

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 637/00-01
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PL/PLW/1

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 4 December 2000, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP (Chairman)
Hon LAU Ping-cheung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Non-Panel members attending : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon SIN Chung-kai

Members absent : Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP

Public officers attending : **Agenda Item IV**

Mr Geoffrey WOODHEAD
Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
(Buildings)

Mr A G COOPER
Land Registrar

Mrs Alice LEE
Registry Manager
Land Registry

Ms May LEE
Deputy Principal Solicitor

Mrs Jenny WONG
Change Manager

Agenda Item V

Mr Patrick LAU, JP
Deputy Secretary for Planning and Lands
(Lands and Planning)

Mr Daniel CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
(Planning)

Mr C H YUE
Project Manager/Kowloon
Territory Development Department

Mr James CHAN
Chief Engineer/Kowloon East
Territory Development Department

Agenda Item VI

Mrs Helen C P Lai YU, JP
Head, Task Force on Building Safety
and Preventive Maintenance

Mr Kevin CHOI
Member, Task Force on Building Safety
and Preventive Maintenance

Mr C M LEUNG
Director of Buildings

Mr Geoffrey WOODHEAD
Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands
(Buildings)

Mrs Betty FUNG

Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr Francis LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr H T LUI
Deputy Director of Home Affairs

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG, Chief Assistant Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG, Senior Assistant Secretary (1)2

I Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper No. CB(1)209/00-01)

The minutes of meeting held on 18 October 2000 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

2. Members noted the following information papers which were issued since the last meeting -

LC Paper No. CB(1)182/00-01 - Information paper on review on banning of hand-dug caissons in building industry provided by the Association of Architectural Practices;

LC Paper No. CB(1)227/00-01 - Information paper on
224 WF - Mainlaying between Sham Tseng and Yau Kom Tau;
238 WF - Mainlaying between Sham Tseng and So Kwun Tan; and
038 WS - Extension of North Point Low Level Salt Water Supply System;

LC Paper No. CB(1)228/00-01 - Submissions on the Town Planning Bill; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)240/00-01 - Submissions from the Urban Watch on zoning of business area and use of Tamar Basin Reclamation Site.

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III Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(1)233/00-01(01) - List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)233/00-01(02) - List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following subjects at the next Panel meeting scheduled for 8 January 2001 at 10:45am-

- Replacement and rehabilitation of watermains, Stage 1 Phase 2 (investigation consultancy);
- Yuen Long - Tuen Mun Corridor engineering works for commercial/residential areas at Hung Shui Kiu; and
- Building safety and timely maintenance- to tackle unauthorized building works.

(Post meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, a special meeting was scheduled for 19 December 2000 to discuss the compensation arrangements for land resumption for urban renewal projects and control over advertisement signboards.)

IV Land Registration (Amendment) Bill 2000

(LC Paper CB(1) 52/00-01)

4. The Land Registrar (LR) briefly explained the proposed amendments to the Land Registration Ordinance which sought to enable the Land Registry to apply the benefits of information technology to improve services to the public. According to LR, the scope of the proposed changes was threefold -

- (a) to provide for new and better services;
- (b) to help meet requirements for legislation on privacy; and
- (c) to formalize and regularize existing practices.

He said that the benefits of the proposed amendments, as set out in paragraph 11 of the paper, would create a win-win-win situation for customers, conveyancing solicitors and the Land Registry as the statutory operator.

5. Mr Albert CHAN enquired if the proposed changes would cause inconvenience to the public and result in increases in fees and charges. While assuring members that the proposed amendments would not cause inconvenience to the public, LR said that the Central Registration System (CRS) would offer greater

operational convenience as almost 98% of conveyancing solicitors had their offices located in the urban area. Only a small number of solicitors' offices were located in the New Territories and these were mostly branch offices of major solicitors' firms in the urban area. Applications for services could also be made by post. The Law Society of Hong Kong had been consulted on the amendments and had indicated support for the Bill. He further advised members that the proposed amendments would not lead to increases in fees and charges, although the Land Registry had not increased its statutory fees since June 1996.

6. Mr LAU Ping-cheung was concerned whether affected parties, other than conveyancing solicitors, had been consulted on the proposed CRS. LR advised that Real Estate Developers Association and the Heung Yee Kuk had been consulted and both were in support of CRS. The Land Registry proposed to retain the New Territories offices to facilitate retrieval of information on the Land Registry and on-line searches of the land register.

