

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 465/01-02
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by the Administration)

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Legislative Council
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Minutes of Meeting held on
Friday, 2 November 2001 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)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Non-Panel Member attending : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP

Member absent : Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP

Public officers attending : Item IV

Mr John C TSANG
Secretary for Planning and Lands

Mr Thomas TSO
Deputy Secretary (Lands and Planning)

Mr Stephen FISHER
Deputy Secretary (Urban Renewal & Buildings)

Mr R D POPE
Director of Lands

Mr Bosco FUNG
Director of Planning

Mr C M LEUNG
Director of Buildings

Mr K A SALKELD
Land Registrar

Item V

Mr Stephen FISHER
Deputy Secretary (Urban Renewal & Buildings)

Mr C M LEUNG
Director of Buildings

Mr K K CHOY
Chief Officer (Site Monitoring)
Buildings Department

Item VI

Mr LO Yiu-ching, JP
Secretary for Works (Ag.)

Mr K K Kwok
Deputy Secretary (Programme and Resources)
Works Bureau

Mr PAU Shiu-hung, JP
Director of Architectural Services

Dr LAU Ching-kwong, JP
Director of Civil Engineering

Mr John COLLIER, JP
Director of Drainage Services

Mr R H LLOYD, JP
Director of Highways (Ag)

Mr WONG Hung-kin, JP
Director of Territory Development

Mr Hugh PHILLIPSON, JP
Director of Water Supplies

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Pauline NG
Assistant Secretary General 1

Mrs Queenie YU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)6

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting and matters arising
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 133/01-02)

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2001 were confirmed.

2. The Chairman said that at the last meeting, members had agreed that the regular meetings of the Panel for the 2001-02 session would be held on the first Friday of each month at 8:30 am. As the first Friday in April 2002 was a public holiday, it was necessary to schedule the regular meeting in April 2002 for another day. Members agreed that the regular Panel meeting in April 2002 would be held on the Friday, 12 April 2002 at 8:30 am.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

3. Members noted the following information papers issued since the last meeting -

- (a) Views of the Central and Western District Council on light pollution (LC Paper No. CB(1) 77/01-02);
- (b) South East Kowloon development -- Development at the North Apron area of Kai Tak Airport and reclamation at the Kai Tak Approach Channel (LC Paper Nos. CB(1) 104/01-02 and 124/01-02);

- (c) Issues relating to fire safety requirements for old commercial buildings raised by Wan Chai District Council members (LC Paper No. CB(1) 2202/00-01); and
- (d) Information paper on remaining engineering infrastructure works for Pak Shek Kok Development (LC Paper No. CB(1) 170/01-02).

4. The Chairman drew members' attention that the Administration would submit the funding proposal on the project mentioned in paragraph 3 (d) to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration in November 2001.

III Date of next meeting and items for discussion

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 146/01-02(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion (issued on 26 October 2001)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 146/01-02(02) - List of follow-up actions (issued on 26 October 2001))

5. Members noted that the following five items were proposed for discussion at the next Panel meeting scheduled for 7 December 2001 by the Administration -

- (a) Drainage improvement in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung (111CD), West Kowloon Drainage Improvement (108CD), and drainage improvement in Northern Hong Kong Island (103CD & 104 CD);
- (b) Wan Chai Development Phase II, engineering works;
- (c) Feasibility study for further development of Tseung Kwan O (TKO);
- (d) Proposed charging and penalty system for road opening works; and
- (e) Focus study on Aberdeen Harbour.

6. Regarding item (a) above, Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip proposed and members agreed to invite professional bodies and academics to give views on the drainage improvement in Tsuen Wan, Northern Hong Kong Island and Lai Chi Kok in particular the interception approach adopted for the proposed drainage systems. Members also agreed to follow-up the discussion on mediation arrangements for dealing with contractual disputes. The subject was raised in relation to the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme at the joint meetings of this Panel and the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 4 October and 1 November 2001.

Members agreed that a special meeting would be arranged in December 2001 in addition to the regular meeting to discuss all the proposed items in paragraph 5 and the mediation arrangements for dealing with contractual disputes.

