's enquiry, PTO/BD,TD clarified that most of the space not designated for bus/mini-bus/taxi bays within the Hang Hau PTI would be occupied by columns and other structural facilities for the development above the PTI. The Chairman suggested that to facilitate members' reference, more information on the designated uses of the space within PTIs be included in the layout plans of relevant proposals in future.

14. Mr LAU Kong-wah asked whether the present proposal had taken into account the external traffic demand of TKO, in particular the traffic between TKO and Sai Kung, bearing in mind that the Administration had announced its plan to develop Sai Kung into the Leisure Garden of Hong Kong, with increased provision of tourist and recreational facilities. In response, DTD advised that the proposed PTIs were planned to serve mainly the local traffic of the respective areas. However, in line with the long-term development strategies for the Sai Kung and TKO areas, apart from making improvement to local roads and transport facilities in TKO, there were plans to improve Hang

Hau Road, Clear Water Bay Road and Hiram's Highway, thus providing an improved highway corridor for through traffic from TKO to Sha Tin via Sai Kung.

Admin
XX

15. Mr LAU Kong-wah requested the Administration to provide a paper setting out the long-term transport planning for the Sai Kung and TKO areas in detail. As the matter involved policy and planning issues, the Chairman suggested and DTD agreed to brief the Transport Panel on the transport planning for the Sai Kung and TKO areas in due course.

16. Mr Fred LI and Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the air quality, noise, lighting and maintenance of the proposed PTIs during operation. In response, DTD advised that adequate and proper ventilation systems would be provided at the proposed PTIs to ensure that the air quality of the PTIs would be in compliance with the air quality guidelines stipulated in the Practice Note on Control of Air Pollution in Semi-Confined Public Transport Interchanges issued by the Environmental Protection Department in 1998.

17. DTD further advised that to avoid excessive noise impact of the PTIs on nearby residents and passengers using the PTIs, the Administration would liaise with bus companies on measures to reduce the noise generated by bus engines when buses were at rest in PTIs. With improved design, the ventilation systems to be installed at the PTIs would not generate excessive noise. He also assured members that adequate lighting would be provided at the proposed PTIs.

18. Miss Emily LAU queried the reasons for the high percentage (23%) of construction and demolition (C&D) waste to be disposed of at landfills under the proposed projects. DTD explained that the proposed projects involved limited site formation works and thus only a small amount of excavated materials, which could be reused as public fill material, would be generated from the projects. On the other hand, it was inevitable that a certain amount of C&D waste would be generated in the construction process. Hence, despite the fact that the actual amount of C&D waste (350 cubic metres) would be small, the level of the C&D waste as a percentage of the total C&D materials would be relatively high in the proposed projects.

Admin
XX

19. The Chairman suggested that as members had expressed concern about the level of C&D waste generated by public works projects on a number of occasions at PWSC meetings, the Administration should provide relevant information in respect of completed projects under which measures to reduce C&D waste had been implemented. Miss Emily LAU supported the Chairman's suggestion. The Secretary for Works agreed to provide the information to the Environmental Affairs Panel a few months later when a reasonable amount of relevant data were available.

20. In reply to Mr LAU Ping-cheung's enquiries about the project estimates, DTD advised that the proposed PTIs would be located at the ground level of the future developments above the respective TKO Extension Stations. As the covering structure of the PTIs would be an integral part of the developments, the developer(s) concerned would be responsible for the cost of constructing the covering structure. The estimates for the PTI projects had not included any cost for piling works as such works were required for the developments only. The cost for the design of the PTIs had been included in the on-cost payable to the MTR Corporation Limited.

21. Mr Henry WU referred to the layout plan of the PTI at Tiu Keng Leng Station and asked whether alternative locations for the run-out of the PTI had been explored as the present location of the run-out would necessitate taxis to make a sharp U-turn. DTD acknowledged that the present location of the run-out was not very satisfactory. He explained that as there was a difference in level of a few metres between the PTI and Road L731, providing a run-out at Road L731 was not feasible. Providing a run-out at the corner of Road L731 and Road D8 was also not feasible for safety reasons. Hence, the only viable option was to locate the run-out next to the run-in at Road D8 as shown on the layout plan.

22. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 704 - Drainage

PWSC(2001-02)5 125DS Tolo Harbour sewerage of unsewered areas

23. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Environmental Affairs Panel on 19 March 2001.

24. Members noted that the project in question comprised two stages, with Stage 1 covering 85 unsewered areas and Stage 2 covering 84 unsewered areas of the Tolo Harbour catchment. The project had commenced in 1990 and according to the current schedule, all the works under Stage 1 would be completed in June 2006 while Stage 2 was tentatively scheduled to commence in December 2002 for completion in 2008-09. As the entire project would take about 20 years to complete, Mr LAW Chi-kwong highlighted his concern about the slow progress of the sewerage works and enquired about the feasibility to expedite the remaining works. His view was shared by some other members.

25. DDS advised that the works completed under the project so far had enabled the interception of over half of the total pollution load from the formerly unsewered areas of stage 1 of the Tolo Harbour catchment for proper

sewage treatment before being discharged into the Tolo Harbour. Upon completion of the works under the present proposal, about 80% of the pollution load from these areas would be intercepted. Stage 2 of the projects covered the more remotely located villages which generated relatively less pollution load. He also reported that the scope and implementation programme of the Stage 2 works were being reviewed as part of review of the North District and Tolo Harbour Sewerage Master Plans (SMPs).

26. Mr LAU Kong-wah urged the Administration to expedite the remaining works of the project, namely the Stage 1 phase 2C and the Stage 2 works. He recalled that separate funding had been approved for a bioremediation project to clean up Shing Mun River and pointed out that the effectiveness of the bioremediation project would be undermined if pollution load from unsewered villages continued to be discharged into Shing Mun River. He also understood that there was a plan to develop a water recreation centre at Pak Shek and considered that the sewerage works should be expedited to tie in with this planned development.

27. In response, DDS and the Chief Engineer/Consultants Management, Drainage Services Department (CE/CM,DSD) advised that upon completion of the Stage 1 phase 2B works, with which the present proposal was concerned, virtually all the villages in the catchment of Shing Mun River would have been sewerred. The design for the Stage 1 phase 2C works was approaching completion. If no or few objections were received after gazettal of the works, the construction works could be advanced accordingly. While the timetable and scope of the Stage 2 works were under review, it was the Administration's intention to expedite the works as far as practicable. They also explained that the main difficulties encountered were land acquisition and related problems which often required prolonged discussions with the village households concerned.

28. The Secretary for Planning and Lands (SPL) confirmed that there was a plan to develop a water recreation centre at Pak Shek but the timetable and the detailed scope of the project were yet to be drawn up. He further said that the water quality of Tolo Harbour had in fact been improved over the years with the implementation of the phased sewerage works for its catchment. The Administration thus considered that it would be viable to develop a water recreation centre at Pak Shek in the foreseeable future. He echoed the view of other representatives of the Administration that since the policy and the strategy for the sewerage works for the Tolo Harbour catchment had been determined, the main difficulties for the outstanding sewerage works would be objections or disputes on land-related issues raised by individual households. He assured members that the Lands Department would work closely with the Drainage Services Department (DSD) in dealing with these issues.

29. On concerns about the availability of funding for the outstanding sewerage works, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (DS/Tsy) affirmed that the Administration would earmark adequate funds for projects that were justified.

Admin
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30. Mr LAU Kong-wah maintained his concern about the progress of the outstanding works under the project, in particular the Stage 2 works. At his request, the Administration agreed to report to the Environmental Affairs Panel the progress of the project before the end of 2001.