7. While expressing support for the proposed re-organization of the Land Registry and the proposed measures in meeting the requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Miss Margaret NG enquired about the existing measures to avoid the setting up of a names index by the users of the Memorial Day Book such that the privacy of the owners could be protected. The Registry Manager, Land Registry (RM) said that the Land Registry provided a land search by property but not by owners' names. It would not allow an individual to check the ownership details of another person, other than details of his/her own property. There were some private companies which provided a names index for searchers. However, such names index would unlikely be comprehensive nor exhaustive as these were based on available information on the Memorial Day Book over the past few years. In order to comply with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and to protect the privacy of the individual, the Land Registry proposed that the names of parties or other relevant persons should not be entered in the Memorial Day Book. This would prevent the companies from compiling names indices.

8. On Miss Margaret NG's further enquiry about the difference between the existing and the proposed search mechanisms, RM said that there was no basic difference except that under CRS, a property reference number would be allotted to each property to facilitate speedy retrieval of data from the land register. This would avoid the cumbersome procedure of entering the detailed particulars of each property for the search. In addition, the land register would include more bilingual information, such as the Chinese names of parties and the Chinese property addresses (if known).

9. As regards the operating costs of the system, LR stated that these would be offset by savings in staff, accommodation and stationery costs. About \$32.7 million would be expected to be saved on staff costs per year and another \$8 million to be saved on accommodation costs per year upon implementation of phase 1 of CRS. According to LR, a whole of job approach under CRS whereby the registration process would be handled by one team instead of splitting into several phases would facilitate

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the entire process, resulting in reduction in staff requirement. The centralization of the registration process would also result in reduction in size of the New Territories offices, giving rise to savings in accommodation and staff costs.

10. On the Chairman's enquiry on the certification of copy documents and the means to prevent fraud, Deputy Principal Solicitor, Land Registry (DPS) advised that the Land Registry in practice accepted copies of documents issued and certified by Government departments and copies of documents certified by solicitors where the original copies were not recoverable. Upon the passage of the Bill, the Land Registry would issue a Circular Memorandum from time to time notifying legal practitioners and interested bodies of the types of documents where certified copies were acceptable for registration and the necessary certification manner.

11. On the Chairman's further enquiry as to whether the property would be reverted to the purchaser or the owner in the event of a fraud involving certification of documents, DPS said that this would have to be decided by the Court depending on the circumstances of the case.

V South East Kowloon Development (SEKD)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)233/00-01(03))

12. The Deputy Secretary for Planning and Lands (Lands and Planning) (DSPL) said that the purpose of the discussion was to brief members on the outcome of the public consultation exercise for the Preliminary Layout Plan of SEKD produced under Stage 1 of the Comprehensive Feasibility Study for the Revised Scheme of SEKD and to seek members' support for funding to start the detailed design of some of the SEKD works.

13. With the aid of a computer power point, the Project Manager/Kowloon, Territory Development Department (PM/K) briefed members on the updated SEKD scheme, which had taken on board the views collected during the public consultation exercise.

Provision of school villages

14. Mr SIN Chung-kai welcomed the proposed provision of school villages in SEKD, which would accommodate about seven to eight schools within the area. He enquired whether, in terms of planning on a broader scale, consideration would be given to reprovisioning some of the existing schools in the older districts in East Kowloon to the school villages in SEKD. He said that this would not only resolve the planning problem of the older districts, but would also provide a unique chance for these schools to be relocated. PM/K said that a close liaison had been maintained with the Education Department on the design for the school villages. The Education Department had yet to provide the list of schools which were to be reprovisioned to SEKD but reprovisioning of schools would certainly be considered as part of an overall plan. The Chief Engineer/Kowloon East, Territory Development Department

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(CE/KE) added that the two school villages within SEKD would be able to accommodate about seven to eight schools to meet the territorial shortfall of educational facilities. Adequate number of schools would be evenly distributed within SEKD in accordance with current standard to serve a population of 240,000.

Transport arrangements

15. Mr Albert CHAN urged the Administration not to consider using a light rail system in SEKD as such system had been a proven failure in Tuen Mun. His concern was shared by Miss CHAN Yuen-han. In response, PM/K said that the Administration was well aware of the experience at Tuen Mun. He informed members that the light rail system was but one of the options to be considered for the feeder system. As the feeder system was expected to be implemented after year 2008, a much wider choice of options would be available by then.

