

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. PWSC156/00-01
(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 17th meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 30 May 2001, at 10:45 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 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 Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, 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

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP

Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP

Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, 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 J COLLIER, JP	Director of Drainage Services
Mr W Y SHIU	Chief Engineer/Project Management, Drainage Services Department
Mr W S SIN	Chief Engineer/Land Drainage, Drainage Services Department
Mr W T YEUNG	Chief Engineer/Consultants Management, Drainage Services Department
Mr H K WONG, JP	Director of Territory Development
Mr TSUI Wai	Chief Engineer (Yuen Long), Territory Development Department
Mr C L NG	Chief Engineer (Tai Po & North) Territory Development Department

Clerk in attendance:

Mr Andy LAU	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2
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Staff in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Erin TSANG	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)3

HEAD 704 - DRAINAGE

**PWSC(2001-02)28 92CD Yuen Long, Kam Tin, Ngau Tam Mei and
Tin Shui Wai drainage improvements,
stage I**

Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 23 April 2001.

2. Miss Emily LAU referred to the information on the cost estimates of the proposal and pointed out the lack of sufficient details to facilitate deliberation by the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC). She suggested that a clear audit trail should be set up to enable more stringent control on public works expenditure by both the Administration and the Legislative Council (LegCo). In response, the Director of Drainage Services (D of DS) advised that the level of information on cost estimates contained in the discussion paper was in accordance with the standard format for PWSC papers. However, should members require a further breakdown on how the estimates of individual work items were arrived at, the said information could be provided.

3. The Chairman considered that the information to be provided in a discussion paper could never be exhaustive. A balance would have to be struck to avoid overloading members with non-essential information. Attendance by responsible public officers at PWSC meetings could ensure that specific questions from members on the funding requests would be properly addressed. Echoing this view, Mr Andrew WONG said that he found the information on cost estimates in the present format sufficient in general. If there was suggestion to change the existing practice, he considered that the matter could be pursued as a separate agenda item with the required notice given. While considering that it would be impractical to specify the type of information to be contained in PWSC papers, Mr LAW Chi-kwong remarked that in the conduct of Council business, there was an evolving relationship between LegCo and the Administration. If any particular information was often sought by members in the scrutiny of financial proposals, the Administration would no doubt take hint and provide the same in the discussion papers as a matter of routine. Concurring with this view, Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that over the years, additional information, such as the estimate on construction and demolition waste, had been included in PWSC papers to address the concerns of members. In view of members' comments, the Chairman remarked that the prevailing practice should be maintained.

4. Taking into account the rapid development in the New Territories, Mr Henry WU asked if it would be more cost-effective to adopt a higher level of flood protection, say a return period of 100 years, for designing the new stormwater facilities. In this connection, he sought information on the additional cost involved if the suggested level of flood protection was to be adopted. In reply, D of DS referred members to Enclosure 4 to the paper for details about the development of the Flood Control and Prevention Strategy. He assured members that the flood protection standards adopted in Hong Kong

were reasonable by international standards and a good level of protection was accorded to the population. If a higher protection level of 1 in 100 years, instead of 1 in 50 years, were to be achieved, it would invariably result in a larger land requirement and additional costs.

5. Given the economic changes in recent years, Mr WU however opined that there might be a case for the Administration to conduct an overall review on the flood protection standards as the relevant planning standards adopted for the Strategy in 1990 might no longer be applicable. D of DS stressed that given the hefty expenditure of \$17.2 billion already committed under the public works programme for flood protection throughout the territory, a reasonable compromise would have to be made between the level of protection and the cost. Notwithstanding the target standards to be achieved, he assured members that a pragmatic approach would be adopted. In cases where practical difficulties were involved, adjustments would be made accordingly during the course of the projects.

6. Referring to the substantial amount of funding sought by the Administration on various drainage improvement works, Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that the problem of flooding was often aggravated by unauthorized uses of land, such as the paving of areas for container storage. In order to ensure that public spending on drainage improvement efforts was not wasted and that disturbance to the affected residents was minimized, he called on the Administration to consider long-term measures to tackle this particular problem. He also suggested that a higher level of fine might be justified to contribute towards Government expenditure in this respect.

