

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. PWSC101/02-03  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/F/2/2

**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building**  
**on Wednesday, 26 February 2003, 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 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

Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP

Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP

Hon WONG Sing-chi

Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Hon LAU Ping-cheung

**Non-Subcommittee Member attending:**

Hon NG Leung-sing, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP

**Public officers attending:**

Miss Elizabeth TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) <sup>3</sup>
Mr John TSANG, JP	Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works)
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Miss Janice TSE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Miranda YEAP	Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport)
Mr C H YUE, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr Eddy YAU, JP	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services) 3
Mr David WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (B)
Mr Edward LAW	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food and Environmental Hygiene) 2
Mr W T CHOW	Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters) Fire Services Department
Mr K P MAK, JP	Chief Ambulance Officer Fire Services Department
Ms Rhonda LO	Assistant Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Operations) 3
Ms Mona WOO	Chief Property Manager (Site Utilisation) Government Property Agency
Mrs Jennie CHOK	Deputy Secretary for Security (2)
Mr L M KWOK	Deputy Commissioner of Correctional Services
Mr C Y CHAN	Assistant Commissioner of Correctional Services (Operations)
Mr TSAO Tak-kiang, JP	Director of Civil Engineering
Mr N P TONG	Chief Engineer/Development Civil Engineering Department
Mr Augustine NG	Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial

Mr Patrick LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Infrastructure and Research Support)
Mr TSE Man-shing	Assistant Director of Home Affairs (Administration)
Mr Andy LEUNG	Acting Project Manager (2) Housing Department
Mr William C G KO, JP	Director of Water Supplies
Mr LEUNG Mang-chiu, JP	Assistant Director of Water Supplies (New Works)

**Clerk in attendance:**

Ms Anita SIT	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)6
--------------	--------------------------------

**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Pauline NG	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

---

**HEAD 703 – BUILDINGS**

**PWSC(2002-03)84      386RO      District open space in Area 18, Tuen Mun**

Members noted that this item had been considered at the meeting of the Subcommittee to follow up the outstanding capital works projects of the former municipal councils on 7 March 2002.

2. Mr Albert CHAN said that while he supported the project proposal in principle, he was concerned about the soft landscaping design for the open space. He requested the Administration to design the open space with a special theme and distinct features such as planting one or a few species of flowers in large quantities in the open space so that visitors would be attracted by the special landscaping of the open space. The Director of Architectural Services (D Arch S) took note of Mr CHAN's comment and said that the Administration would take that into consideration in designing the open space.

3. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**HEAD 708 – CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT****PWSC(2002-03)91****5QJ****Renovation of the Wu Kwai Sha Youth Village of YMCA, Ma On Shan**

4. Members noted that this project proposal had been considered by the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) on 12 June 2002. Members had raised concern about the safety issues of the phased implementation of the project and the need to consult local residents on the precautionary measures. The item had thus been withdrawn at the meeting.

Arrangements for closure of camp during the works period

5. Mr WONG Sing-chi commented that the current proposed arrangement of implementing the works in one go and closing the entire camp during the removal of asbestos roof sheets was better for the protection of camp users and staff from possible health hazards. Mr WONG asked about the arrangements for camp users and staff during the camp closure. The Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services)<sup>3</sup> (AD(LS)<sup>3</sup>) explained that during the camp closure, the 41 camp staff would be temporarily re-deployed to other government-subsided camps managed by the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association of Hong Kong. Camp users who had booked/applied for usage of the camp during its closure would be referred to other government-subsided camp sites. The proposed works were scheduled to commence in October 2003 so that the camp facilities would be available to users during the summer vacation, which was the peak season for the camp every year.

6. Ms Emily LAU sought clarification on the work arrangements for the dismantling of the asbestos roof sheets and the consequential reinstatement works. AD(LS)<sup>3</sup> advised that D Arch S would take over the 42 cottages in September 2003 for site preparation works. The camp would then be completely closed in October 2003 for the dismantling of asbestos roof sheets for all cottages. The bulk of the camp not affected by the consequential reinstatement works would be reopened in November 2003 and the entire camp would resume full operation after completion of all the reinstatement works in April 2004.