(Post-meeting note: The agendas for the regular Panel meeting on 7 December 2001 and the special Panel meeting on 12 December 2001 were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos CB(1) 233/01-02 and 234/01-02 on 7 November 2001 respectively. The Administration has subsequently advised that the proposal in paragraph 5(a) will be submitted to the Panel in January 2002.)

7. The Panel noted that two documents had been provided by the Administration pursuant to the discussion of "Flood control and prevention strategy and measures" at the special meeting on 13 June 2001.

- (a) Information paper on causes of flooding in New Territories in June 2001 and the actions taken by the Administration to reduce the flood risk in the specific areas (LC Paper No. CB(1) 2041/00-01 (01)); and
- (b) Executive summary of Investigation Report on Flooding in the New Territories and Tsuen Wan in June 2001(LC Paper No. CB(1) 2041/00-01(02)).

Overseas duty visit

8. Mr Albert CHAN suggested that a delegation of the Panel be sent to visit overseas places where urban renewal, town planning and heritage preservation were successful to enable members to have a better understanding of these subjects. The observations made in the visit would also serve as references when considering forthcoming urban renewal projects in Hong Kong. Mr LAU Ping-cheung considered that the visit, if conducted, should focus on a specific subject and there should be ample time to study the subject in depth. Ir Dr Raymond HO Chung-tai said that he was interested in the subject of town planning for new development areas which was relevant to the South East Kowloon Development and the West Kowloon Reclamation Area etc. He suggested that the Planning Department be invited to provide suggestions of suitable places with successful experience in town planning for new development areas for the Panel's reference. Members agreed.

Clerk

IV Policy briefing by the Secretary for Planning and Lands on the Chief Executive's 2001 Policy Address

(Policy Objective booklet entitled "Developing Hong Kong" provided by the Administration and issued to Members on 10 October 2001)

9. The Secretary for Planning and Lands (SPL) presented a brief report on the work of the Bureau and the departments under its purview in the preceding year and their work plans for the coming year on land use planning, land supply, building safety and maintenance and urban renewal. (A copy of SPL's speaking note (provided in Chinese only) was circulated to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB (1) 209/01-02 on 5 November 2001.)

Policy on town planning

10. Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him noted that it was a common practice for certain lots to be designated as Comprehensive Development Areas (CDA). The relevant provisions of CDA were too restrictive, hence affecting the development of the land. In response, D of P advised that the concept of CDA was formally enshrined in the Town Planning Ordinance in the 1980s'. Many large, comprehensively planned housing estates had been built as a result of the CDA zoning. The Town Planning Board (TPB) had formulated criteria for zoning a piece of land as CDA. TPB had reviewed the CDA zones annually in the past two years and from time to time undeveloped land designated as CDA had been rezoned for other development purposes. Indeed, there had been few new cases of land zoned as CDA in recent years and the overall number of CDAs taking into account the rezoning of developed land had decreased in the past four years. Responding further to Mr SHEK, D of P said that zoning a lot as CDA would not hamper development. In fact, it was not uncommon for private developers to request rezoning of land to CDA in conjunction with their comprehensive residential developments. At the request of members, D of P agreed to provide an information paper on CDA covering the following aspects -

- (a) background of the CDA concept;
- (b) criteria for zoning a piece of land as CDA;
- (c) special provisions in the zoning for CDAs and how these provisions might affect the development right of the lease holders; and
- (d) number, location and types of land zoned as CDA in the past four years, rezoning of existing CDAs to other uses in the past four years, and the total number and distribution of CDAs at present.

11. Mr Abraham SHEK proposed that the subject be discussed by the Panel at a future meeting.

12. Regarding the policy on height restrictions, Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired whether the future direction on urban design would be to provide the market with more freedom in line with the world-wide trend or to impose more stringent controls through regulations on building height. SPL explained that the Government's policy was to give as much freedom and flexibility to the market as far as practicable. There had been some discussions recently in the community on the need to impose prescriptive restrictions on building height to protect ridgelines and this was a subject covered by a public consultation document issued by the Planning Department (PD). The Director of Planning (D of P) informed members that mixed views had been received on the subject. There were views that some form of control on building height for certain areas like the waterfronts would be necessary. As the subject was still under public consultation, the Administration had not established any specific policy in this regard.