7. Acknowledging Mr CHAN's concerns, the Secretary for Planning and Lands (SPL) assured members that the Administration also attached great importance to the problems caused by unauthorized uses of land. At present, efforts had been taken by the Planning Department, the Lands Department and where environmental problems were involved, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), to address the issues involved from different perspectives. A special task force was also set up recently to spearhead a clean-up exercise of the black spots. While agreeing that tougher actions might be required to achieve a more effective deterrent effect, he suggested that the matter could be discussed by the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works in more detail.

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8. Noting the remarks on the economic losses suffered by local residents from flooding in another proposal PWSC(2000-01)32, Miss Emily LAU sought clarification on whether the adverse effect on the properties of local residents also occurred in the area covered in the present proposal. In reply, D of DS explained that the Administration did not have comprehensive record on the economic losses incurred at flooding incidents because such losses were not usually reported. In the areas covered under the present item, there had been relatively minor flooding incidents but these had not resulted in homes being flooded. However, as far as PWSC(2000-01)32 was concerned, the proposal was a village flood protection scheme specifically for a very low-lying black-spot area. As the area had a history of heavy rainstorms where village houses were being

inundated, the Administration was able to establish a direct relationship between flooding and economic losses.

9. Unconvinced that the same information could not be furnished for all flood protection-related projects, Miss LAU remarked that if an area was constantly affected by flooding, economic losses would inevitably be resulted. Hence, the Administration should try to provide the relevant cost-benefit analysis in PWSC papers for members' information. In response, D of DS maintained that comprehensive justifications for the proposed project had already been given in the paper. If members required additional information on cost-benefit analysis, a wider issue would be involved as it was generally not provided in PWSC papers.

10. Mr IP Kwok-him sought information on the annual recurrent expenditure of \$130,000 arising from the project and asked whether it would include works to deal with foul-smelling drains. In response, the Chief Engineer/Project Management, Drainage Services Department (CE/PM, DSD) stated that the sum was the estimated annual expenditure for desilting, maintenance and repairs works required for the proposed drainage system. Supplementing on the term contract arrangement adopted by the Drainage Services Department (DSD) for the maintenance of drainage systems in Hong Kong, D of DS said that normal maintenance works of the drainage systems in each of DSD's three district maintenance divisions, i.e. Hong Kong and Islands, Mainland South and Mainland North, would be covered under a 2-year term contract. In addition, DSD had a small team to respond to emergencies. Hence, the problem of bad odour from drains would either be dealt with by the in-house team on an urgent basis or by the maintenance contractors as a matter of routine.

11. Mr IP cited repeated complaints about bad odour from drains in the Central and Western District soon after improvement works had been undertaken, and urged the Administration to take appropriate measures to ensure that the problem was tackled at root and to allocate adequate resources for proper maintenance. In response, D of DS stated that the question of bad odour was a site specific issue which might be caused by certain pollution sources. In that case, follow-up actions would be taken jointly by DSD and EPD. The Chairman advised that if considered necessary, members could raise the matter for discussion at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works.

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12. In reply to Miss Emily LAU on contract strategy, CE/PM, DSD advised that the proposed works would be tendered out as one standard remeasurement contract. Given that extensive work had been done by the Administration to identify possible conflicting utilities, Miss LAU queried the need for tendering out the project under a remeasurement contract. In reply, D of DS highlighted the risks presented in this project due to uncertainties about the existence and location of underground utilities. Hence, instead of tendering the works out under a lump sum contract which would require the contractor to bear all the risks and as such, might result in a lot of claims and disputes, DSD had decided that it would be more appropriate to utilize a remeasurement contract for the purpose of risk management. In order to facilitate the contractors in computing their cost estimates, efforts had been made by the department to conduct prior investigations as

best as it could. But such investigations might not always be successful, particularly in some older urban areas. The Chairman agreed that under such circumstances, a remeasurement contract would normally be used. He also pointed out that if a lump sum contract was utilized, the tender price for the project might increase substantially.