Public consultation on the proposed works

7. Expressing concern about the possible impact of the proposed works on the health of nearby residents, Mr WONG Sing-chi asked whether the Administration had conducted public consultation on the proposed works. Mr LAU Kong-wah shared Mr WONG's concern and pointed out that members of PWSC had requested the Administration to consult local residents on the proposed works when the item was last considered by PWSC on 12 June 2002. Mr LAU stressed that since asbestos could be hazardous to health and given that there were a number of residential developments in the vicinity of the camp, the

Administration had the obligation to consult local residents on the proposed works.

8. In reply, AD(LS)3 informed members that the Administration had consulted the Sha Tin District Council (STDC) on the proposed works on 20 June and 5 September 2002 and STDC had agreed to the proposed implementation programme of the works. He advised that the removal, collection and disposal of asbestos-containing material would be in full compliance with the relevant statutory requirements. As agreed with STDC, periodic reports would be posted at the entrance of the project site to inform the public of the dust levels within the site during the period of asbestos roof sheets removal. The Administration had also undertaken to keep STDC informed of the works progress. He recapitulated from paragraph 5 of the paper that according to the material sampling of the roof sheets conducted by D Arch S, it had been confirmed that the roof sheets contained asbestos of a low risk type and presented no imminent health hazard if left undisturbed.

9. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed dissatisfaction that despite the request of PWSC members, the Administration had only consulted STDC but not the residents of the nearby developments. He commented that the consultation undertaken by the Administration was inadequate and could not be accepted as local residents in the vicinity of the project site were not properly consulted on the proposed works. Ms Emily LAU shared Mr LAU's views.

10. In response, the Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sports) undertook to conduct consultation with local residents and provide the findings on the consultation before the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 11 April 2003. She assured members that the Administration would keep the local residents informed of the dust level within the site by posting periodic reports at the entrance of the project site during the removal of the asbestos roof sheets.

11. Ms Emily LAU opined that it would be improper for PWSC to endorse this item without considering the views of local residents on the proposed works. She therefore requested the Administration to withdraw the item and re-submit it when the Administration could provide the results of its consultation with local residents. Mr LAU Kong-wah concurred and added that as local residents might have alternative views on the implementation arrangements of the project, it would not be proper for PWSC members to endorse this item at this stage. Mr LAU therefore asked the Administration to conduct the consultation as soon as possible so that the item could be submitted to the next PWSC meeting scheduled for 9 April 2003.

12. In reply to Mr WONG Sing-chi's enquiry, D Arch S pointed out that the Administration would have to face a tight implementation schedule for the proposed works if the project proposal was withdrawn and re-submitted on 9 April 2003. Nevertheless, D Arch S said that it would still be possible to meet the original target works commencement and completion dates, which would be October 2003 and April 2004 respectively.

13. The Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)<sup>3</sup> (DS(Tsy)<sup>3</sup>) said that the Administration would withdraw this item and re-submit it to PWSC for consideration at the next meeting scheduled for 9 April 2003 after consultation with local residents.

14. The item was withdrawn.

## **HEAD 703 – BUILDINGS**

**PWSC(2002-03)89            178GK            Kwai Chung ambulance depot with  
Fire Services Department offices and  
refuse collection point at Hing Shing  
Road, Area 10B, Kwai Chung**

15. Members noted that an information paper on the item had been circulated to the Panel on Security and the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (FSEH Panel) on 13 December 2002. Referring to paragraph 17 of the paper which stated that the FSEH Panel noted the paper with no comments at the meeting held on 19 December 2002, Mr Fred LI, Chairman of the Panel, clarified that no discussion had taken place at the aforesaid meeting as Panel members considered that the project proposal should be considered by the Panel on Security instead.

