

NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Supplementary information on 30EC – Construction works for schools in the final phase of the School Improvement Programme

INTRODUCTION

In considering the paper referenced PWSC(2001-02)106 on **30EC** for the construction works of 59 schools in the final phase of the School Improvement Programme (SIP) at the Public Works Subcommittee meeting on 27 February 2002, Members requested additional information on -

- (a) the measures to reduce noise nuisance generated from the public address systems and alarm-bell systems of schools; and
- (b) the number of schools which had requested improvement works above the budget ceiling and the outcome of discussions between the Administration and the schools concerned.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE

Measures to reduce noise nuisance

2. The daily operation of schools may generate noise, especially when public address systems or school bells are in use. Where possible, these will be installed and operated in such a way to maintain the noise generated at an acceptable level. If the noise has become a nuisance to the neighbourhood, Education Department officers who visit all schools from time to time will advise the schools to -

- (a) adjust the volumes of the public address systems suitably to lower levels;

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- (b) adjust the directions of the loudspeakers of the public address systems to point them towards the school premises;
- (c) use a number of synchronized school bell systems for different areas of the school premises so as to reduce the noise level of a single bell for the whole school; and
- (d) use softer or musical notes for school bells instead of ordinary electric bells.

The number of schools with improvement works exceeding the budget ceiling

3. Starting from phase 4 of the SIP, we propose to upgrade school facilities to the year 2000 school design as far as practicable within a budget ceiling. As a general guide, the budget ceiling for each school (inclusive of consultancy fees, furniture and equipment, and other related costs) is set at 42% of the average cost of construction of a new school of the same type and size, based on a consultancy review on the cost effectiveness of the SIP conducted in 2000. However, the budget ceiling for a school may in exceptional cases exceed the 42% limit to take account of such considerations as land issues (e.g. cost of site formation for additional land grant), age and condition of existing buildings, and educational factors.

4. Since the introduction of the 42% budget ceiling in 2000, there were six schools out of a total of 127 in phase 4 of the SIP with proposed works exceeding the 42% budget ceiling. The project estimates of these schools range from 42.3% to 64.4% of the average cost of construction of a new school of the same type and size. With considerations given to special requirements to cope with site constraints, such as upgrading of construction site access, foundation system works to avoid adverse effect on adjacent structure, provision of transformer room, slope upgrading, upward extension to provide open space for students, demolition of existing structure to make way for an emergency vehicular access, the Administration has agreed to let the schools concerned to proceed with the SIP works as proposed.