

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. PWSC66/00-01
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/F/2/2

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

**Minutes of the 8th meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 17 January 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
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
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 Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
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

Non-Subcommittee Member attending:

Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong

Members absent:

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

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)
Mr Patrick LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (2)
Mr S H PAU, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr P L KWAN, JP	Deputy Director of Architectural Services
Mr Peter P Y LEUNG	Assistant Director of Education (Special Duties)
Mr Y M HO	Principal Transport Officer/Urban, Transport Department
Mr Raymond LEE	District Planning Officer/Kowloon, Planning Department
Mr Joseph LAI, JP	Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (3)
Mr John LEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (9)
Mr H F LEE	Senior Assistant Director of Education (Support)

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 703 - Buildings

PWSC(2000-01)83 91ET Education Resource Centre-cum-Public Transport Interchange at Kowloon Tong

Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Education Panel on 18 December 2000.

2. Mr LAU Ping-cheung declared interest that the firm he worked for might bid for the consultancy contract(s) of the proposed project.

3. In reply to Mr TAM Yiu-chung's enquiries, the Assistant Director of Education (Special Duties) (AD(SD),ED) advised that the proposed composite Education Resource Centre (ERC) would house the existing 17 education resource centres scattered across the territory and three planned resource centres. The Administration envisaged that by co-locating the resource centres in the centrally located ERC, the services of the centres could be improved, notably with an extension of opening hours, without the need for additional staff.

4. Pointing out that the ventilation and lighting of many existing public transport interchanges (PTIs) were very poor, Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired whether any measures would be taken to address these aspects of the proposed PTI. In reply, the Deputy Director of Architectural Services (DDArchS) advised that provisions had been earmarked in the present proposal to engage consultants to conduct an aero-dynamics study and to provide specialist advice on ventilation system to handle the exhaust from the vehicles and to design a facade which could optimize natural light at the proposed PTI. He took note of the Chairman's suggestion of using plants and soil to absorb excessive carbon dioxide in the PTI.

5. Noting that the estimated total capital cost of the proposed ERC-cum-PTI was about \$740 million and the ERC would provide a total operational area of around 14 000 square metres, Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired about the unit construction cost for the project. In reply, DDArchS advised that the unit construction cost for similar types of facilities was around \$20,000 per square metre of construction floor area. However, pending the detailed design of the project, details on the construction cost for the proposed ERC-cum-PTI had not been worked out.

6. Members noted that under the present proposal, the ERC-cum-PTI would be constructed to the full height limit applicable to the project site (i.e. six-storey high) with the foundation and structure designed to allow for the addition of one more storey should the height restriction be relaxed in future. Pointing out that the project site was at a prime location and there was ever increasing demand for education support facilities in the community, Mr.

CHEUNG Man-kwong referred to the suggestion made by some members of the Education Panel that the foundation of the ERC-cum-PTI should be strengthened further to allow for the possible addition of more storeys in future and urged that the Administration should seriously examine the viability of the suggestion. He remarked that there had been cases in the past that structural alterations to existing facilities constructed above Mass Transit Railway (MTR) stations had been turned down on grounds of inadequate loading capacity of the foundation. Hence, if a stronger foundation was not provided in the initial stage under this project, Mr CHEUNG considered that it would be quite impossible to construct additional storeys even if the relevant height restriction was relaxed in future.

7. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (2) advised that the present proposal had already taken into account the need to maximize the development potential of the project site, the possibility of relaxation of the height restriction applicable to the site, as well as the cost and time implications of providing a stronger foundation as suggested by some members. However, as the ERC-cum-PTI and the MTR underground concourse would form an integrated structure, changes to this project would inevitably cause delay in the works for the ERC and the MTR underground concourse, which he understood was urgently required to improve the services which ED was currently providing and to alleviate the present heavy passenger traffic at the Kowloon Tong Station respectively.

8. DDArchS further explained that the present design of the entire structure of the ERC-cum-PTI and the MTR underground concourse had been drawn up according to the requirements of the relevant user parties. To avoid affecting the pedestrian circulation, the columns of the ERC-cum-PTI would not penetrate the MTR underground concourse, but would be supported by horizontal beams laid above the concourse. This "transfer" design would limit the loading of the ERC-cum-PTI superstructure. To further strengthen the foundation of the ERC-cum-PTI superstructure would probably require the columns of superstructure to be erected at the underground concourse, which in turn would require enlargement and alteration of the design of the underground concourse to cater for these columns and to provide the required space for passenger traffic. DDArchS stressed that while this alternative arrangement was technically feasible, it would inevitably delay the works for the MTR concourse and the PTI as the design of the entire structure would have to be altered.