13. In response to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's enquiry about the planning strategy for the Harbour and its waterfront areas, SPL advised that the Administration attached great importance to the subject given that the Harbour was one of the most precious resources in Hong Kong. D of P elaborated that PD had conducted a number of studies on the development potentials of the Harbour and its waterfront areas including the Central, Wan Chai, South East Kowloon and Tsim Sha Tsui and had undertaken public consultation on these studies. The Administration accorded high priority to environmental and conservation factors in drawing up these development proposals. While appreciating the efforts of the Administration in this area of work in recent years, Miss CHAN expressed concern that environmental and conservation considerations would be overridden by economic ones when the property market rebounded. SPL assured members that the implementation of endorsed development plans for the Harbour and its waterfront areas would not be subject to changes in the property market.

Land use in the New Territories

14. Ir Dr Raymond HO expressed concern about the growing gap in the development pace between Shenzhen and the northern rural New Territories (NT). He enquired whether the Administration had examined potential development opportunities of Sha Tau Kok and nearby areas which were currently designated as "Closed Area". In reply, SPL advised that areas near the boundary were designated as "Closed Area" for security reasons. According to his knowledge, the Security Bureau was reviewing the coverage of the Closed Area and the arrangements for access to the Closed Area. On the planning side, the Administration would assess the development potential of the areas adjacent to the Hong Kong-Shenzhen boundary, giving due attention to environmental and conservation factors, in the context of the study on "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy".

15. Mr LAU Wong-fat commented that the existing control over access to Sha Tau Kok and nearby areas had hampered the development of the areas and was not conducive to effective utilization of land resources, notwithstanding the

rapid development of transport infrastructure in the New Territories. He urged the Administration to review the relevant policy.

16. Referring to the review on the planning standards and guidelines on greening planned to commence in late 2001, Mr LAU Wong-fat enquired whether the views of the public including private land owners would be consulted during the review. D of P explained that the review was being coordinated by the Environment and Food Bureau. PD was a participating department responsible for consolidating and compiling the relevant prevailing standards and guidelines adopted by government departments and bureaux. The public would be further consulted on the proposals arising from the review.

17. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired how the Government would strike the balance between preserving private land of conservation value and the safeguarding of the property rights of the land owners. D of P said that a study on planning and land management for the rural NT would be commissioned in 2002 and the subject would be addressed in the study. Responding to Mr LAU Wong-fat's enquiry, D of P advised that PD would take the lead in the study and specialist consultants would be engaged to provide the necessary technical support. Extensive public consultation would be conducted in the course of the study so that issues of public concern could be duly taken into account in the study.

18. As to whether there was any intention of the Government to buy private land for conservation purposes, SPL replied that the subject fell under the purview of the Secretary for Environment and Food. Mr LAU Wong-fat stated his view that it was unfair for the Government to freeze the development of private land without proper compensation.

Study on Hong Kong Residents living in the Pearl River Delta Region

19. Mr TAM Yiu-chung sought elaboration on the study on Hong Kong residents living in the Pearl River Delta Region to be commissioned by the Planning Department in 2002. D of P advised that the study was to seek information including, number, location and types of properties purchased by Hong Kong residents living in the Pearl River Delta Region and their decision-making process. The study would be conducted in the Mainland and a preliminary study would be carried out to work out the methodology for data collection.

Urban renewal

20. Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired about the policy on heritage preservation under the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). The Deputy Secretary (Urban Renewal & Buildings) (DS/URB) advised that one of the three main objectives of urban renewal was to preserve buildings of historical, cultural or architectural interest within the urban renewal target areas and project areas. A total of 27 buildings had been identified for preservation in these areas. The

Planning and Lands Bureau (PLB) had put forward proposals to the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) on the arrangements for preservation of these building in the course of urban renewal. Subject to the agreement of HAB and the response of the public, an agreed policy for heritage preservation in the context of urban renewal would be implemented by PLB. Nevertheless, he envisaged that the process would take some time as legislative amendments were involved.