16. Mr Albert CHAN was disappointed that the Administration would still consider a light rail system as one of the options for the feeder system. He was of the view that the idea of a light rail system should be precluded. Mr Abraham SHEK however opined that the light rail system in Tuen Mun was not a failure, except that the system did not provide for linkage to Tsuen Wan or the Mass Transit Railway stations. He said that there were other more improved light rail systems that could be considered.

17. Mr Fred LI said that instead of relying solely on land transport, consideration should be given to the use of cross-harbour ferry services. In response, CE/KE said the Administration was considering the provision of a pier which could provide ferry services between SEKD, Wanchai and Central.

18. Mr CHAN Kam-lam pointed out the need for co-ordination of the construction of East Kowloon Line with the rest of the developments at SEKD for the convenience of the public. CE/KE said that the major construction works of East Kowloon Line would be done underground and would not cause much inconvenience to the public. Nevertheless, the Administration would ensure that the developments at SEKD would be co-ordinated with the rail development.

Provision of sites for rehousing residents affected by urban renewal projects

19. Mr Albert CHAN opined that the Administration should be more generous in the provision of land in SEKD to meet the rehousing needs arising from urban renewal projects in the older districts of Kowloon. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Planning and Lands (Planning) (PAS/PL(P) said that the Administration had reserved a site for rehousing the affected residents of urban renewal projects. Upon its establishment, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) would work out with the Housing Authority and the Housing Society on the provision of housing units for the affected residents.

20. Mr CHAN pointed out that the proposed site earmarked for rehousing purposes would hardly be adequate to meet the needs of residents displaced by urban renewal projects. He hoped that full use should be made of the space available in SEKD for rehousing affected residents of urban renewal projects, as similar sites would unlikely be available in the urban area in the foreseeable future. This would be a planning error if rehousing sites were not adequately provided for in SEKD. In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide a paper to explain in detail the utilization of land in SEKD for rehousing residents affected by urban renewal projects in East Kowloon. Sharing the same concern, Mr Abraham SHEK pointed out that SEKD should not only provide sites for rehousing residents of urban renewal projects, it should also provide housing units for residents affected by squatter clearance.

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21. DSPL explained that as the URA had yet to be set up, the Administration could only undertake that it would set aside a site in SEKD for rehousing purposes for the urban renewal projects in East Kowloon. It could not be more specific about the matter. He nevertheless agreed to liaise with colleagues responsible for the setting up of URA to see if more information on the subject could be provided in writing.

Provision of a stadium

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22. Mr CHAN Wai-yip had reservations on the proposed provision of a stadium in SEKD. He was of the view that the available space should be better utilized for residential purposes. From the town planning perspective, stadium facilities should be located in sites which were not suitable for residential purposes, such as those under the flight path. In this connection, he requested the Administration to explain in writing the reasons for not placing the stadium at a site in North Lantau close to the rail development. PAS/PL(P) said in response that the provision of a stadium within SEKD had had wide support from the public. The choice of site for the stadium was also supported by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB). Therefore, planning for a stadium had all along been included in SEKD, the detailed design of which fell within the purview of HAB.

23. Responding to Mr LAU Ping-cheung's enquiry about the traffic and environmental impact of the stadium, CE/KE said that the Administration was well aware of such impact and therefore proposed to locate the stadium at a site which would be far away from residential areas. To address the problem of noise, consideration would be given to providing a retractable roof for the stadium, which was expected to accommodate an audience of 40,000 to 50,000. Close liaison would be maintained with HAB on the noise insulation requirements of the stadium. The operating hours of the stadium would be strictly administered to minimize the noise impact on the neighbouring schools. To further resolve the noise problem, consideration would be given to providing noise abatement installations in the neighbouring schools. CE/KE assured members that the proposed project would be submitted to the Advisory Council on the Environment for consideration prior to its implementation.

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24. Mr Timothy FOK said that Hong Kong had waited over 20 years for a world class stadium, and the idea of a stadium was well supported by the sports associations.