9. As to whether the building height restriction applicable to the project site would be relaxed in future, the District Planning Officer/Kowloon, Planning Department (DPO/K,PD) advised that the height restriction for the project site and other sites in Kowloon Tong had been imposed by the Town Planning Board (TPB) after its last review of the Kowloon Tong Outline Zoning Plan, taking into account the capacity constraints of the infrastructure facilities for the district and the desirability to preserve the low density

characteristic of the district. He reported that at present, TPB had no plan to relax the height restriction.

10. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that as there had been calls in the community to review the building height restriction for Kowloon Tong, it was highly probable that the restriction would be relaxed in future. As such, it would be prudent to provide a stronger foundation for the project site to allow for future additional storeys.

11. Mr Albert CHAN shared Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's view. He understood that despite the closure of the Kai Tak Airport, the building height restriction for the Kowloon Tong district had been retained due to the capacity constraints of existing infrastructure facilities. He envisaged that in the light of progressive advancement and upgrading of infrastructure facilities, it was highly probable that the height restriction would be relaxed to meet development needs. He further pointed out that the demand for education support services was ever increasing and often outpaced Government's planning for education facilities. Taking these factors into account, he considered it worthwhile to provide a stronger foundation at the subject site to allow for future additional storeys.

12. Mr CHEUNG and Mr CHAN further suggested that the Administration should revise the present proposal to include the additional cost requirements for providing a stronger foundation and related infrastructural facilities and submit the revised proposal for the Finance Committee (FC)'s approval on 9 February 2001. They considered the additional costs justified as the development potential of the subject site would be optimized and the demand for educational support services would be better met.

13. Miss Emily LAU said that while she supported the principle of maximizing the development potential of project sites in planning for Government facilities, she was concerned that the resources required for providing a stronger foundation under the present project would be wasted if there was no prospect of relaxing the relevant building height restriction at all. She thus enquired whether there was any concrete plan to review the relevant building height restriction.

14. In reply, DPO/K,PD advised that the Administration was undertaking a Stage II Study on Review of Metroplan and the Related Kowloon Density Study Review which were scheduled for completion in year 2001. In these studies, the development potential of various districts, including Kowloon Tong, would be reviewed.

15. As regards the cost and time implications of providing a stronger foundation at the subject site, DDArchS advised that as the ERC-cum-PTI project was an integral part of the MTR concourse project, it would be necessary to consult the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) before any

precise estimate of the extra cost and time could be given. A rough estimate was that both projects would be delayed by six to nine months. He also remarked that apart from extra foundation works, additional lifts, drainage and building services facilities would need to be provided to allow for future additional storeys. Moreover, the Government might need to compensate the MTRC for any additional cost and time incurred by the company in this regard. In reply to Miss Emily LAU's enquiry, he confirmed that works for constructing additional storeys in future could be implemented without causing undue disruption to existing users of the ERC building if the required foundation, lift shaft, staircases and building service facilities were already provided when the building was first constructed.

16. Mr IP Kwok-him and Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that to enable members to assess whether the additional resources for a stronger foundation and additional building services facilities were justified under the present project, the Administration should be asked to provide more precise information on the cost and time implications of this alternative arrangement. A comprehensive assessment on the future demand for education support services should also be made to determine the maximum number of storeys of the ERC building in the long term. They were of the view that pending the availability of such information, it would be difficult for members to take a position on whether or not to support increasing the cost estimates for the present proposal as suggested by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Mr Albert CHAN.

17. Miss Emily LAU echoed the view of Mr IP and Mr TAM. She also highlighted the importance for the Administration to provide its assessment on the possibility of any future relaxation on relevant building height restriction, and on how the additional storeys, if available, would be utilized. She considered that a more advisable approach would be for the Administration to provide the additional information to this Subcommittee again for consideration of the present proposal and any proposed revision.

18. Mr LAU Ping-cheung opined that unless there was a proven demand for increased educational support services which the proposed ERC could not cater for, he considered that there was no strong justification to revise the project to allow for further additional storeys in future.

19. In view of members' concerns and requests, the Chairman advised that the Administration should discuss with the MTRC on the alternative arrangement as suggested by Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Mr Albert CHAN and provide further information as requested by members at the meeting. He also remarked that unless there was an urgency to submit the present proposal to FC on 9 February 2001 as originally scheduled, he considered it preferable for the Administration to withdraw the present proposal and re-submit it to this Subcommittee with the requested information instead of putting the proposal to FC direct.

