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Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 2nd meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 16 October 2002, 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

Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP

Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP

Hon James TO Kun-sun

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP

Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP

Hon SIN Chung-kai

Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP

Hon WONG Yung-kan

Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS

Hon LAU Kong-wah

Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Hon CHOY So-yuk

Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP

Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP

Hon WONG Sing-chi

Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Members absent:

Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Public officers attending:

Miss Elizabeth TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr Thomas TSO, JP	Deputy Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works)
Mr M J STOKOE, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Miss Janice TSE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mr Martin K K CHEUNG	Chief Civil Engineer Housing Department
Mr K S CHAN	Regional Highway Engineer/Hong Kong
Mr C W KWAN	Chief Engineer/Traffic Engineering (Hong Kong) Division Transport Department
Ms Eva TO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport)
Mr Eddy YAU, JP	Assistant Director (LS) 3 Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Mr C H YUE, JP	Deputy Director of Architectural Services
Mr S L MA	Principal Education Officer (Infrastructure)
Mr Samuel S Y CHAN	Acting Principal Transport Officer/Urban

Clerk in attendance:

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

Mr Andy LAU	Acting Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Rosalind MA	Senior Assistant Secretary (1) ⁹
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant 1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant 2

Attendance of public officers at Public Works Subcommittee meetings

The Chairman raised concern about the attendance of public officers at meetings of the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) following the implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials. He noted that the Deputy Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) and the Permanent Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works) had been designated to attend meetings of PWSC in place of the former Secretary for Planning and Lands and the former Secretary for Works. He sought clarification from the Administration as to whether the relevant Directors of Bureau would be in attendance of all agenda items at future PWSC meetings.

2. Ms Emily LAU shared the Chairman's concern. She questioned whether it was the Administration's plan to designate Permanent Secretaries instead of Directors of Bureau for attendance at PWSC meetings starting from the 2002-03 session. She opined that the Administration should have consulted PWSC before making any changes to the regular attendance arrangements.

3. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (DS(Tsy)3) explained that the main role of public officers in regular attendance at PWSC meetings was to assist in the deliberations of the PWSC by providing information on capital works, planning and environmental protection-related matters, etc. The division of responsibilities within relevant bureaux would be a matter for the bureaux concerned to decide on. The Permanent Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Permanent Secretary (ETW)) said that there was flexibility in the arrangements for attendance of public officers. Directors of Bureau might attend PWSC meetings on a need basis; they might attend those meetings at which items involving major new policies or controversial issues would be considered.

4. Responding to the Chairman's question of whether Permanent Secretaries would be in the position to answer members' enquiries on policy issues, Permanent Secretary (ETW) said that it was a normal practice for the Administration to consult the relevant Panels on public works proposals with policy implications before submitting them to PWSC for consideration. It was therefore expected that major policy concerns would be addressed at Panel meetings.

5. Mr Albert CHAN expressed strong reservation over the arrangements for attendance of public officers for this meeting. He commented that this reflected the confusion over the implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials, under which the delineation of responsibilities between Directors of Bureau and Permanent Secretaries was far from clear. He asked the Administration to clarify whether the Permanent Secretaries attending the meeting could represent their respective bureaux and whether the Directors of Bureau would be held accountable for the policy advice and/or undertakings made by the Permanent Secretaries at the meetings. Mr CHAN suggested that unless the Administration could provide clarification and confirmation on these issues, the

Subcommittee should not proceed with the discussion of project proposals.

6. Mr Henry WU said that the relevant Directors of Bureau should attend PWSC meetings. However, he opined that the Subcommittee should not defer the discussion of the agenda items for this meeting in view of the urgency of the items.

7. Mr IP Kwok-him considered that the relevant Directors of Bureau should attend PWSC meetings on a need basis and there should be flexibility in this regard. He disagreed with Mr Albert CHAN's suggestion of deferring the agenda items for this meeting. He pointed out that as the primary function of PWSC was to consider funding proposals for public works projects and make recommendations to the Finance Committee (FC) in this respect, discussions at PWSC should concentrate on the technical and implementation details of the projects rather than the policy aspects, for which the relevant Panels were the appropriate forum. Mr Andrew WONG and Mr LAU Kong-wah shared Mr IP's view that attendance of Directors of Bureau at PWSC meetings should not be made a necessary and standing arrangement.