### Concerns of the local community about the traffic and environmental impacts of the proposed refuse collection point

16. Mr WONG Sing-chi noted that the Administration had revised the architectural design of the project by swapping the locations of the refuse collection point (RCP) and the ambulance depot in response to concerns raised by residents of Hibiscus Park and school management of Lions College. He asked the Administration whether the revised design could adequately address their concerns. In reply, the Assistant Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Operations)<sup>3</sup> (AD/FEH(O)) advised that the suggestion of swapping the locations of the RCP and the ambulance depot was actually made by local residents at a meeting with the Administration held on 12 February 2001. The Administration had amended the project design accordingly and exchanged views on the amended design with local residents and the school management at a briefing held on 13 September 2001. The revised proposal was presented to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Committee of Kwai Tsing District Council again on 14 December 2001 and the Committee agreed that the project should be implemented as soon as possible. To address the concerns of residents of Hibiscus Park and the school management of Lions College, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) personally explained to them on 6 November 2002 the latest development and the significance of the provision of a refuse collection point in the area to minimise nuisance.

17. Ms Emily LAU expressed appreciation of the Administration's efforts in addressing the concerns of the local community, in particular, the arrangements for DFEH to explain personally to the residents and school management. Ms LAU however noticed that despite the work of the Administration, the residents of Hibiscus Park and the principal of Lions College were still opposed to the RCP. She asked whether the Administration would do something further to address their concerns. Mr WONG Sing-chi also sought information on the Administration's plan for mitigation measures to minimize possible environmental nuisance caused by the operation of the RCP.

Admin

18. In response, AD/FEH(O) confirmed that the Administration took heed of the request of local residents and the school management for transportation of refuse to and from the RCP only after late afternoon to minimize possible disturbance to students. She assured members that the Administration would closely supervise the refuse collection service undertaken by private refuse collectors when the RCP commenced operation. She undertook to maintain continuous liaison with local residents and the school management for implementation of proper measures to minimize possible disturbance and environmental nuisance caused by the operation of the RCP. As to Mr WONG Sing-chi's suggestion of asking the private refuse collectors to route through Ko Fong Street for transportation of refuse, AD/FEH(O) confirmed that the Administration would request the private refuse collectors to take this routing for refuse transportation.

19. Pointing out that Hing Sing Road was a narrow dual one-lane carriageway, Mr TAM Yiu-chung urged the Administration to closely monitor the impact of the future operation of the RCP/ambulance depot on road safety. Appreciating the need for a RCP to service its catchment area in Kwai Fong and that no better alternative site could be identified, Mr TAM said that he would support the project proposal. He urged the Administration to put in place appropriate mitigation measures during construction and future operation to minimize disturbance and environmental nuisance to nearby residents and students.

#### Measures to minimize noise nuisance generated by the operation of the ambulance depot

20. Ms Emily LAU commended the Administration's effort in providing three-dimensional drawings of the proposed facilities at Enclosure 2 of the paper and pointed out that this could facilitate members' understanding of the project proposal. However, she was concerned about the possible noise nuisance arising from the operation of the ambulance depot, including the sound level of the public address system and the sirens of ambulances. In reply, the Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters), Fire Services Department (CFO(H)/FSD) explained that the Director of Fire Services would implement mitigation measures to minimize noise nuisance to nearby sensitive receivers. These measures included the use of volume adjustable devices to control the sound level of the public address system. Sirens

of ambulances and wig-wag signals would only be used when necessary. He advised that guidelines on the proper use of the public address system, sirens and wig-wag signals had been issued to individual ambulance depots.

#### Optimal utilization of Government sites

21. Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the arrangements for joint-use of Government site in the project proposal and asked whether the Administration had encountered any difficulties in identifying compatible joint users for the site. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (B) (PAS(S)) said that following Government's policy of optimizing site development potential, the Government Property Agency had made an effort to identify compatible joint users for the site. The Chief Property Manager (Site Utilization), Government Property Agency (CPM(SU)/GPA) said that it was the normal practice for GPA to examine the possibility of incorporating additional users into a development for the optimal utilization of any Government site. In the case of this project proposal, GPA was not able to identify other compatible joint users apart from the facilities proposed by the Fire Services Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

22. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**PWSC(2002-03)90                      36BA                      Mong Kok ambulance depot with  
Ambulance Command and Fire  
Safety Command Headquarters at  
Anchor Street, Mong Kok**

23. Members noted that an information paper on the project proposal had been circulated to the Panel on Security on 13 December 2002.