31. Miss Emily LAU queried why the design for the Stage 2 works which was scheduled to start in December 2002 for completion in December 2008 would have to take six years to complete. She also asked whether the construction works, which were scheduled to start in 2005-06 for completion in 2008-09, could be advanced. In reply, DDS and CE/CM, DSD explained that the unsewered villages covered by Stage 2 of the project would be prioritized under the aforesaid review of the SMPs and thus the more critical part of the works would be completed earlier than 2008-09. The design period would continue up to December 2008 because it was expected that certain design details would need to be revised during the construction period to cater for unforeseen local circumstances. DDS and CE/CM, DSD also confirmed that since the same consultant would be engaged for the design and construction supervision work for each phase of sewerage works, the overlapping of the design period and construction period in each phase would not result in higher consultants' fees.

32. Addressing Mr WONG Yung-kan's concern about the long time taken (about 11 months) for consultation with the relevant Provisional District Boards for the proposed sewerage works, CE/CM, DSD explained that the Tai Po and Sha Tin Provisional District Boards had been consulted on two occasions, in July/September in 1998 and in May 1999, because the Stage 1 phase 1D and the Stage 1 phase 2B works under the present proposal were under two separate consultancy agreements. He assured members that the Administration would commence the consultation on the Stage 2 works once the scope and the implementation programme had been determined. He added that the Administration needed to discuss the proposed sewerage works with the village households concerned before consulting the respective District Councils.

33. In view of the long time required to complete the sewerage works for some villages, Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired about the feasibility of laying temporary sewers to connect individual households to the existing septic tanks in the villages as an interim measure to alleviate the pollution problem. In reply, DDS advised that given the lack of space between village houses and the difficulty of access to individual households, he anticipated that laying temporary sewers would encounter similar land-related problems as the

proposed sewerage works and thus would not serve the purpose as suggested by Miss CHAN.

34. Mr WONG Yung-kan commented that as the Administration had already designated certain land in the Tolo Harbour catchment for future village development, the proposed sewerage works should be provided with spare capacity and connection facilities to cater for the small/village houses that might be built in future. Miss Emily LAU also enquired whether the estimated population of 13 000 served by the entire sewerage project had been updated.

35. In response, DDS and CE/CM,DSD advised that one major objective of the aforesaid review of the SMPs was to examine how the sewerage to be provided could cater for the potential developments in the region while tackling the sewerage needs of existing villages. In designing the sewers for the region, connection facilities would be provided at locations which had been designated for village or other types of developments. CE/CM,DSD also confirmed that the design capacity of the communal septic tank system for Yung Shue O had taken into account the potential future development of the village.

36. Noting that the total population of the areas covered by the entire sewerage project was 13 000 and the total estimated project cost was \$435 million, Mr Albert CHAN expressed grave concern about the high unit cost of the sewerage works. As the areas covered by the outstanding works were less populated, he enquired whether alternative sewage facilities of lower costs had been considered for these areas. In response, DDS advised that the issue of cost-effectiveness of the outstanding sewerage works would be addressed in the aforesaid review of the SMPs. An alternative approach to laying sewers to connect remote villages to the sewerage system was to treat the sewage on site by constructing a septic tank system and discharge the effluent underground through a suitably designed absorption field. This approach was less costly but could only be adopted at locations with suitable ground conditions. In fact, this approach would be adopted for Yung Shue O covered by the present proposal.

37. Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the situation whereby many village houses discharged grey water (effluent other than sewage generated from domestic uses) into stormwater drains, thus causing pollution to the villages and the receiving water body such as Tolo Harbour. In response, the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) acknowledged that while direct discharge of grey water to stormwater drains was in breach of the relevant legislation, the problem was that the capacity of the septic tank systems of these village houses was often inadequate to cater for sewage as well as grey water. Hence, the solution was to provide proper sewage facilities for these villages and to arrange the village households to connect to DSD's sewer system.

38. Mr Andrew WONG asked whether the lack of sewage facilities would be a reason for rejecting an application for building a small house notwithstanding that the applicant was entitled to build a small house on the land concerned. DEP advised that EPD would advise against approving such an application if there was no adequate sewerage for the area concerned and the ground conditions in the area were unsuitable for the provision of a septic tank system for proper treatment of sewage on site. He remarked that such cases might occur for isolated and sporadic small/village house development. For areas which had been planned for future small/village house development or expansion, sewage facilities would usually be put in place in advance of such development.