8. Mr David CHU, Mr Abraham SHEK, Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Kenneth TING and Mr LAU Kong-wah shared the view that consideration of the agenda items for this meeting should not be deferred to a future meeting lest the implementation of the projects would be delayed unnecessarily. Mr David CHU, however, opined that the Administration should explain to members the delineation of responsibilities between Directors of Bureau and Permanent Secretaries and whether the Directors of Bureau would be accountable for the commitments and undertakings made by Permanent Secretaries at LegCo committee or subcommittee meetings.

9. Mr Fred LI opined that the relevant Directors of Bureau should attend PWSC meetings to answer members' questions on the policy aspects of public works projects under consideration. He pointed out that under the Accountability System for Principal Officials, the Permanent Secretaries were not in the position to answer Members' enquiries on policy issues on behalf of Directors of Bureau. This was exemplified in the practice of the Administration designating only Directors of Bureau to answer oral questions at Council sittings.

10. Noting members' concern about the representativeness of the public officers in attendance of PWSC meetings, DS(Tsy)³ assured members that public officers attending the meetings were entrusted to represent their respective bureaux or departments in answering members' queries about public works proposals. Permanent Secretary (ETW) and the Deputy Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) (DS (HP and L)) reiterated that they were fully authorised by their respective Directors of Bureau to speak on matters concerning their bureaux.

11. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung accepted that the public officers attending the meeting could represent their respective policy bureaux or departments and opined that members should proceed with the deliberation of the proposed projects on the

agenda immediately.

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12. Mr Albert CHAN said that as the Administration had given assurance on the capability of the attending public officers to represent their respective bureaux and departments, he agreed that consideration of the project proposals on the agenda could be proceeded with. Nevertheless, he requested the Administration to provide a complete explanation and confirmation in this respect in writing after the meeting. Ms Emily LAU shared Mr CHAN's concern and added that the Administration should provide a written response on members' concerns about the attendance of public officers at PWSC meetings before the next PWSC meeting scheduled for 13 November 2002.

Financial Secretary's comments regarding the need to review the priority order among public works projects

13. The Chairman expressed concern about the recent comments made by the Financial Secretary (FS) to the media on the need to review the priority order among public works projects, in particular, his comments that projects with economic benefits would be accorded priority and those without economic benefits would be deferred. He sought clarification from the Administration as to whether public works projects previously endorsed by PWSC and approved by the Finance Committee would be deferred or shelved on account of failing to meet the criterion of economic benefits. He opined that if the criterion of economic benefits would be a primary consideration in the prioritization of public works projects, there should be assessment of the extent of the benefit each project would bring to the economy in the proposals submitted to PWSC.

14. Mr Albert CHAN shared the Chairman's concern and opined that FS should clarify his comments. In particular, he should explain whether there had been any change to the funding policy for public works projects in that the economic benefits of projects had become the primary consideration in prioritizing public works projects. Mr SIN Chung-kai also considered that FS's comments had created doubts and confusion over the funding policy on public works projects. He suggested that the Administration should provide a written explanation on this matter. Mr Andrew CHENG shared the views of Mr CHAN and Mr SIN.

15. DS(Tsy)3 said that she was not in a position to comment on indirect quotes from FS, but could affirm that it was the Administration's normal practice to ask all bureaux and departments to review the priority of their proposed projects annually to update the priority order of these projects for funding allocation purposes. The extent of economic benefits generated by a project was one of factors to be taken into account in the review process. A more vigorous assessment of this factor was appropriate in view of the stringent financial position of the Government.

16. Mr Andrew CHENG queried whether FS's comments on reviewing the priority order among public works projects would include projects already given funding approval for implementation. In this connection, the Chairman sought

clarification on whether the projects submitted for consideration at this meeting would also be subject to further priority review after endorsement.

17. DS(Tsy)3 said that all the items submitted to PWSC for consideration had been accorded priority for implementation and thus had to seek funding approval. She assured members that there was no question of these projects being deferred or aborted after funding had been approved by FC. Permanent Secretary (ETW) reaffirmed that the project proposals submitted to PWSC were projects accorded priority for implementation after having gone through the internal vetting procedures within the Administration.