20. Having regard to members' views and concerns, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury said that the Administration would withdraw the item for further consideration.

21. The item was withdrawn by the Administration.

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS

HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

PWSC(2000-01)84	85ET	Improvement works to existing government schools based on the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 5 - phase 4
	19EC	Improvement works to existing aided secondary schools based on the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 5 - phase 4
	20EC	Improvement works to existing aided primary schools based on the recommendations of the Education Commission Report No. 5 - phase 4

22. Mr LAU Ping-cheung declared interest that the firm he worked for might have been awarded or bid for the consultancy contract(s) for the school improvement projects in question.

23. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that a major problem encountered by many schools included in the School Improvement Programme (SIP) was that the responsible consultants had not taken into account the views and requests of schools in drawing up the scope and design of the improvement works. Thus, the final project plans might not be able to accommodate the needs of the schools concerned. He therefore enquired about the arrangements available under the SIP for supervision of consultants and for handling complaints against consultants.

24. The Deputy Secretary for Education and Manpower (3) (DS(EM)3) and the Senior Assistant Director of Education (Support) (SAD(S),ED) advised that the Administration attached great importance to the views of schools in drawing up the SIP project plans. They acknowledged that there was a need to strengthen communication and co-operation among the parties concerned and for this purpose, the Administration would set up a quadrilateral meeting comprising representatives from the school and the consultancy firm concerned, the Architectural Services Department and the Education Department for each and every SIP project in phase 4 and the final phase of the SIP. The

quadrilateral meeting would provide a useful forum to address schools' concerns and to tackle problems in the course of any SIP project at the earliest opportunity. SAD(S),ED further advised that a high level Task Force had been set up under the Education Department with senior representatives from relevant departments to streamline interdepartmental arrangements and approval procedures for the SIP. Issues/problems that could not be satisfactorily dealt with at the quadrilateral meeting could be referred to the Task Force for examination.

25. Regarding the supervision of consultants, the Deputy Director of Architectural Services (DDArchS) acknowledged that for the SIP projects under phases 1 to 3, some consultants' performance had not been satisfactory. He advised that the schools concerned could lodge a complaint to the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) if any consultants were found not performing their duties with due diligence. Consultants with two consecutive reports of poor performance might not be offered further SIP consultancy contracts. DDArchS further confirmed that relevant provisions were included in the consultancy contracts to enable the Government to claim compensation for losses arising from substandard works or delays if these problems were caused by the consultants not having performed their duties with due diligence. He however remarked that delays and substandard works were often attributed to the faults or negligence of contractors rather than consultants.

26. While agreeing that improvement works were needed for the schools, Mr Albert CHAN expressed grave concern about the cost-effectiveness of SIP projects. He considered that the "trend line" average construction costs for additional net floor area (NFA) to be provided under SIP (set out in paragraph 10 of the discussion paper) were apparently very high. In view of the large number of schools requiring the provision of additional NFA in phases 4 and 5, he urged the Administration to explore feasible ways to control and where possible, reduce costs. He further opined that schools should be allowed to play a more active role in the delivery of SIP projects and this might help save costs.

27. In response, DDArchS clarified that the "trend line" average construction costs recommended in the SIP consultancy review represented the upper cost limit above which an SIP project would be considered not cost-effective. The "trend line" costs were derived on the basis of the tender prices of the successful bids for the SIP projects in phases 1 to 3. He further explained that the costs of the improvement works for existing schools were relatively high mainly because of the high unit cost of the piling works required, the restrictions on the timing and duration of construction works and the strict requirements on the implementation of safety and environmental mitigation measures.

28. DS(EM)3 supplemented that carrying out improvement works at existing schools were subject to more constraints than constructing a new

school. Apart from the need to schedule works to minimize disruption to school operation, a unique design was required for each SIP project to take account of the specific circumstances of individual schools. He further advised that part of the reasons for the trend of rising costs of improvement works under the SIP over the years was the expanding scope of improvement works at subsequent phases. For phases 4 and 5, the objective was to upgrade schools to the standards of the Year 2000 Design as far as practicable.