13. In this connection, Miss Emily LAU enquired about the measures to be taken by the Administration to ensure the accuracy of utility records so that a lump sum contract could be used. In response, D of DS explained that much effort had been made to reduce the obstruction caused by underground utilities in drainage and sewerage works. For example, utility reserves would be incorporated in the design of new road system where appropriate. The Secretary for Works (S for W) added that with computerized utility records, details of underground services would be kept in a digital form. Although more reliable records could be obtained for new roads, the accuracy of existing utility records could only be verified or improved gradually as aged utilities were replaced and their records updated. He said that in the long run when accurate records were kept for all underground utilities, a lump sum contract could be considered for such projects.

14. Citing the different ways in which the breakdown of consultants' staff cost was presented in this paper and PWSC(2000-01)43, Mr Henry WU considered that a standard format should be adopted to facilitate members' perusal. Acknowledging the member's concern, S for W said that comments had been raised previously in this Subcommittee about whether resident site staff cost should be included under consultants' fees. Hence, a different way of presentation was used in this paper. However, he agreed that a standard format should be adopted for all PWSC papers.

15. In reply to Mr MAK Kwok-fung about the impact of discharge from the Shenzhen Reservoir, D of DS briefly reported the progress of the Shenzhen River Regulation Project. Members noted that when Stage III of the project was completed, the expanded waterway would be able to handle the discharge from the reservoir with no effect on flooding. D of DS also confirmed that the areas covered under the present item would not be affected by the discharge from the Shenzhen Reservoir.

16. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 704 - DRAINAGE

PWSC(2001-02)29 109CD Drainage improvement in Sha Tin and Tai Po

17. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 23 April 2001.

18. Mr IP Kwok-him noted that the proposed investigations and detailed design would not be completed until May 2005 and sought explanation on the long lead time required. In reply, D of DS outlined the details of work to be undertaken by the

consultants under the proposed investigations and consultancy study. Considering the time taken for statutory procedures and land resumption, the proposed time frame was normal for works related to river training which involved land and environmental issues. To supplement, the Chief Engineer/Consultants Management, DSD (CE/CM, DSD) explained that before detailed design could be finalized, the consultants would have to conduct various assessments including those for environmental impact and traffic impact.

19. Mr IP however pointed out that work for securing project approval and land resumption fell outside the scope of the present item and asked whether the proposed consultancy *per se* could be expedited. His views were shared by the Chairman who considered that time taken for administrative procedures should not be taken into account. In this respect, Mr Albert CHAN opined that if the works were tendered out as smaller contracts, it might help to speed up the whole process. Miss Emily LAU also called on S for W to review the situation and see whether accelerated implementation was possible.

20. In response, S for W assured members that the Administration was mindful of the need to speed up the programme where possible to reduce the inconvenience caused to the affected residents. For this purpose, CE/CM, DSD advised that site investigations and detailed design for improvement works having no land or environmental implications would be completed by December 2003, while the rest by May 2005. In this way, construction work could proceed in phases starting from October 2004 with a view to completing all the improvement works by end 2008. In addition, he advised that the consultants were also responsible for the preparation of tender documents and assessment of tenders, which could only proceed until all necessary statutory procedures including public consultation and gazettal, as well as land resumption matters had been completed.

21. While expressing support in principle for the proposed improvement works, Mr WONG Yung-kan also queried the long time taken for the consultancy, and asked whether the unsatisfactory situation could be improved by engaging different consultants for drainage improvement works in rural areas. In reply, D of DS stressed that the Administration had no intention of using one consultant for all the drainage studies. The engagement of consultants in this project or any other projects would depend on the outcome of the tendering process. In this respect, Mr WONG called on the Administration to ensure that the progress of improvement works could keep up with the rapid development of the New Territories.

