

NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Supplementary Information on 332CL - West Kowloon Reclamation-main works (remainder)

INTRODUCTION

When considering paper PWSC(2001-02)83 on **332CL** at the PWSC meeting held on 28 November 2001, Members requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the measures being taken to improve the aesthetics of highway structures.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE

Planning new highway structures

2. When proposing to construct highway structures over, under, on or adjacent to public roads, both government departments and the private sector have to submit their design proposals to the Advisory Committee on the Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS) for vetting. ACABAS was established in 1984 and comprises both government officials and representatives of two professional institutions, namely the Hong Kong Institute of Architects and the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers. Each and every submission is reviewed and discussed by ACABAS at its regular meetings. Designers and project proponents of individual projects are invited to attend ACABAS meetings to give presentation and to respond to members' enquiries and comments. ACABAS will recommend to the Director of Highways either rejection of a design or acceptance with or without modifications. The modifications may include provision of hard or soft landscape elements, the structural form, alignment, finishes and any other features that may impact on appearance of the highway structures.

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3. The Administration also places emphasis on landscaping and greening treatments at the planning and design stages to improve the aesthetics of highway structures. Such treatments may include hard and soft landscaping at the following locations –

- (a) the embankment supporting the highway structures;
- (b) roadside amenity strips in front of the highway structures; and
- (c) the covered areas underneath bridge decks.

Improving the appearance of existing highway structures

4. Highways Department plans to carry out retrofitting works to improve the appearance of existing highway structures. As a pilot scheme, the Highways Department will employ a consultant in mid-2002 to carry out feasibility study and undertake subsequent design and supervision of the retrofitting work for the existing highway structures in Central and Wanchai Districts. Highways Department will review the result of this scheme, and consider rolling out similar schemes to other districts in due course.

Raising the general standard of aesthetic design for highway structures

5. In early 2001, Highways Department commissioned a review for completion in early 2003 on the aesthetic standards of highway structures. In the interim, the Department has reminded relevant government departments to enhance the appearance of highway structures. In particular for footbridges, relevant departments including Territory Development Department and Housing Department are advised to consider the attractiveness of the structural form and finishes, and the provision of lifts as an alternative to ramps, architectural lighting, planters at deck level and also flooring/walling finishes compatible with the surrounding features. Upon completion of the review, Highways Department plans to produce detailed guidelines on the aesthetic design of new highway structures, including landscaping and greening treatments for easy reference by designers (both government departments and the private sector). ACABAS will vet subsequent design proposals based on the new guidelines.