21. Mr Abraham SHEK urged that urban renewal should be expedited.

Clearance of illegal rooftop structures and rehousing of occupants

22. Mr Albert CHAN referred members to the Buildings Department (BD)'s target of clearing 12 000 illegal rooftop structures on 4 500 single-staircase buildings within seven years. He was concerned whether the Housing Department (HD) would provide the necessary support in making timely and proper rehousing arrangements for the affected occupants. Pointing out that the current rehousing policy was formulated in 1982 and thus was outdated, he cautioned the Government not to under-estimate the social impact of the clearance operations given the present adverse economic climate.

23. In response, The Director of Buildings (D of B) acknowledged that rehousing for clearerees was a complex issue and partly due to difficulties encountered in rehousing, BD had so far only managed to clear the illegal rooftop structures of 323 as against the target of 700 single-staircase buildings in 2001. He said that while the rehousing policy fell within the purview of the Housing Bureau, BD had worked in close liaison with HD to facilitate the latter to make timely rehousing arrangements. To improve the situation, social workers would be engaged in 2002 to support BD in handling problems raised by affected occupants during the clearance operations.

Consultation with District Councils

24. Responding to Mr IP Kowk-him's enquiry about plans to strengthen the communication between District Councils (DCs) and the Administration on land use planning, building safety and urban renewal, SPL assured members that the Administration valued the views of DCs on the relevant policies and the implementation arrangements. The Director of Lands (D of L) advised that representatives of the Lands Department attended meetings of the District Management Committees and DCs on a regular basis. DCs were briefed and consulted on land policy and matters. D of B informed members that to strengthen support provided to DCs, a Chief Surveyor attended meetings of DCs when matters relating to building safety and maintenance were scheduled for discussion. The Administration planned to enlist the assistance of DCs in BD's actions on removal of abandoned advertisement signboards. Members of DCs would also be invited to join a committee to assess applications for the Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme, which had been launched to help owners with financial difficulty to undertake maintenance and repairs.

25. DS (UR&B) said that members of DCs would be invited to join district advisory committees, which under the finalized URS would be established to give advice and assistance to the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) with regard to its urban renewal projects. For new projects, the URA was required to consult the concerned DCs. D of P informed members that it had been an established practice to consult the relevant DCs on Draft Outline Zoning Plans and planning studies. PD had recently organized a forum to exchange views with DC members on planning matters.

26. Mr IP Kwok-him commented that DC members generally considered that the Administration's consultations on planning matters were inadequate and were often conducted with very short notice. The Chairman shared Mr IP's concern and remarked that it was important for PD to consult DCs before finalizing their proposals. D of P pointed out that conscious efforts had been made by PD in the past few years to conduct extensive and timely consultation on planning studies and proposals. SPL assured members that the Administration would endeavour to conduct timely consultations on planning proposals.

V Brief report by the Administration on the collapse of an industrial building in Yau Tong on 29 October 2001

27. The Director of Buildings (D of B) briefed members on the latest position regarding the tragic collapse of the Asia Trade Centre under demolition at 19 Sze Shan Street in Yau Tong on Monday, 29 October 2001 as detailed in the paper tabled by the Administration at the meeting.

(Post-meeting Note: The information was circulated to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 209/01-02 on 5 November 2001.)

28. Ir Dr Raymond HO and Mr LAU Ping-cheung declared that they were authorized persons in the structural engineering and surveying fields respectively.

Rescue operation and investigation into the cause(s) of the incident

29. Members commended the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department (BD) for their round-the-clock rescue operation following the incident. They also expressed their appreciation of the prompt response of BD in conducting immediate inspection of all the other 48 approved demolition sites, and setting up a 3-member investigation team to inquire into the incident. Members urged for early completion of the investigation.

30. Ir Dr Raymond HO pointed out that the use of heavy equipment to demolish the remaining standing parts of the collapsed building would not be appropriate in the present circumstance as it might jeopardize the life of the missing workers trapped in the building. He was also concerned whether there

were adequate life detectors for the rescue operation. D of B assured members that great care would be exercised during the rescue operation and there was no shortage of life detectors for the rescue operation.