39. Mr Andrew WONG further queried whether instead of rejecting a small house application for the lack of sewerage treatment facilities, the Administration would consider exchanging land with the applicant or assisting the applicant in designing alternative sewage treatment facilities. In response, SPL advised that cases involving sporadic village/small house development in remote locations would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

40. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(2001-02)2	110CD	Drainage improvement in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi - urban drainage improvement works
	111CD	Drainage improvement in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi - Tsuen Wan drainage tunnel

41. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Planning, Lands and Works (PLW) Panel on 5 March 2001.

42. Mr Henry WU queried why the traffic impact assessment (TIA) for project 111CD required an estimate of \$1.2 million while the TIA for project 110CD only required an estimate of \$0.2 million. In reply, CE/CM,DSD advised that project 111CD comprised the construction of a drainage tunnel to divert stormwater from the upper rural catchments above the Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung urban areas away from the existing downstream drainage systems. The construction of the tunnel intakes and outlet would involve a lot of excavation works and the locations of these works would interface with some existing roads, notably Castle Peak Road. The TIA for project 111CD would include detailed studies and work programming in order to minimize traffic disruption. On the other hand, as the drain replacement and rehabilitation

works under project 110CD would be carried out using a trenchless construction method, the works would not cause significant disruption to local traffic. As such, it was estimated that the TIA for project 111CD would require a higher cost.

43. Mr Henry WU queried why the proposed design consultancy for the two projects would be tendered under one consultancy agreement, bearing in mind that the two projects involved very different types of works (construction of a drainage tunnel versus the replacement and rehabilitation of existing drains). Miss Emily LAU also enquired about the pros and cons of putting the two projects under one consultancy agreement.

44. The Chairman shared Mr WU's concern. He also conveyed the general concern of the local engineering profession that to provide fair opportunities for both large and small consultancy firms, the Government should, where practicable, split large-scale projects into smaller ones for the award of consultancy contracts.

45. In response, CE/CM,DSD explained that the main reason for tendering the design consultancy for the two projects under one consultancy agreement was to achieve the economies of scale. The proposed arrangement would bring about savings in overhead costs incurred by the consultants and in certain administrative costs on the part of the Government. He confirmed that the arrangement would not affect the duration of the consultancy studies as the Government would specify the timetable for these studies in the consultancy agreement.

46. The Chairman commented that the Administration should further assess whether the arrangement was beneficial to the Government in this case. He pointed out that as the two projects involved different types of works which would also be carried out at different locations, engaging one consultancy firm for both projects might not necessarily result in cost savings as envisaged by the Administration. Taking note of members' concern, CE/CM,DSD agreed to reconsider the arrangement. The Chairman also requested the Secretary for Works to take note of members' concern in planning for future projects.

Admin

47. Mr Albert CHAN reiterated his concern raised at the PLW Panel meeting on 5 March 2001 that the Administration had not undertaken sufficient consultation on the approach to be adopted under project 111CD, i.e. the construction of a drainage tunnel to intercept and convey the upland flows directly to the sea to reduce the risks of flooding in the urban areas. Pointing out that the proposed works under project 111CD involved a very high cost (about \$1,114 million in September 2000 prices) and that according to the Administration, the same approach would be adopted in other districts, Mr CHAN urged the Administration to re-examine critically whether this approach was the most cost-effective option.

48. DDS confirmed that the Administration planned to adopt the same approach for another project in the northern part of Hong Kong Island at an estimated cost of about \$1.7 billion. He advised that the approach had been recommended after a comprehensive review of the drainage systems in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi and that the Administration had conducted a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of various options to address the flooding problem before deciding to adopt this approach. The options considered included the construction of a storage tank, carrying out drainage improvement works directly at the developed areas, and the interception option through the construction of a drainage tunnel at the upper catchment areas. Pursuant to the objective of upgrading the flood protection in existing urban areas to the levels set for new development areas and taking into account all relevant factors, the Administration had come to the conclusion that the interception option was the most cost-effective. As regards consultation, he said that the relevant District Councils and the PLW Panel had been consulted on the proposed projects and a fair amount of technical details had been provided for reference.