29. As regards Mr Albert CHAN's suggestion of allowing schools to play a more active role in SIP projects, DS(EM)3 advised that all along, there had been a mechanism whereby schools could carry out improvement or expansion works on their own with Government subvention. For the final phase of the SIP, the Administration would give schools an option to carry out the pre-contract works and improvement works by appointing their own consultants with Government subvention in order to provide an alternative means to deliver the SIP and to provide flexibility to schools. DDArchS informed members that the Administration would brief schools on the new arrangement, as well as the communication and complaint channels under the SIP at two briefing sessions to be held on 18 and 20 January 2001.

30. Miss Emily LAU pointed out that there might be some cases in which reprovisioning an existing school to new school premises would be more cost-effective than carrying out improvement works at an existing school. In this connection, she enquired about the respective number of schools which had requested for reprovisioning but had been included in the SIP instead; and those which had opted for improvement works despite the offer of reprovisioning by the Administration. In reply, the Assistant Director of Education (Special Duties) (AD/SD,ED) advised that the Administration had not conducted a survey among the schools included in the SIP on their preference for reprovisioning or otherwise. On the other hand, he had personally suggested to a few schools the option of reprovisioning but these schools had turned down the option. In reply to Miss Emily LAU's further enquiry, he confirmed that all school principals had had the opportunity to visit newly built schools of the Year 2000 design.

31. Regarding the present status of the 21 schools which had been found technically non-feasible for improvement works under SIP phase 4, SAD(S),ED and AD/SD,ED advised that all the four technically non-feasible schools which had indicated that they had no intention to be reprovisioned/redeveloped were located very close to Mass Transit Railway stations and the school sites were relatively small. The approach being considered was to reduce the class number of these schools so as to vacate some space for additional facilities. As regards the remaining 17 schools, they reported that five schools had agreed to in-situ redevelopment and the Administration was actively seeking suitable sites for reprovisioning the other 12 schools.

32. As regards the estimated number of existing schools included in the SIP final phase which might require reprovisioning or in-situ redevelopment subsequently, AD/SD,ED advised that in the light of past experience, the Administration estimated that around 10% to 20% of the 342 schools included in the SIP final phase might be classified as technically non-feasible after completion of feasibility studies and thus, some 30 to 70 schools might require reprovisioning or in-situ redevelopment. This requirement would be taken into account in the land use planning for various districts. AD/SD,ED remarked that in pursuing the reprovisioning option, factors including the need or otherwise for students to go to schools in other districts, the demand and supply of school places of the districts concerned and the views of the staff, parents and students of the schools concerned had to be taken into account. For in-situ redevelopment, the size of the school site should not be less than 3 000 square metres.

33. Addressing Miss Emily LAU's concern about the availability of sufficient sites for reprovisioning of existing schools which were technically non-feasible for SIP works, the Secretary for Planning and Lands confirmed that the Planning and Lands Bureau and the Government departments under its purview were making the best effort to reserve sufficient suitable sites for construction of the required school premises, and that they would be prepared to discuss and assist where problems arose.

34. Pointing out that it might be too costly to engage consultants for small scale improvement works for a single school, Mr LAU Ping-cheung suggested that while schools should be given the option to engage their own consultants to carry out SIP projects, there should be a budget ceiling for each school and schools should be allowed to group their SIP works and jointly engage one consultancy firm for such works to benefit from the economies of scale. In response, DS(EM)3 confirmed that the budget ceiling for the SIP works for each school would be set at 42% of the construction cost of a new school of the same type and size. Schools might choose to employ their own consultants and where the costs exceeded the aforesaid ceiling, top up the costs in excess with their own funds. The Administration envisaged that some school sponsoring bodies might choose to group the SIP works of the schools under their management and assign them to the same consultancy firm. DDArchS added that all along, schools were allowed to undertake self-funded works together with works funded by Government, provided that there was a clear delineation of the two groups of works items in the relevant works contract(s).

35. Mr LAU Ping-cheung pointed out that ArchSD should provide technical guidelines for those schools which chose to engage their own consultants to carry out SIP works and these guidelines should include, inter alia, the lists of approved consultants and contractors, relevant specifications/standards for improvement items and descriptions on unauthorized works items, if any. In response, DDArchS advised that the SIP projects to be implemented under the new arrangement would be subject to Government supervision as in the case of

other subvention projects. The Administration would provide detailed guidelines on the new arrangement for schools at the aforesaid briefings and ArchSD would provide necessary guidance in the course of project implementation.