31. In response to Mr LAU Ping-cheung's concern about the unusual speed in undertaking the demolition works during the three days preceding the occurrence of the incident, D of B assured members that the subject would be one of the areas to be investigated. Every effort would be made to complete the investigation within three to four weeks.

32. Miss LI Fung-ying questioned the adequacy of the current site supervision mechanism given that the site was inspected by BD only three days before the building was collapsed and the works were found to be in order at that time. D of B advised that this was also one of the seven areas to be examined by the investigation team. In general, site supervision was undertaken at different levels by the contractor, authorized person and registered structural engineer responsible for the demolition works. The role of BD was to monitor and check that works were carried out according to BD's approved plans and procedures. He remarked that over the past years, there had been ongoing reviews and improvements made to the supervision mechanism. The current mechanism was prudent and comprehensive, though there might still be room for improvement.

33. Mr Albert CHAN commented that as far as demolition works were concerned, the Administration had performed poorly in respect of supervision and accident prevention, as evidenced by the recurrence of similar incidents over the past years. While it might be true that the existing legislation and procedures for supervision of demolition works were already comprehensive, there were yet numerous problems with site supervision for building works and demolition works. He observed that virtually all the prosecution cases against authorized persons for building problems had been initiated by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). There had been few, if any, prosecution action initiated by the Building Authority (BA) against authorized persons for failure to provide proper site supervision, except for cases where accidents had occurred on site. Mr CHAN further said that according to his experience in handling complaints relating to building problems, the usual approach of BD in tackling a building problem identified was to refer the problem to the management company concerned for rectification works without further inquiry as to whether the problem was attributable to inadequate site supervision. He therefore questioned whether BD had duly performed its regulatory role in respect of authorized persons.

34. D of B responded that each case had its own particular circumstances and any prosecution action should be substantiated by evidence. He explained that in some cases of building problems, the Department of Justice, after assessing the nature and gravity of the alleged offences involving authorized persons, had advised that it was more appropriate for the ICAC, instead of the BA, to initiate prosecution action. He considered it presumptuous to generalize that failure to

provide proper site supervision by authorized persons was a common problem and that the prevailing regulatory framework for site supervision was ineffective. He however shared Mr Albert CHAN's view that there was still room for improvement in BD's regulatory work. To strengthen the monitoring role of BD, a legislative proposal was in the pipeline to confer additional powers on BD to conduct search and obtain information on non-compliance during investigation. Other improvement measures being considered included the streamlining of procedures for approval of plans, conducting more frequent site inspection by BD staff with particular regard to safety and stepping up the monitoring of building quality after issuance of an Occupation Permit.

35. Ir Dr Raymond HO remarked that under the current legislation, authorized persons were subject to very strict regulation and heavy sanctions for failure to duly perform their duties. The liability upon an authorized person for the structural safety of a building approved by him/her was for life.

36. Mr Abraham SHEK did not agree with Mr Albert CHAN's observation that the lack of proper site supervision was common in the local construction industry. According to his understanding, professionals responsible for site supervision in general paid high regard to safety.

37. Mr Albert CHAN clarified that he did not question the adequacy of the existing legislation, but he had serious doubt on how far BD had duly performed its regulatory role in respect of authorized persons, in particular, for cases where no serious accident had occurred even though the failure to provide proper site supervision could be substantiated.

38. Miss LI Fung-ying expressed concern about the adverse implication of sub-contracting on the quality of construction works. For this case, she enquired about the number of sub-contractors involved in the demolition works of Asia Trade Centre. D of B pointed out that sub-contracting was a commercial practice. The concern of BD was whether the sub-contractors concerned had carried out the works in compliance with the approved procedures and safety requirements.

Preventive measures

39. Citing accidents occurred during demolition works in the past, Ir Dr Raymond HO was concerned whether adequate measures were in place to prevent occurrence of accidents during different types of demolition works. He was of the view that site supervision and scrutiny of demolition plans were very important for ensuring safety. He urged the Administration to ensure that adequate qualified staff would be provided for site supervision for different types of demolition projects. Where necessary, a qualified engineer should be stationed at site on a full-time basis. D of B replied that BD had issued a comprehensive practice note for authorized persons and registered structural engineers on demolition works in 1998 as an interim measure to enhance safety. The Administration also planned to propose amendments to the Buildings

Ordinance in early 2002, amongst other things, to create a new register of "minor works contractors" for building repairs, removal of unauthorized building works, and erection of signboards. To qualify for registration, contractors would be required to prove relevant knowledge and experience in those minor works. D of B further informed members that in this case a Technical Competent Person at level 4 was stationed on site to supervise the demolition work, and a qualified structured engineer conducted site inspection on a regular basis. He however advised members that a comprehensive review on the existing system for site supervision of demolition works would be conducted and the construction industry would be consulted in due course.