22. Noting members' grave concerns in the matter, D of DS emphasized that the proposed time frame had taken into account the difficulties involved in the project. However, he re-assured members that the Administration would press ahead with the improvement works where possible. At the request of the Chairman, S for W agreed to provide a written response to members' concerns before the item was considered by the Finance Committee (FC).

23. Pointing out that quite a number of locations of the proposed drainage works in Sha Tin were near Shing Mun River Channel, Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the provision of substandard drainage system in the area which was a new town developed in 1970's. He queried whether the improvement works were necessary as a result of oversight on the Administration's part during the planning and development of the new town. In reply, D of DS explained that where upgrading of drainage system in existing towns was proposed, the works were primarily for the older parts of these towns. CE/CM, DSD added that upon completion of the proposed improvement works, the flood protection level in the older parts of Sha Tin covered under the present item would be brought up to the required standard and the risk of flooding during heavy rainstorms would be substantially reduced.

24. Supplementing on the background of the proposed improvement works, the Chief Engineer/Land Drainage, DSS (CE/LD, DSD) said that as a result of the Stormwater Drainage Master Plan Study in Sha Tin and Tai Po (the Master Plan Study) completed in October 1999, it was revealed that some stormwater drains and natural streamcourses in these areas did not have the required hydraulic capacity to meet the flow requirements. To tackle the flooding problems in Sha Tin and Tai Po, including the low-lying areas in Sha Tin such as Ha Wo Che which was in the outskirts of the new town, a series of improvement works was recommended.

25. In this connection, Mr Andrew WONG noted that the scope of improvement works presently proposed did not cover Tai Wai which was also a low-lying area, and sought assurance from the Administration that the area would not be affected by the problem of flooding in the absence of improvement works. In response, CE/LD, DSD informed members that the said area was served by a pumping station in Tai Wai which would substantially reduce the risk of flooding.

26. Mr Albert CHAN did not accept the Administration's explanation and stressed that notwithstanding the low-lying topography of the said areas, flooding incidents would not happen for no reason at all. Citing the proposed works near Heng On Estate, he pointed out that the need for improvement works in this relatively new development area clearly illustrated that errors had been made by the Administration in both its planning for development and assessment on the capacity of existing drainage facilities. The Administration should therefore acknowledge responsibility in the matter and learn from its mistakes. S for W however considered that the true picture could only be revealed by a comprehensive review of all previous records on the development of the new town. D of DS also maintained that the improvement works presently proposed was for tackling the flooding spots identified in the Master Plan Study and bringing the protection standard up-to-date. Thus, they had nothing to do with fault-finding of what had or had not been done in developing the town. In this connection, Mr CHAN considered that the case might need to be reviewed by the Director of Audit to determine whether additional public expenditure had been incurred unnecessarily on drainage improvement works as a result of the planning mistakes made by the Administration.

27. Pointing out that the provision of infrastructure might be affected by inaccurate planning parameters such as population projection, Mr LAU Ping-cheung was concerned about the adequacy of improvement works proposed vis-à-vis the future development in Sha Tin and Tai Po. He thus sought assurance from the Administration that the scope of proposed drainage improvement works would serve the purpose. D of DS replied that the Master Plan Study was intended to be comprehensive to take into account all known future developments in the areas. CE/LD, DSD added that the Administration did not envisage the need for further improvement works in these two areas for the next 10 to 20 years.

28. Elaborating on the Administration's planning for territorial development, SPL stated that in order to cater for Hong Kong's further development up to 2011, Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Hung Shui Kiu had been chosen as priority new development areas in North West New Territories. Strategies for development beyond that would be examined under the "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" Study taking into account changes in environmental and socio-economic conditions as well as population levels, such as the latest population forecasts obtained from the 2001 Population Census. Nevertheless, given the impact further development might have on the existing infrastructure of highly-developed new towns such as Sha Tin and Tai Po, new development opportunities would most likely be identified elsewhere having easy access to existing and planned railway networks.

Admin.