Relocation of the refuse transfer station (RTS), the public filling barging point and the helipad

25. Mr Fred LI expressed appreciation for the Administration's positive response to the request of residents of Laguna City for relocating the RTS, the public filling barging point and the helipad. Mr LAU Ping-cheung was concerned if the proposed relocation had met with objection from Kwun Tong residents. PM/K said that the original proposed location of the RTS and the public filling barging point was strongly objected by residents of Laguna City. After reviewing a number of alternative options, the Administration revised the proposal to relocate these facilities near the existing Kwun Tong ferry pier and had consulted the Kwun Tong District Council. The local residents did not object to the proposed relocation as set out in the revised scheme.

26. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that residents of Laguna City were concerned about the use of the site which was originally earmarked for the RTS and the public filling barging point. They had indicated their wish that the area be developed for recreational purposes.

International design competition

27. Mr Abraham SHEK said that he did not consider the revised SEKD a good scheme in terms of planning and aesthetics. To make the best use of the site, he suggested that an international design competition be held so that a more forward looking design that would address the needs of the community could be adopted. The idea of holding an international design competition for the stadium was supported by Mr Timothy FOK.

28. PAS/PL(P) said that SEKD had been revised several times to take account of the views of LegCo Members and the public. The revised SEKD scheme had adopted an environmental design as well as key features which would lead Hong Kong to the 21st Century. A stepped building height concept would be incorporated into the statutory plans for SEKD for a better view as well as improved air circulation. The provision of a Metropolitan Park had the support from the community. Through a system of road links, residents of the older districts of Kowloon would have easy access to the waterfront promenade, which in the long term would stretch from Eastern to Western Kowloon. Apart from housing developments and community facilities, SEKD would provide tourist facilities such as a cruise terminal. The revised SEKD had accommodated a wide variety of facilities to suit the needs of the community.

29. Mr SHEK opined that as SEKD would be the best piece of land available in the urban area, care should be taken to ensure that it should be carefully planned to meet the requirements of a 21st Century city. The planning of SEKD should be quite

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different from the planning for Shatin or Tuen Mun and a holistic and comprehensive approach should be adopted. In his view, the present planning for SEKD had not lived up to the expectations of the community. DSPL supplemented that in planning for SEKD, the Administration had taken a holistic view on the needs of the community. The plans were therefore not made simply on the basis of how the land vacated by Kai Tak Airport should be utilized. The stadium would not only be used for sports activities, but also for other cultural and leisure activities. The facilities at the school villages would cater for the educational needs of both SEKD as well as other areas. The Metropolitan Park and the cruise terminal were also meant to serve the entire territory. In short, the planning of SEKD had adopted an overall concept which took account of the multiple needs of the community.

30. As regards Mr SHEK's proposal of holding an international design competition for SEKD, DSPL said that the Administration had received a lot of comments and suggestions from various quarters on the planning of SEKD during the public consultation exercise. They included overseas experts in stadium and urban planning. Local professional bodies had also been consulted and they had made valuable contribution to the planning of SEKD.

31. While not objecting in principle to inviting overseas participation in the international design competition, Mr LAU Ping-cheung said that town planning was not a science and care should be taken to ensure that the design for SEKD would meet the local needs. He pointed out that as there were a lot of local experts available in the town planning field who were familiar with local needs, there might not be a need to rely on overseas consultants in the planning for SEKD.

Typhoon Shelter

32. Mr Fred LI was concerned about the adverse environmental impact associated with the heavily polluted waters at the Typhoon Shelter. Sharing the same concern, Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that the emission from the barges moored at the Shelter was one of the sources of pollution. CE/KE explained that the major source of the pollution was the illegal industrial and domestic effluent from Kwun Tong District discharging into the Kai Tak Approach Channel. This in turn caused contamination of the marine mud at the seabed, thus giving rise to odour and water pollution. The Administration was seeking funds to treat the contaminated sediments before reclaiming the Kai Tak Approach Channel. In future, there would not be illegal inflows of industrial effluent nor stormwater into the Shelter. At present, the treated effluent from Shatin Sewage Treatment Works flushed the water in the typhoon shelter to a certain extent. In future, the tidal flush would serve to cleanse the water to an acceptable level. Under the existing environmental legislation, the Administration would need to address the environmental problems including water quality before proceeding with the project.