18. Mr Fred LI suggested that FS be invited to attend a PWSC meeting to clarify his comments regarding the need to review the priority order among public works projects and the application of the criterion of economic benefits. Mr Andrew WONG agreed that FS should be invited to clarify his comments, yet it might be more appropriate for FS to attend a meeting of the House Committee for this purpose. Ms Emily LAU agreed that the matter should be discussed at the House Committee.

19. DS(Tsy)3 assured members that there had not been any change in the funding policy for public works projects. The review of priority order was done internally within the Government bureaux and departments as an annual exercise to ensure that the proposals under their purview were properly prioritized to maximize the efficacy of public funds for the benefit of the community at large. She pointed out that the economic benefits of public works projects had been and would continue to be a factor for consideration in the review. She reiterated that in line with usual practice, the Administration would consult the Legislative Council as necessary should there be fundamental policy changes.

20. In view of the significant impact of the implementation programme of public works projects on the community, members considered it necessary for FS to clarify and elaborate his comments in respect of these projects, with particular regard to the setting of priority among different projects for funding allocation. After discussion, the Chairman moved the following motion:

"本小組委員會向內務委員會提出邀請財政司司長出席內務委員會會議解釋工務工程政策"。

21. The motion was put to vote. 13 members voted for the motion, no members objected and 5 members abstained. The motion was carried.

(Post-meeting note: The letter from the PWSC Chairman to the House Committee Chairman was issued to the House Committee on 17 October 2002. The matter was discussed at the House Committee meeting on 18 October 2002. Noting that the Panel on Financial Affairs had invited FS to attend the meeting on 25 October 2002 to discuss the item on "Fiscal deficits and the budgeting of Government expenditure for the years from 2003-02 to 2006-07", the House Committee agreed that Members would

take the opportunity to raise their concerns with FS about the funding policy on public works projects. FS's letter dated 17 October 2002 to the PWSC Chairman on public works expenses was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)PWSC7/02-03 on 21 October 2002.)

HEAD 711 – HOUSING

PWSC(2002-03)59 130TB Construction of a footbridge at Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road and improvements to Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road and Ap Lei Chau Drive

22. Ms Emily LAU referred to paragraph 7 of the paper which stated that it was for enhancement of road safety that the construction of a footbridge across Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road was proposed, and enquired whether there was any policy governing the provision of footbridges in place of existing at-grade pedestrian crossings. In response, the Chief Engineer/Traffic Engineering (Hong Kong) Division, Transport Department (CE/TE, TD) advised that the footbridge was constructed both for the enhancement of road safety and for the proper separation of traffic and pedestrian flows at the Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road which was a major local road with heavy traffic.

23. Ms Emily LAU and Mr Abraham SHEK queried why the footbridge was not constructed earlier given the high accident rate, CE/TE, TD and Regional Highway Engineer/Hong Kong, Highways Department (RHE/HK, HyD) explained that the Administration had been monitoring the situation of traffic accidents on the road and had started planning for the footbridge in 1997. However, various factors had contributed to the prolonged period of planning, such as the new requirement for an Environment Permit under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499), which was enacted in 1998.

24. In reply to Mr Albert CHAN's enquiry on how the proposed works could cater for the pedestrian and traffic flow generated from the housing developments north of Ap Lei Chau Drive, RHE/HK, HyD said that the proposed works would improve the existing vehicular and pedestrian traffic network at three road junctions at the northeast part of Ap Lei Chau, with a new footbridge, road widening and signalization of one of the junctions to cope with the traffic demand and to enhance road safety.

25. In reply to Mr David CHU's enquiry, CE/TE, TD confirmed that the existing at-grade pedestrian crossing at Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road would be cancelled when the proposed footbridge was completed and put into use. Railings would be installed to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road at ground level.

26. Ms Miriam LAU doubted whether the proposed footbridge, with its current design, could prevent jaywalking effectively. She pointed out that the current design of the footbridge only facilitate pedestrian flow between the two

sides of Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road but could not cater for the pedestrian flow towards other directions at the T-junction. She enquired about the feasibility of modifying the design to also cater for the pedestrian flow between the two sides where the Harbour Mission Church and the Harbour Mission School were located. Mr Albert CHAN shared Ms LAU's concern.