40. On Ir Dr Raymond HO's concern about the supervision of the works to remove signboards and unauthorized building works (UBWs) including illegal rooftop structures, D of B further informed members that BD had taken the initiative to identify buildings with a substantial number of UBWs attached to their external walls and advise the owners of the same building to remove the UBWs at the same time, instead of its previous approach of acting mainly on individual complaints. The new approach was effective as most owners of these buildings would commence the removal works before a removal order was served by BD. Moreover, owners would normally make use of the opportunity to carry out other maintenance works for the whole building, thereby improving the overall safety of the building. He assured members that BD was fully aware of the need to ensure safety while taking actions to remove UBWs on a large scale in the coming years.

41. In response to Miss LI Fung-ying's and Ir Dr Raymond HO's enquiry, D of B confirmed that it was a statutory requirement on the contractor concerned to station a Safety Officer at every works site.

42. On Miss CHAN Yuen-han's enquiry about the promotion of industrial safety among construction workers, D of B said that there was room for improvement in the public awareness of industrial safety and the technical knowledge on industrial safety among workers. While the Labour Department would continue their work in promoting and regulating industrial safety, the Works Bureau was working on a mandatory registration scheme for construction workers, the objective of which was to enhance safety in the construction industry and the standard of built works.

43. Miss LI Fung-ying urged the Administration to provide all possible support and assistance for the families of the victims in the incident. The Administration took note of her concern.

VI Policy briefing by the Secretary for Works on the Chief Executive's 2001 Policy Address

(Policy Booklets entitled "Public Works Programme" "Slope Safety for All" and "Water Supply" provided by the Administration and issued to Members on 10 October 2001.)

44. At the Chairman's invitation, the Secretary for Works (Acting) (S for W) (Ag) briefed members the major achievements of the Bureau in the past year as well as key initiatives to be taken in the year ahead in respect of Public Works Programme, follow-up on the review completed by Construction Industry Review Committee, flood prevention, slope safety and water supply.

(Post-meeting note: A copy of S for W (Ag)'s speech tabled at the meeting was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 209/01-02 on 5 November 2001.)

Public Works Programme

45. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed concern that the construction industry employing about 300 000 workers was experiencing an extremely difficult time. Many construction companies regardless of their size were at the verge of winding up their business due to insufficient jobs. As a result, workers were either unemployed or under-employed. He was disappointed to note that only 64 accelerated projects of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSC) had been included for implementation under the Government's Capital Works Programme. To help the construction industry, he considered it important for the Government to implement more public works projects in the coming few years.

46. S for W (Ag) informed members that a total investment amounting to some \$400 billion by the Government in the Capital Works Programme would be implemented in the coming 9 years. The Programme consisted of \$7.8 billion for the School Improvement Programme Final Phase, \$8.7 billion for the 64 accelerated projects of LCSC, \$76 billion for 105 new projects, and about \$300 billion for over 1 400 on-going projects. In addition, the Government planned to inject an additional \$2 billion each year into minor works to generate more jobs in the coming years.

47. On the timing of the creation of new jobs, S for W (Ag) advised that by mid-2003, a total of 20 000 new jobs would be created. The details were as follows -

<u>Time</u>	<u>Accumulated number of new jobs created</u>
1 st quarter of 2002	2 000
2 nd quarter of 2002	4 500

3 rd quarter of 2002	9 600
4 th quarter of 2002	12 000
Mid-2003	20 000

48. Mr Abraham SHEK was of the view that additional funds should be injected into minor works and the Administration should expedite submission of capital works projects for approval by the Finance Committee. He believed that Members would accord priority to consideration of these proposals. Mr SHEK and Mr LAU Ping-cheung requested and the Administration agreed to provide the following information -

- (a) a schedule of capital works projects for the year 2001-02;
- (b) a schedule of minor works projects for the coming two years; and
- (c) additional jobs to be generated from the respective projects mentioned in items (a) and (b) above.