#### Measures to enhance the operation of the proposed ambulance depot

24. Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed concern about the possible impact of the frequent loading/unloading activities nearby on the operation of the proposed ambulance depot. He sought information on the measures to prevent such loading/unloading activities from obstructing the passage of ambulances in responding to emergency calls. The Chief Ambulance Officer, Fire Services Department (CAO/FSD) responded that in addition to the enforcement actions of the Police against illegal parking in the vicinity, FSD would work out with the Transport Department the need to implement other traffic management measures, such as designating a no-parking zone outside the proposed ambulance depot, where appropriate.

#### Optimal utilization of Government sites

25. Referring to paragraph 21 of the paper, Ms Emily LAU sought clarification on the criteria used by the Administration to assess whether the



proposed development on a site represented the optimal use of the site. She queried why the Administration considered both project proposals under PWSC(2002-03)89 and 90 would optimize the use of sites, given that shared use was arranged only for the former proposal but not the latter one.

26. In reply, PAS(S) reiterated that in deciding on the development of a site, the Administration had followed the established diligent procedure of examining the possibility of incorporating additional users into the development. As a result, three FSD offices were proposed to be relocated from other government/leased premises to the new building, with details shown in paragraph 6 of the paper. He assured members that in this case, the Administration had endeavored to achieve the optimal utilization of the Government site. CPM(SU)/GPA advised that there was no definite plot ratio set for GIC (government/institute/community) sites, but GPA would seek the advice of the Planning Department or the Property Strategy Group on the proposed usage of the sites on a case-by-case basis to ensure optimal utilization of each GIC site.

27. Ms Emily LAU was dissatisfied that there was in fact no objective criteria laid down for assessing whether the proposed development on a GIC site represented the optimal utilization of the site, and thus every proposed development would be considered on an individual basis. Ms LAU pointed out that the optimal utilization of land resources was of paramount concern in considering whether a project proposal was justified. In this connection, Ms LAU requested the Administration to provide detailed information on the existing space provision and number of staff accommodated at the existing premises of the three FSD offices, and the justification for the increased space provision, if any, at the proposed Ambulance Command Headquarters and Fire Safety Command Headquarters. She also asked the Administration to confirm whether the proposed space provision in the FSD offices would be fully utilized upon reprovisioning of all the proposed offices and whether there would be any spare space left with undetermined uses.

28. In response, PAS(S) pointed out that all Government offices were subject to the vetting of GPA on the space provision for their office accommodation based on the established accommodation standards. CPM(SU)/GPA also advised that GPA would vet the schedule of accommodation submitted by the proponent departments in detail and over-provision above the set entitlement standards would not be allowed unless there were adequate justification on operational grounds. CFO(H)/FSD re-affirmed that the space provision in the proposed FSD offices had been vetted by GPA against the prevailing standards and there was no over-provision. He informed members that the Fire Safety Command Headquarters and its three subsidiary offices were currently occupying leased office accommodation in Mong Kok. The provision of permanent accommodation for these offices could provide both security of tenure and savings in the Government's rental payments. PAS(B) undertook to provide the information requested by Ms Emily LAU before the relevant FC meeting.

Plans to cope with increasing demand for ambulance service

29. Noting from paragraph 5 of the paper that the proposed facilities were expected to meet the increasing demand for ambulance service in the areas concerned up to 2006, Mr LAU Ping-cheung asked whether there was any room for expansion of the ambulance service to cope with further increase in demand. In reply, CAO/FSD explained that the proposed facilities were planned in accordance with the anticipated demand for ambulance service up to 2006, which was in turn calculated on the basis of forecast population growth. Upon commissioning, the demand for emergency ambulance service provided by the proposed depot would be subject to annual review and appropriate deployment of resources would be arranged to cope with changes in demand.