29. Mr LAU Kong-wah was concerned about flooding incidents in the vicinity of Wan Tau Tong Estate in Tai Po, and asked whether the proposed consultancy could also look at the problem there. D of DS responded that the general intention of DSD was to deal with black spots as priorities. As far as the specific area raised by the member, he agreed to provide members with a written reply before the present item was considered by FC.

30. Mr WONG Yung-kan considered that silting was the major reason for flooding in Lam Tsuen River and Shing Mun River, and asked whether suitable provision would be made in detailed design of the improvement works to reduce the problem. D of DS responded that as siltation of stream courses and drainage channels was on-going problem, DSD had a regular prevention programme for the removal of silt under the maintenance term-contracts and resource provisions would be earmarked in the department's estimates accordingly. Under the proposed drainage improvements in Sha Tin and Tai Po, some material would be removed and it would be undertaken carefully with due regard to the environment and ecology of the areas.

31. Mr LAU Kong-wah relayed the strong requests from the Tai Po District Council for the urgent implementation of sewerage improvement works in Lam Tsuen River as the lack of sewerage infrastructure had hampered the development of the area, and asked whether site investigations for drainage and sewerage improvement works could proceed together so as to achieve greater cost-effectiveness and minimize the disturbance on affected residents. Sharing similar views, Miss Emily LAU hoped that it would bring about early improvement to the affected residents.

Admin.

32. In response, CE/CM, DSD advised that the Administration also shared members' concerns. A review on the sewerage facilities for Lam Tsuen River and the rural areas in Tai Po was being undertaken by EPD for completion by the end of this year. As the officer-in-charge for both drainage and sewerage improvement projects in Lam Tsuen area, he assured members that DSD would closely liaise and co-ordinate with EPD to ensure that such improvement works for Lam Tsuen River would be undertaken together where appropriate. In addition, the views of local District Council would be consulted accordingly. Given that the earliest date a main sewerage could be provided to Lam Tsuen would be around 2008, Mr LAU considered the situation highly unsatisfactory and called on the Administration to try its best to shorten the implementation programme. At his request, D of DS agreed to provide a written response in more detail before the present item was submitted to FC for consideration.

33. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 704 - DRAINAGE

PWSC(2001-02)30 112CD Drainage improvement in Northern New Territories - package A

34. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 23 April 2001.

35. Mr WONG Sing-chi noted that the proposed upgrading and rehabilitation works would cover extensive areas in Sheung Shui and Fanling, and expressed grave concerns about the traffic impact of the drainage improvement programme for Northern New Territories if construction works were to be carried out at the same time. In response, D of DS assured members that under the proposed consultancy, comprehensive assessments on the impact of the drainage improvement works in various aspects would be carried out. CE/PM, DSD added that upon the completion of the traffic impact assessment, the relevant District Councils (DCs) and government departments would be consulted accordingly to ensure that suitable traffic management measures were put in place during the construction stage.

36. Referring to past experiences where the flooding problem was aggravated during the construction stage as a result of improper disposal of construction and demolition materials by the contractors, Mr WONG sought elaboration about the measures to be taken by the Administration to improve its monitoring on the contractors' compliance with the required mitigation measures. CE/PM, DSD responded that an environmental impact assessment (EIA) study would be carried out under the proposed consultancy. For the construction stage of the project, the consultants would be required to fully consider and propose measures in the preliminary design for minimizing the generation of materials and for reusing or recycling materials as much as possible. In addition, the

Administration would step up monitoring on the construction sites to ensure that the recommended mitigation measures were carried out accordingly.

Admin. 37. Noting that the consultancy would be completed by the end of 2003, Mr WONG called on the Administration to conduct timely consultation with the local DCs as and when individual impact assessments were completed, instead of waiting until the whole consultancy was completed. In response, CE/PM, DSD agreed to adopt the suggested approach for consultation with the relevant DCs and rural committees.