27. CE/TE, TD explained that there were limitations to the design of the proposed footbridge due to the space constraint at the Ap Lei Chau Drive. As the existing footpath next to the Harbour Mission School was very narrow, the provision of a footbridge would not be feasible unless some land of the School was resumed. In fact, there was already a subway for pedestrians to cross the Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road near the School. Taking into account the concentration of traffic flow at the Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road and the heavy pedestrian flow between Lei Tung Estate and the northbound bus stop on the Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road, the current design of the proposed footbridge was considered appropriate.

28. As to Ms Miriam LAU's concern about the problem of jaywalking, CE/TE, TD said that apart from the installation of safety railings, road safety education would be important to remind the public to cross the road properly. Since the junction of Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road and Ap Lei Chau Drive would continue to be a signalized junction for vehicular traffic, the traffic using Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road would have to stop at traffic lights and thus the road would not be a non-stop highway even after the completion of the proposed works.

29. Mr Albert CHAN criticized that the design of the footbridge lacked creativity despite members' comments on this aspect in the past. He also considered the estimated cost of \$31.7 million for the proposed works too expensive. The Chairman shared Mr CHAN's view on the lack of creativity in the design of the proposed footbridge. In response, RHE/HK, HyD explained that during the course of designing the footbridge, various options, such as the provision of lift, had been considered. The proposed design was finalized after detailed study to identify the best feasible option for enhancement of road safety and convenience of pedestrians. Plants would be provided along both sides of the footbridge for beautification purpose. As regards the cost of the proposed works, RHE/HK, HyD said that out of the project estimate of \$31.7 million, \$11.3 million would be allocated for the construction of the footbridge. The relatively high construction cost of the footbridge was mainly attributed to the associated works on the existing retaining walls. He assured members that the current design was cost-effective and efficient as the existing retaining walls were utilized for the construction of the footbridge.

30. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, RHE/HK, HyD advised that the contract period would be 20 months, and two additional months would be allowed for unforeseeable delay of works due to rainy weather.

31. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 703 – BUILDINGS**PWSC(2002-03)60 377RO Local open space in Area 15, Tin Shui Wai**

32. Members noted that the Administration had reported the progress of this project in the information papers for the meetings of the "Subcommittee to follow up the outstanding capital works projects of the former municipal councils" on 7 March and 2 May 2002.

Planning standards set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines

33. Ms Emily LAU pointed out that according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), there were set standards for the provision of open space in a district in relation to the population size of the district. In its past proposals, the Administration used to set out the target provision of open space for the district concerned under these standards. Noting that the target provision of open space in Yuen Long or Tin Shui Wai was not mentioned in the paper under consideration, she sought information in this regard and enquired about the reason for omitting the information on this occasion.

34. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport) (PAS for HA) explained that HKPSG was the Government reference manual for determining the scale, location and other requirements of various land uses and facilities. This manual was applied in planning studies and in preparing or revising town plans. Nevertheless, the standards and guidelines set out in HKPSG would be applied with flexibility in the planning process. Other important factors, such as the population structure of the district in question, the availability of similar facilities in the vicinity and the usage situation of existing facilities, would be taken into account. She added that according to HKPSG, the target open space to be provided for the population in Yuen Long would be 87 hectares (based on the standard of 20 hectares per 100 000 persons). The existing facilities in Yuen Long provided some 40 hectares of open space and the Administration was planning for other facilities, including a community centre in Area 17. Other suitable sites would be identified in Yuen Long for provision of additional open space when the land formation works at new areas, such as areas 101 and 107, were completed. DS(HP and L) supplemented that the Administration would make reference to HKPSG for determining the requirements for open space as far as practicable, taking into consideration the particular circumstances of each district in question. He assured members that the Administration closely monitored the demand for recreational facilities and open space in the territory and would try to provide adequate facilities to meet the demand.

35. Ms Emily LAU commented that even after the completion of the proposed project, there would still be a significant shortage of open space in Yuen Long. She urged the Administration to speed up the planning process to enable early provision of additional open space. At Ms Emily LAU's request, PAS for HS

agreed to set out the target provision of facilities according to HKPSG, where appropriate, in the future proposals submitted to PWSC.