33. As regards the concern over the water pollution problems arising from emissions from the barges moored near the Shelter, CE/KE said that the problem would be resolved upon the reprovisioning of the cargo working area from Kwun Tong

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to Tseung Kwan O because the number of barges mooring at the Shelter would be decreased.

34. Mr CHAN Kam-lam was concerned about the design of the breakwater at the Typhoon Shelter and whether the design would hinder the water flow. CE/KE explained there would be ways and means to achieve acceptable water quality, e.g. providing conduits beneath the breakwater to enhance tidal flush if necessary in future. The Chairman said that the Administration might need to rethink about the design of the breakwater to resolve the problem of water flow. He hoped that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be conducted on SEKD to address different aspects lest the entire project would be held up as a result of environmental concerns.

Need for height restriction

35. Responding to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's concern about the need to impose a height restriction at SEKD even if the stepped building height concept was to be implemented, PAS/PL(P) said that options for control of building height in the urban area were being formulated in the context of Urban Design Guidelines which would soon be available for public consultation. He stressed that the public had divergent views on this issue.

Waterfront promenade

36. While expressing appreciation for the Administration's efforts in revising SEKD to take account of public views, Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired if consideration would be given to extending the waterfront promenade from Kwun Tong to Lei Yue Mun. PAS/PL(P) responded that this was the Administration's intention in the long term.

VI Building safety and timely maintenance- supplementary information
(LC Paper No. CB(1)233/00-01(04))

37. Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired whether the designated officer for the Coordinated Maintenance of Building Scheme (CMBS) would have the necessary authority to enforce action and coordinate the maintenance works. The Director of Buildings (D of B) explained that CMBS would operate as an extension of the "one-stop" service. As the Building Co-ordinator, the designated officer would conduct, in association with other departments concerned, a survey of the building and determine the scope and nature of improvement works. He would provide technical advice to owners and assist them in the application for low-interest loans where necessary.

38. As regards Mr LAU's further enquiry on the time-frame for reviewing the implementation of CMBS, D of B said that the pilot scheme on CMBS would be carried out for a trial period of one year. The Buildings Department (BD) would conduct an interim review in six to nine months after its implementation. It would assess the extent of owners' compliance with the advice given by the Building

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Management Co-ordinating Teams in respect of repair and maintenance works. It would also look into the feasibility of contracting out services. If the pilot CMBS was successful, consideration would be given to implementing it on a wider scale. The Head, Task Force on Building Safety and Preventive Maintenance (HTF) stressed that the Administration had not abandoned the idea of setting up a mandatory building maintenance and inspection scheme. However, since CMBS was being implemented under the existing legislative framework, the Administration considered it appropriate to assess its outcome before taking further regulatory steps which might require legislative changes. Mr LAU Ping-cheung expressed support for an interim review on CMBS.

39. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the Administration's proposals. He hoped that the Administration would be firm on its stance, particularly on its requirement for developers to strengthen the defects liability warranty, and would not back down upon resistance by developers. He pointed out that the present system was unfair to owners in that once the defects liability period expired, developers would be able to shirk their responsibility for making good structural defects. In view of high litigation costs, owners would seldom resort to legal actions against the developers. There was thus a need to clearly define responsibilities between developers and property owners in the maintenance of buildings. He also stressed that the Administration should provide the needed advice and assistance to owners in the maintenance process.

40. In response, HTF said that the Task Force believed that the maintainability of new buildings should start well before construction, with land leases and deeds of mutual covenant. In fact, some responsible developers had already voluntarily improved their after-sales service to owners. The Administration would encourage developers to take reference and as appropriate, it would consider incorporating provisions into land leases requiring developers to shoulder responsibility for repairs where due. As regards the support to building owners and Owners' Corporations (OCs), HTF referred members to paragraphs 20 to 30 of the information paper which set out the support services covering technical, management and legal aspects to be provided by BD and the Home Affairs Department (HAD).

41. The Deputy Director of Home Affairs (DDHA) added that HAD was keen to offer assistance to owners and OCs in complying with the existing legislation to ensure building safety. Irrespective of whether an OC had been set up, it was ultimately the owners who should bear the ultimate responsibility for building maintenance. Although HAD could provide the required assistance, it could not intervene the operation of OCs. Where necessary, it could mediate and offer technical advice.