38. Mr Albert CHAN observed that the proposed improvement works would cover nearly all major residential areas in Sheung Shui and Fanling with an estimated cost of \$710 million. Restating the view that such works were required as a result of oversight on the Administration's part during the planning and development of these new towns, Mr CHAN said that the disturbances and economic losses caused to the affected residents could have been avoided in the first place. Hence, both SPL and S for W should make better planning for the development of new towns in future to ensure that public expenditure would no longer be incurred unnecessarily to rectify such mistakes made by the Administration. As for the present case, he opined that it might need to be reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee.

39. S for W stated that in the course of the planning, design and construction of new towns, the Administration would endeavour to take all known factors into consideration. However, further and subsequent developments might exceed the planning parameters adopted and called into question the adequacy of existing services and facilities, such as the drainage systems. To accommodate such developments which could not be anticipated during the initial planning of the new towns, the Administration had reviewed the situation and initiated a comprehensive drainage improvement programme in phases to tackle the flooding problem in Northern New Territories.

Admin. 40. Sharing the member's concern about the proper use of public moneys, the Chairman commented that for similar items to be proposed in future, the Administration should give members a clear account of the changes that had taken place in the areas concerned to facilitate members' understanding. In this connection, Mr Albert CHAN requested that a supplementary information note be provided by the Administration after the meeting to elaborate on the measures and relevant requirements to be adopted for existing new towns and development areas to ensure that the same mistakes would not recur.

41. Given that the capacity problem of the existing stormwater drains in the town areas of Fanling and Sheung Shui had already been identified in the drainage master plan study for Northern New Territories as early as in October 1999, Miss Emily LAU noted with dissatisfaction that about 200 000 residents were currently affected by the problem of flooding in these areas. She expressed grave concerns about the long time taken to bring about improvements to the affected residents as the works would not be completed until October 2008.

42. In reply, S for W advised that the planning and construction of public works projects would proceed according to established procedures, and the project timetable was worked out accordingly. In addition, time would also be required for various statutory procedures including gazettal, consultation with relevant bodies, land acquisition and EIA study. However, he assured members that the Administration would make every effort to press ahead with flood prevention and protection works. As far as the present item was concerned, CE/PM, DSD clarified that as no land implication was anticipated for the proposed improvement works in Sheung Shui and Fanling, construction would commence in 2004 for completion in 2006. Depending on the quantity of work for individual locations, different completion dates would be specified in the relevant contracts. Hence, improvement would be seen in those areas gradually. However, as for the construction of about 7 km of drainage channels such as in Ma Wat River and Kau Lung Hang, land acquisition would be required and such works would be completed by 2008.

43. In this respect, the Chairman pointed out that for designated projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), the areas likely to be affected by the proposed works would have to be surveyed throughout the year and thus, the EIA study would take at least 1 to 1½ years. Taking into account the additional time required, such works projects might take a longer time to complete.

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Admin. 44. Notwithstanding various statutory procedures and requirements, Miss LAU considered that an overall review by the Administration was required to examine the ways in which the delivery of flood prevention and protection projects could be expedited. She suggested that the matter should be discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works. Recalling that the Administration had put forward a package of improvement measures in 1997 for streamlining the development approval process, the Chairman opined that S for W should review whether further improvements could be made for this type of projects. While agreeing to provide a paper to the Panel for discussion, S for W advised that the recommendations made as a result of the review in 1997 had been put into implementation and on-going reviews had also been carried out to ensure that various processing and consent procedures would be undertaken expeditiously within the specified time limit.

45. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 707 - NEW TOWNS AND URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT

**PWSC(2001-02)31 30CD Village flood protection for Yuen Long,
Kam Tin and Ngau Tam Mei, North West
New Territories, stage I - remainder**

46. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 18 May 2001.

Admin.