Facilities designed to cater for the need of different age groups

36. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for the project. He welcomed the provision of a tai-chi area, exercise equipment designed for the elderly and a pebble foot message path in the local open space and urged the Administration to include similar facilities in other open space projects in future in view of the aging population.

37. Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the provision of recreational facilities for the youth in Tin Shui Wai. She suggested that the Administration should consider providing facilities for more trendy activities among youngsters, such as venues for dancing and practicing BMX-cycling, in regional and local open spaces.

38. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that the demand of the youth in Tin Shui Wai for recreational activities had been neglected in the past years. He urged the Administration to speed up the process of planning and construction of recreational and sports facilities for the youth, in particular, the provision of basketball courts and football pitches.

39. The Assistant Director (Leisure Services)³, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (AD(LS), LCSD) explained that the Administration would try to provide a greater variety of facilities to suit the needs of different age groups. While venues for trendy activities such as dancing and BMX-cycling were not included in the design of the proposed project, such facilities could be made available through contract-out arrangements and it would not be necessary for the Government to construct facilities for this purpose. Responding to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry on whether innovative play equipment would be provided in all new children's play areas in future, AD(LS), LCSD said that the Administration would design new children's play areas with up-to-date innovative and safe play equipment that were available in the market. The play equipment would be educational and designed to cater for the needs of different children age groups.

40. Mr IP Kwok-him opined that as the proposed project comprised mainly passive leisure facilities, more grassland should be provided for the enjoyment of the public in this area.

41. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(2002-03)61 382RO District open space in Area 5, Tai Po

42. Members noted that the Administration had reported the progress of this project in the information papers for the meetings of the "Subcommittee to follow up the outstanding capital works projects of the former municipal councils" on

7 March and 2 May 2002.

Provision of car parking spaces

43. Mr Andrew CHENG pointed out that as the proposed open space was adjacent to the proposed football pitch under PWSC(2002-03)62, there were issues of common concern in the two proposals, such as the provision of car parking spaces for visitors to the proposed garden and football pitch. He said that the project site was not at a location easily accessible by nearby residents. Instead, it was surrounded by highways, including the Tolo Highway and the Tai Po Road-Yuen Chau Tsai section. Thus, to facilitate access by the public to the facilities, adequate car parking spaces should be provided as part of the projects. Ms Emily LAU and Mr IP Kwok-him shared Mr CHENG's view that there should be adequate car parking spaces near the open space.

44. Being a member of the Tai Po District Council (TPDC), Mr Andrew CHENG expressed dissatisfaction with the land-use planning in Tai Po. The example of the Tai Po Waterfront Park demonstrated the consequences of a wrong choice of location which was hardly accessible by residents in the district. Notwithstanding the nice seaview and the facilities provided in the Park, the number of visitors remained small due to accessibility problem. Mr Albert CHAN concurred and pointed out that with the choice of an inconvenient location, additional pedestrian access facilities and car parking spaces would be required, and this in turn necessitated additional costs and space.

45. In response, AD(LS), LCSD informed members that in the light of the comments and suggestions of TPDC, 25 spaces had been designated for private cars and 8 others for coaches near the entrance of the proposed football pitch. The Recreation, Sports and Cultural Affairs Committee of TPDC had been informed of the plan for car parking spaces and the Committee accepted the Administration's proposal taking note of the limited availability of space. Responding to Mr CHENG's suggestion of providing parking spaces by constructing a multi-storey car park if additional parking spaces could not be provided at the ground level, AD(LS), LCSD said that this might be a possible option but would necessitate higher cost and more deliberations with departments concerned.

46. Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that while he would support the provision of additional car parking spaces, he did not consider the construction of multi-storey car park necessary for the proposed facilities. He commented that over-supply of car parking spaces would be a wastage. As car parking spaces were available in Kwong Fuk Estate, visitors might make use of these parking spaces. Mr Andrew CHENG pointed out that the number of car parking spaces in Kwong Fuk Estate was already insufficient to cater for the existing demand.