42. D of B said that BD would provide a comprehensive layman's guide to building safety and maintenance for distribution to building owners and OCs. It would advise on the procurement of services of building professionals and assist them in the scrutiny of tender and contract documents. It would also provide indicative information on professional fees and charges for different types of maintenance and repair works. In addition, District Offices had been offering advisory and liaison

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services to the local community. The Building Management Resource Centres set up by HAD provided updated and comprehensive information on building management and answers to general enquiries. The provision of such support would help OCs resolve the differences amongst owners and assist them in making an informed decision on management matters.

43. As to Mr Albert CHAN's further enquiry as to when the provisions requiring developers to shoulder responsibilities for building maintenance and repair would be incorporated into the land leases, HTE said that some developers were already doing so and with members' support, such provisions could be incorporated into land leases in a year or two.

44. Responding to the Chairman's concern about the liability for providing incorrect advice, D of B said that it was ultimately the OCs who made the final decision and therefore they would have to bear the consequences. The Chairman said that there was a need for BD and HAD to improve their services to the public on maintenance and management matters.

45. Mr IP Kwok-him was pleased to note that the Administration had accepted public opinion and would be prepared to conduct initial inspections of buildings aged 20 to 40 years old to determine whether they required maintenance. He also expressed support for setting aside part of the monthly management fee for the establishment of a maintenance reserve fund. Given the complexity of maintenance works, Mr IP queried if the Administration could provide adequate assistance to owners through its regional one-stop shops.

46. HTE said that OCs would be encouraged to set up a maintenance reserve fund on a voluntary basis. However, if this failed to achieve the desired effect, consideration would be given to incorporating provisions in the deeds of mutual covenant and/or legislate for the setting up of such fund. The provision of a maintenance reserve fund would facilitate owners in saving up according to the schedule for future major maintenance works. She hoped that these proposals would have the necessary support from members. As for "regional one-stop shops", these would only complement District Office and other departments.

47. Responding further to Mr IP, DDHA said that concerns had been expressed from staff of District Offices as to how they could maximize their services to the public. The District Officers and the Building Management Resource Centres would work together in providing one-stop shop services. He reiterated that although the necessary assistance could be given by the staff, they could not interfere with the actual operation of OCs.

48. Miss CHAN Yuen-han stressed the need for HAD to take up a mediating or adjudicating role in resolving differences arising from maintenance and management matters dealt with by OCs. The Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs said in response that while owners or OCs would much prefer HAD to serve as a mediator/adjudicator, it would not be appropriate for HAD to intervene management matters which OCs

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should decide for themselves. Nevertheless, it was hoped that with the provision of more resources and training, the staff of HAD could play a more active advisory role and provide more professional advice to OCs. To this end, HAD planned to establish a new headquarters division to streamline the co-ordination of building management matters and provide a more comprehensive advisory service. Two specialist teams, providing building professional support and legal advisory services respectively, would be set up within this new division to provide advice to the front-line staff. Building Management Co-ordination teams would be set up in each of the 18 districts. These teams, comprising full-time liaison and housing management professionals, would assume a more proactive and technical role. However, they could only offer advice and could not assume the role of an adjudicator in the affairs of OCs.

49. Mr James TO congratulated the Administration on the proposals as detailed in the supplementary information paper. He enquired about the number of lawyers engaged in providing legal advisory service to the public. DDHA said that there would be an appropriate number of lawyers engaged in providing legal advisory service to officers in Home Affairs Department and the number of lawyers would be less than 10. The Department of Justice would also provide the necessary legal advice to officers of Home Affairs Department. Voluntary lawyers of Building Management Resource Centre would continue to provide legal advice on matters related to building management to members of the public. The Department of Justice would also provide the necessary legal advice. HTF referred members to paragraphs 30 to 32 of the paper which set out the training and information provided to the public. She emphasized that apart from staff training which aimed at equipping staff with adequate knowledge in building management, the District Offices and the Building Management Resources Centres had been organizing seminars, workshops and training courses for owners and OCs. Mr IP Kwok-him opined that the Building Management Resources Centres should engage their own lawyers and building management professionals instead of relying on voluntary professional services. DDHA said that with the economic recovery, the voluntary services provided by professional Societies/Association had reduced. The Building Management Co-ordinators Teams would be in a better position to assist owners in building management.

50. HTF thanked members for their support. She hoped that members would lend their support to the funding applications in respect of the proposals in future.

VII Any other business

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:30 am.