Maintenance for aging infrastructure facilities

49. Ir Dr Raymond HO requested S for W (Ag) to consider the proposal for injecting an additional \$6 billion to carry out maintenance for aging infrastructure facilities. He was of the view that given the lower cost of works under the current stringent climate and the benefit of timely maintenance for infrastructure facilities, Government would be able to save costs in the long run.

50. S for W (Ag) responded that part of the maintenance works for infrastructure facilities such as buildings and bridges had already been included in the minor works programme for the coming two years. The injection of an additional \$2 billion each year for minor works represented a 40% increase above the original annual provision of \$5 billion for the purpose. The additional works included rehabilitation works for bridges and pedestrian subways, landscaping and improvement works for slopes, repainting of buildings etc.

Slope safety and landscaping

51. Ir Dr Raymond HO appreciated the good achievement made by the Government for maintaining 54 000 slopes in recent years, which was evidenced by the fact that no major landslide had occurred despite the frequent occurrence of heavy rainstorms in the summer of 2001. To enhance safety of private slopes, he suggested that the Government should consider introducing mandatory inspection of private slopes by authorized persons on a regular basis, say at 5-year intervals.

52. The Director of Civil Engineering (D of CE) pointed out that in addition to government slopes, the Civil Engineering Department (CED) would select about 300 private slopes for random inspection every year, and would serve Dangerous Hillside Orders to private owners concerned under the Buildings

Ordinance requiring them to upgrade their substandard slopes. Technical advice would be provided for private owners by a team comprising a Senior Engineer and two Engineers of CED. Private slope owners having financial difficulties to rectify substandard slopes might apply for loans under the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme launched in July 2002.

53. Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that the prevailing arrangements were inadequate to safeguard the risk of landslides given that there were over 12 000 private slopes in Hong Kong. S for W (Ag) replied that the policy was to promote public awareness in slope safety through public education. The Geotechnical Engineering Office under CED had been monitoring the response and awareness of private slope owners of their slope maintenance responsibilities through surveys and other means. If the monitoring results showed that public education was ineffective in this regard, the Government would consider introducing legislative measures to ensure slope safety.

54. Ir Dr HO expressed strong objection to the use of concrete spraying as the finish for slopes as this method produced poor aesthetic results. He considered that more resources should be allocated to slope landscaping as it would provide a better living environment for the public. S for W (Ag) informed members that efforts had been made in landscaping all the slopes upgraded under the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme. The Administration had published “Technical Guidelines on Landscape Treatment and Bio-Engineering for Man-made Slopes and Retaining Walls” which provided guidance on beautifying slopes. D of CE advised that in future, landscaping would be provided for all slope works as far as practicable. A landscape architect would be engaged to provide landscaping input for each slope restoration project. On average, landscaping works would represent about 10% of the total slope restoration cost.

Construction personnel registration system

55. Noting that the drafting of the new legislation for the construction personnel registration system for construction workers would be completed by end of 2001, Mr TAM Yiu-chung sought elaboration on the system. S for W (Ag) advised that to ensure the quality of construction works, the Administration considered it necessary to implement a mandatory registration system for all construction workers to certify their skill levels. The Administration planned to submit the legislative proposal to the Legislative Council in 2002.

Trial schemes to promote long-term employment of construction workers

56. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the progress of the trial schemes to promote long-term employment of construction workers in selected public works contracts. He was given to understand that the trial schemes had commenced in August 2001. S for W (Ag) undertook to provide relevant information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information on the trial schemes to promote long-term employment of construction workers and the Public Works Programme provided by the Administration were circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 421/01-02 on 27 November 2001.)

VII Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong

57. In view of insufficient time, members agreed that discussion of this agenda item should be deferred to the next regular meeting on 7 December 2001.

VIII Any other business

58. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 11:15 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat
4 December 2001