Pedestrian access to the proposed facilities

47. In response to Ms Emily LAU's and Mr Andrew CHENG's concern about the ease of pedestrian access to the proposed open space and football pitch from

the housing estates nearby, AD(LS), LCSD said that as shown in the plan appended to the information paper, there was a footbridge to the north of the football pitch which would facilitate pedestrian access from Kwong Fuk Estate to the proposed facilities.

48. Ms Emily LAU pointed out that residents of Wang Fuk Court would have to walk a long way to use the footbridge. She thus enquired whether additional pedestrian facilities would be provided to encourage residents to use the new facilities. Ms Miriam LAU concurred and urged the Administration to consider providing a subway from Wang Fuk Court to the proposed open space.

49. AD(LS), LCSD said that residents in the nearby estates, with a total population of about 50 000, could access the proposed facilities on foot. Other visitors might make use of public transport or private cars. Nevertheless, in view of members' concerns, AD(LS), LCSD undertook to follow up with the Transport Department to explore feasible measures to improve pedestrian access to the facilities.

LPG Store and LPG Filling Station in the vicinity of the proposed facilities

50. Ms Miriam LAU expressed concern about the possible impact of the traffic generated from the taxis using the LPG Filling Station adjacent to the proposed district open space. Mr WONG Yung-kan shared her concern. In reply, AD(LS), LCSD informed members that there was a buffer zone for taxis using the filling station to queue up for filling and it was not anticipated that the operation of the LPG filling station would have any adverse impact on the users of the open space.

51. Mr CHAN Kam-lam suggested that there should be a buffer area with proper landscaping between the proposed facilities and the LPG store and filling station, so that visitors could enjoy the leisure environment of the open space with the sight of the LPG store and filling station completely fenced off. The Deputy Director of Architectural Services (DD Arch S) agreed with Mr CHAN's suggestion of a buffer area and advised that the proposed project design had already included the necessary soft landscaping works for this purpose. It would not be necessary to erect a wall between the proposed open space and the LPG filling station as the trees and vegetation to be planted between them would constitute an effective buffer area.

Other concerns

52. Mr Andrew CHENG sought clarification on why the expenditure schedule would extend to 2007 with project scheduled for completion by November 2004. DD Arch S explained that as there would be defects liability periods in the contract, full payment to the contractor would be made only upon the expiry of these periods for various facilities under the project.

53. Responding to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry, AD(LS), LCSD informed members that according to HKPSG, 65 hectares of open space should be provided in Tai Po and there would be a shortage of 3 hectares upon the completion of the proposed project. In terms of provision of football pitches, there should be three football pitches in Tai Po and upon completion of the proposed football pitch, the shortfall would be reduced to one football pitch.

54. Mr WONG Yung-kan supported the proposal in principle as TPDC had called for more recreational and leisure facilities for years. However, he cautioned that as the facilities were surrounded by roads, particular attention should be given to the safety of visitors and consideration in this regard should be given in the design of the entrances and exits of the proposed garden and football pitch. He also suggested that the football pitch should be so designed to allow it to be used for other ball games, such as rugby. AD(LS), LCSD said that the football pitch could be used for other ball games simply by changing the goal posts.

Way forward

55. Taking into consideration the concerns raised by members and the Administration's response at the meeting, Mr Andrew CHENG opined that while he was prepared to endorse the proposal in principle, the Administration should address the concerns raised at this meeting, in particular concerns relating to the provision of car parking spaces and pedestrian access facilities. He requested the Administration to provide a supplementary information paper to PWSC after consulting TPDC on measures to address these concerns, before putting forward the proposed project to FC for funding approval. Ms Emily LAU concurred. However, Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that the proposal should be implemented as soon as possible and further delay of even a few weeks would be undesirable.

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56. Noting that TPDC and its Traffic and Transport Committee would have their meetings on 5 and 14 November 2002 respectively and allowing time for the Administration to prepare the supplementary information paper, members agreed that the proposed project should be put forward to the FC meeting scheduled for 22 November 2002.

57. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Any other business

Deferring the remaining items on the agenda to the next meeting

58. As the meeting had overrun, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the remaining items on the agenda, i.e., PWSC(2002-03)62, 63 and 64, would be deferred for consideration at the next PWSC meeting scheduled for 13 November 2002.

59. The meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 November 2002