30. Mr LAU Ping-cheung was concerned about the declining response time performance of the emergency ambulance service in the areas concerned as the percentage of calls responded within the 12-minute target response time had dropped from 92.4% in 1999 to 88.2% in 2002. He urged the Administration to improve the performance and prepare for expansion of service to cope with further increase in demand. CAO/FSD responded that while the proposed facilities would initially accommodate six ambulances, the number could be increased to eight or even 10 if there was significant increase in demand in the areas concerned. FSD would work out measures to cope with the increase in demand, including re-deployment of ambulances from other depots and identification of suitable sites for development of new depots.

Admin &  
Clerk

31. The item was voted on and endorsed. Ms Emily LAU expressed reservation on the proposal and requested that this item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

**HEAD 705 – CIVIL ENGINEERING**

**PWSC(2002-03)95**

**72LC**

**Prison development plan at Hei Ling Chau – feasibility study and preliminary site investigation for land formation and infrastructure works**

32. Members noted that the item had been discussed at meetings of the Panel on Security on 7 December 2000, 7 June 2001 and 7 February 2002. The item had also been discussed at the meeting of the Panel on Planning Lands and Works (PLW Panel) on 9 July 2002.

33. Dr TANG Siu-tong, Chairman of PLW Panel, pointed out that when the proposal was considered at the Panel meeting on 9 July 2002, members expressed concern about the following issues -

- (a) the remote location of the proposed prison complex at Hei Ling Chau, and hence the high cost for providing a transportation link to

the Lantau Island, inconvenience caused to visitors, as well as the cost and security problems involved in transportation of remands pending trial to and from courts in the urban areas;

- (b) possible impact of the proposed reclamation works on the environment and marine lives in the surrounding waters; and
- (c) the high cost for site investigation works and capital cost for the proposed prison development.

Dr TANG said that in view of the various issues yet to be addressed, PLW Panel had not given its support to the project proposal.

#### Location of the proposed prison complex

34. Dr TANG also commented that as a suitable site for the proposed prison complex had yet to be agreed upon, the Administration should consider carrying out only the feasibility study in the first instance, leaving the part on site investigation to a later stage when the feasibility of the proposed site had been established.

35. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Security(2) (DSS) and the Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial (AD(P)) advised members that a territorial location search for pursuing the proposed prison development had been undertaken based on a set of objective criteria. Given the need for a site area of about 80 hectares for the proposed prison development to provide 7 220 penal places and all associated facilities, no suitable site could be identified in the urban area during the territorial location search. In fact, any hypothetical site of such a size in the urban area would involve a high opportunity cost. After the search, two possible site options at Hei Ling Chau and Kong Nga Po had been identified for further consideration. Hei Ling Chau was considered more suitable as Kong Nga Po, partly falling within the Frontier Closed Area, might have great potential for long-term development into other uses which could best take advantage of the strategic location of the area.

36. The Director of Civil Engineering (DCE) explained that as the feasibility of a project proposal could only be established by the findings of site investigation for land formation and infrastructure works, Dr TANG's suggestion of conducting the feasibility study and site investigation in two stages was not practicable.

37. Mr Albert CHAN also expressed serious doubt on the suitability of the proposed location at Hei Ling Chau. He was in particular concerned about the cost and security risks in transporting remands between the proposed prison complex and courts in the urban area. He considered that the Administration should have reverted to the PLW Panel on the site selection issue before submitting this proposal to PWSC. He said that in view of the above concerns, he would not support the project proposal on this occasion. He requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the cost of transporting remands pending

trial from the proposed prison complex to courts in urban areas before the relevant FC meeting.