36. Noting that the scope of works was yet to be confirmed for 28 schools included in the SIP phase 4, Mr Albert CHAN enquired about the extent of variation in the amount of funds required upon finalization of the scope of works for these schools. He also enquired about the target schedule for the phase 4 SIP projects. In reply, AD/SD,ED advised that although the scope of improvement works for the 28 schools would require further discussion between the Administration and the schools concerned, the final scope would not significantly deviate from that set out in the present proposal. Upon approval of the present proposal, the consultants engaged for the phase 4 SIP projects would proceed to prepare the detailed design and tendering documents. The target was to complete all phase 4 projects by mid 2003.

37. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong informed members that he had consulted the principals of the 28 schools concerned, and learned that these schools did not entirely agree to the scope of improvement works proposed by the consultants concerned. In this connection, he enquired about the basis for drawing up the estimates for the SIP projects for these schools and whether a target completion date would be set for each SIP project to facilitate schools to plan their school activities accordingly.

38. In reply, AD/SD,ED advised that as the SIP projects under phase 4 and the final phase would be subject to a budget ceiling (as explained in the discussion paper), the final estimates for the SIP projects for the 28 schools would not deviate significantly from the present estimates. He also advised that milestone dates in respect of the detailed design, the tendering exercise for the works contract and the completion of the construction works would be set for each SIP project at the quadrilateral meeting. The responsible party would need to account for any delay at the quadrilateral meeting.

39. The item was voted on and endorsed.

40. The Chairman informed members that in anticipation of insufficient time to deal with all the remaining items at this meeting, the Administration had requested that after consideration of the next item PWSC(2000-01)85, the Subcommittee should proceed to consider the last item PWSC(2000-01)88. Discussion of PWSC(2000-01)86 and 87 would be carried over to another meeting. Mr Albert CHAN considered the proposed arrangement unsatisfactory as some members had scheduled their attendance according to the order of items on the agenda. In this regard, the Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (DS(Tsy)) explained that items PWSC(2000-01)86 and 87 relating to the infrastructure works for two railway projects were closely related and should preferably be considered at the same meeting.

41. Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that this additional Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) meeting had clashed with a meeting of the Subcommittee on Occupational Safety and Health (Display Screen Equipment). As some members of the Subcommittee were also PWSC members, the Subcommittee had decided to cut short its meeting so that those PWSC members could also attend this meeting to discuss the items of their concern, notably items PWSC(2000-01)86 and 87.

42. After discussion with members and in consultation with DS(Tsy), the Chairman instructed that the remaining items on the agenda, i.e. PWSC(2000-01)85, 86 and 87, would be carried over to the next meeting scheduled for 14 February 2001.

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS

HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

**PWSC(2000-01)85 28EC Pre-construction works for schools
in the final phase of the School
Improvement Programme**

43. Mr LAU Ping-cheung declared interest that the firm he worked for might bid for the consultancy contract(s) for the school improvement projects in question.

44. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong enquired whether the target to complete the improvement works for the technically feasible schools included in the SIP final phase by the end of the 2004/05 school year could be achieved as planned, given that very few schools might engage their own consultants and ArchSD would have to absorb the bulk of the workload.

45. In response, DDArchS advised that ArchSD would make the necessary staffing arrangements to cope with the heavy workload. Upon approval of the present proposal, ArchSD would proceed immediately to invite bids for the consultancy contracts for the final phase SIP projects. It was estimated that about 20 to 30 consultancy firms would be appointed for the final phase projects. It normally took about 18 months from the appointment of consultants to the award of works contracts and another 18 months for implementation of construction works. While the actual construction works would be staggered, all the projects should be completed by the end of the 2004/05 school year if both the consultants and contractors could carry out their works on schedule.

46. Referring to the previous proposal PWSC(2000-01)84 in which there was a table setting out the scope of improvement works for all the schools concerned, Mr Albert CHAN enquired why such information was not provided

in the present proposal. He also enquired whether those schools which engaged their own consultants could proceed with the SIP works ahead of those schools entrusting the appointment of consultants to ArchSD.

47. In reply, DS(EM)3 and DDArchS advised that feasibility studies for all phase 4 projects had already been completed and the scope of improvement works had been determined. Funds were sought under the previous proposal to proceed to the construction stage. For the phase 5 projects, the present proposal was to seek funds to carry out the feasibility studies, and thus the scope of improvements for the schools concerned had not yet been confirmed. Another funding proposal would be put up for the construction works at a later stage. They also advised that schools which chose to engage their own consultants would also be required to put up the consultancy contracts for tender.

48. The item was voted on and endorsed.

49. The meeting ended at 10:37 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

8 February 2001