47. Dr TANG Siu-tong expressed support for the present item which would alleviate flooding problems in various villages in Pok Wai and Wang Chau in Northwest New Territories. However, he referred to the malfunctioning of pumping stations during typhoons or heavy rainstorms which would seriously undermine the effectiveness of such improvement works and suggested that regular checks should be conducted, especially before the beginning of the rainy season, to ensure that such facilities were in proper working order. He also asked which government department was responsible for restoring faulty pumping stations. In reply, the Director of Territory Development (D of TD) explained that the pumping stations would be installed with a stand-by system for emergency operation and so far, he was not aware of any reported problems about the operation of the pumping stations. However, he would relay the concerns and suggestions raised by the member to DSD for follow-up.

48. Expressing appreciation for the comprehensive environmental mitigation measures proposed under the project, Mr Albert CHAN opined that the same approach should be adopted for all public works projects. He referred to paragraph 6 (h) of the discussion paper and sought elaboration on the estimated cost of \$100,000 for overseas inspection of machinery. D of TD replied that in order to ensure the quality of critical electrical and mechanical machinery to be delivered, it was normal practice to send staff overseas to attend the factory acceptance tests.

49. In reply to further questions from Mr Albert CHAN and the Chairman, S for W confirmed that except for technically sophisticated machinery procured under contract, the need for overseas inspection would not normally arise in public works projects. To facilitate members' consideration of proposals of this kind, the estimated cost involved would be itemized in PWSC submissions. In this respect, Mr CHAN called on the Finance Bureau to closely scrutinize the need for such expenditure.

50. Referring to the conditions imposed by the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) in its endorsement of the EIA report for the project as set out in paragraph 18 (a) to (c) of the discussion paper, Miss Emily LAU sought assurance from the Administration that ACE's recommendations would be actively taken forward for the project. In response, D of TD informed members that as required by ACE's conditions, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department was carrying out a relevant study to address ACE's recommendations on the restoration of the old river channels into wildlife habitats and off-site wetland compensation. According to initial findings, it would be technically feasible to compensate for the loss of wetland caused by the project in off-site locations. The outstanding question was whether adequate land could be identified for the purpose. More details on the specific measures to be implemented would be available upon completion of the study by end 2001/early 2002.

51. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 707 - NEW TOWNS AND URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT

**PWSC(2001-02)32 74CD Village flood protection for Yuen Long,
Kam Tin and Ngau Tam Mei, North West
New Territories - stage II**

52. Members noted that the present proposal had been discussed at the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 18 May 2001.

53. Dr TANG Siu-tong expressed support for the present item which would alleviate flooding problems in various villages in Mai Po Lo Wai, Mai Po San Tsuen, Ma Tin Tsuen and Shui Pin Wai in Northwest New Territories. Referring to paragraph 20 of the discussion paper, he asked whether the installation of acoustic louvers for floodwater pumping stations was a special provision for this project. In reply, the Chief Engineer (Yuen Long), Territory Development Department (CE/YL, TDD) confirmed that the installation of acoustic louvers was a standard provision for floodwater pumping stations to ensure proper ventilation while minimizing the noise impact caused by their operation.

54. Mr Albert CHAN reiterated his grave concerns about the adequacy of the proposed village protection works in the long-term vis-à-vis various planned and proposed developments in the vicinity of the areas, such as the residential developments in northern part of Yuen Long and in the Mai Po Wetland Buffer Area. He was worried that if the proposed works had failed to take into account the potential impact such developments might have on the capacity of the drainage systems and facilities, the objective of providing adequate protection to the public would be defeated while valuable public resources would have to be expended in future for additional improvement works.

55. In response, D of TD advised that the improvement works presently proposed had already taken into account the planning and development in northern part of Yuen Long. The stormwater facilities would be designed and constructed accordingly to meet both existing and future requirements. Addressing Mr CHAN's concern that the proposed developments in Mai Po Wetland Buffer Area might result in blockages of stormwater drains to Deep Bay, thereby causing flooding problems in Tin Shui Wai, he advised that the design of the proposed works had already taken this point into consideration and a high tide level had been used. He assured members that in the worst case scenario during torrential downpour, the capacity of the drainage network would be adequate to discharge the stormwater to Deep Bay.