49. Dr TANG Siu-tong confirmed that when the present proposal was discussed at the PLW Panel, some members had raised queries about the interception approach. In this regard, he enquired whether there was proven effectiveness of this approach in overseas countries, and the level of rainstorm that the drainage systems in the Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung areas could cope with after completion of the proposed works.

50. In reply, DDS advised that at present, the interception approach was not widely used around the world. If the present proposal was approved, Hong Kong would be a pioneer in adopting the interception approach in such a large scale. He however remarked that the approach did not involve new technology as the drainage tunnel to be constructed at the mountain side for interception of stormwater at upland areas were similar in terms of design to aqua ducts used for water distribution.

51. As regards the design capacity of the proposed drainage works, DDS advised that upon completion of the proposed works, the capacity of the drainage systems in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung could cope with a one-in-200-year rainstorm for the trunk urban drainage systems and a one-in-50-year rainstorm for the branch drainage systems, which were the current standards adopted for planning the drainage systems for new towns.

52. Miss Emily LAU shared the concern about the cost-effectiveness of the interception approach. She concurred with Mr Albert CHAN that in view of the huge financial implications of the planned projects adopting this approach, the Administration should conduct more thorough consultation with the Panel as well as the relevant industry and profession(s) before taking forward this approach to address the flooding problem in urban areas.

53. In view of members' concerns, DS/Tsy said that the Administration would withdraw the item for further consideration.

54. The item was withdrawn by the Administration.

PWSC(2001-02)6

62BL

**Investigation of sewers and drains
affecting the safety of slope
features in the new Government
Catalogue of Slopes, phase 2**

55. Addressing Mr Kenneth TING's concern about the long time required for the investigation and repair works to tackle the problem of leakage from sewers and drains buried behind and adjacent to slope features across the territory, DDS said that the Administration had taken a comprehensive and systematic approach whereby the required investigation and repair works had been undertaken in phases. The present proposal was concerned with the last phase of investigation in respect of the remaining 3 300 slope features with DSD sewers and drains buried behind or nearby. The previous phases of investigation works had already covered some 8 200 such slope features.

56. Referring to the financial commitments totaling about \$287 million that had been approved since 1996 for the investigation of DSD sewers and drains affecting the safety of slope features, Mr Henry WU expressed his general concern about the extensive use of consultancy services by the Administration and sought justification for engaging consultants for the investigation works. Miss Emily LAU echoed Mr Henry WU's concern and said that the Administration might have been over-reliant on consultants for the investigation works. She sought clarification on whether DSD did not have the required expertise for the investigation work or whether the department could not re-deploy existing staff to cope with the additional workload.

57. In response, DDS and the Chief Engineer/Hong Kong and Islands, DSD (CE/HK&I, DSD) advised that it was necessary to engage the services of geotechnical engineers to carry out the risk analysis of slope failures which formed part of the investigation works and DSD did not have in-house geotechnical engineers. Therefore, consultants had to be engaged for the investigation works. They also informed members that a fair proportion of the investigation work involved the updating of the Asset Inventory System which was a computer-based system for effective management of sewers and drains. The system would be handed over to DSD upon completion of the investigation work. Thus, the training of in-house staff for maintaining the system would be a requirement to be included in the consultancy contract.

58. In reply to Mr Henry WU's enquiry, DDS confirmed that the previous packages of investigation works in respect of DSD sewers and drains affecting slope features had been tendered out under separate consultancy agreements.

59. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, DDS and CE/HK&I advised that so far, essential repair works in respect of drains and sewers affecting some 4 100 slope features had been completed and the relevant cost was about \$25 million. Drains and sewers that were deteriorating but did not require immediate repair would be included in DSD's routine pipe maintenance programme.

60. The item was voted on and endorsed.

61. There being insufficient time, the Chairman instructed that the remaining items, i.e. PWSC(2001-02)1 and 8 would be carried over to the next meeting to be held on 18 April 2001.

62. The meeting ended at 10:45 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

26 April 2001