56. Supplementing on the progress of the Government's overall flood control programme in Northwest New Territories, D of TD stated that improvement to the downstream sections of major river channels had been completed while construction works for the midstream sections of these river channels had been in progress since 1999. Planning and design for further improvements to midstream and upstream sections of the river channels and tributaries and further village flood protection schemes in the New Territories were actively underway.

Admin.

57. While expressing support for the present item, Mr Albert CHAN opined that instead of tackling localized problems, the Administration should undertake the planning of improvement works from a wider perspective. In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide members with an assessment of impacts on the existing drainage facilities and the proposed village flood protection works due to development projects proposed by private developers in Mai Po Wetland Buffer Area and Fung Lok Wai. In reply, D of TD agreed to provide a consolidated response to the member's request with DSD.

58. In reply to Miss Emily LAU, D of TD reported that the number of residents living in the two villages at Mai Po, Ma Tin Tsuen and Shui Pin Wai were 1 000, 2 000 and 200 respectively. However, he did not have any information on the economic losses incurred by flooding incidents. While calling on the Administration to speed up the progress of the proposed project to bring about early relief to the affected residents, Miss LAU expressed support for the initiatives outlined in the paper on landscaping works.

59. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 707 - NEW TOWNS AND URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT

PWSC(2001-02)43 476CL Formation and servicing of Area 36, Fanling - remaining works

60. Members noted that an information paper on the present item had been circulated to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works in April 2001.

61. Referring to the planned residential development in Area 36, Fanling, Miss Emily LAU queried whether the projected housing demand in this area which was in close proximity to Shenzhen might be on the high side, given that more and more Hong Kong people would choose to live in Shenzhen with the extension of the opening hours of cross-boundary control points. She thus asked whether the present proposal for improving the existing road network in the area had taken into account the latest projection on population.

62. In response, D of TD advised that public housing development in the area would provide about 7 000 flats to accommodate 21 000 persons, whereas the development by the Housing Society would provide about 920 flats for 3 200 persons. Given the steady demand in public housing and the comprehensive facilities provided, he did not think that such provision was over-estimated. Notwithstanding the Administration's reply, Miss LAU cautioned that the Administration should review the provision of infrastructure basing on updated planning parameters to ensure that public moneys were not wasted.

63. Noting that three existing road sections would be widened, Mr Albert CHAN was concerned about the increasing impact of traffic noise on the nearby residents.

Notwithstanding the Administration's policy on addressing the noise impact of existing roads, he opined that under the circumstances, the Administration should adopt the noise limit for new roads in considering whether the installation of noise barriers for the widened road sections was justified. In this connection, he requested a comparison on the existing and predicted noise levels of the concerned road sections.

Admin. 64. While agreeing to provide the information as requested, D of TD advised that according to the findings of the Preliminary Environmental Review, the project would not have long term adverse environmental implications. Although there would be an increased level of traffic noise, it was considered not necessary to install noise barriers at the concerned road sections. However, if the situation was further aggravated in future causing serious nuisance to nearby residents, these road sections would be included in the retrofitting programme subject to compliance with the guiding principles. Notwithstanding the Administration's reply, Mr CHAN considered that if excessive noise was generated by the proposed works, the additional cost for the provision of noise barriers would be justified as the disturbance created on the affected residents would be greatly alleviated.

Admin. 65. Mr Albert CHAN referred to the proposed improvement works at the two roundabouts in the Sheung Shui/Fanling area, and suggested that if adequate space was available, consideration should be given to providing double white line within the roundabout to facilitate left-turn movement to improve traffic flow. Agreeing with the member's point, D of TD advised that such double white line road markings would be installed in this project at suitable site.

66. On the plantation of trees at the roadside, Mr CHAN suggested that more efforts should be made to ensure that local characteristics were reflected. While agreeing that the member's suggestion would be taken on board where possible, D of TD advised that native species would mainly be used in roadside planting so that a more habitual environment would be provided for the birds.

67. The item was voted on and endorsed.

68. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

19 June 2001