Admin 38. In response, DSS said that the present proposal was to seek funds for conducting feasibility study and site investigation for the proposed prison complex at an estimated cost of \$46.7 million. After consulting PLW Panel on 9 July 2002, the Administration had provided written response to the issues raised by Panel members. Upon receipt of the supplementary information, the Panel had not indicated that further discussion on the project proposal was required. As to the transportation of remands, DSS advised that with the provision of a transport link between Hei Ling Chau and Lantau Island, which was part of the prison development proposal, the site would be accessible through both land and sea transport. She agreed to provide the information on transportation cost as requested by Mr Albert CHAN.

39. Dr TANG Siu-tong clarified that as the Chairman of PLW Panel, he had not received any request from the Administration after the meeting on 9 July 2002 for further discussion of the project proposal.

#### Cost-effectiveness of the proposed prison complex

Admin 40. Noting that the estimated capital cost for the proposed prison development was about \$16 billion, Mr Henry WU expressed concern about the high unit cost for providing 2 600 additional penal places through the proposed development. In this connection, Mr WU sought information on how the forecast of penal population as set out in paragraph 9 had been arrived at, including the method of computation and relevant figures involved. DSS informed members that the forecast on the growth of penal population had taken into account the number of arrests and prosecutions projected by the Police and the Immigration Department and other relevant factors such as crime rate, crime detection rate, admission rate, sentencing pattern and the general population growth. She undertook to provide the requested information before the relevant FC meeting.

41. Mr WONG Sing-chi also expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed prison development. He asked whether the Administration had conducted any cost-benefit analysis of this large scale prison development. DSS responded that the proposal would provide additional penal places to solve the current problem of overcrowding and cater for future growth up to 2015. Moreover, the co-located prison complex would be able to achieve a significant economy of scale. For example, only 709 additional staff would be required to cover the net increase of 2 600 places, instead of 1 100 additional staff which would otherwise be required under the conventional approach of building separate, stand-alone prisons. There would be long-term substantial savings in operation and manpower costs, through which an estimated annual recurrent saving of \$125 million could be achieved. She also informed members that the latest estimated capital cost for the proposed prison development was \$12 billion instead of \$16 billion.

42. The Chairman remarked that the Administration should have advised members of the significant change in the estimated capital cost for the proposed prison development at the beginning of the discussion of this project. He requested the Administration to make proper arrangements in future submissions so that members would be provided with all relevant information and informed of the latest revisions.

43. Mr Albert CHAN commented that the latest estimated capital cost of \$12 billion was still high, taking into consideration that only 2 600 additional penal places would be provided. He considered that this amount of public funds should better be spent on social security assistance, and did not agree with the Administration's cost-benefit analysis that the development of a centralized prison complex was cost-effective in the long run.

44. In response, DSS said that the proposed prison complex would provide a total of 7 220 penal places. By co-locating existing prison facilities on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon in the proposed prison complex, the existing sites would be released for other uses. She said that a detailed breakdown on the estimated capital cost would be provided when the feasibility of the proposed prison had been established and the proposal for the construction of the proposed prison complex was submitted for members' consideration. DCE added that among the total cost of \$12 billion, about \$3 billion was for the necessary infrastructure facilities, such as the said transport link and sewerage facilities. The estimated cost for development of the prison buildings and associated facilities was about \$9 billion. Hence, the average capital cost of each of the 7 220 penal places would be about \$1.3 million, which was lower than that of the Stanley Prison Complex of some \$1.5 million.

45. Dr TANG Siu-tong also expressed concern about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed prison complex. He pointed out that the size of the prison complex had been reduced from the original plan of 15 000 places to 7 220 places, but similar infrastructure facilities would still be required. He therefore doubted whether the proposal would still achieve the same level of cost-effectiveness as under the initial plan of co-locating all existing penal facilities in a single prison complex.

46. To assess the cost-effectiveness of the proposed project, Mr LAU Ping-cheung sought information on the expected economic return from the existing penal sites to be released for alternative development after the commissioning of the proposed prison complex. Mr LAU also asked the Administration to explore alternative modes of financing and implementing the proposed prison complex, including private sector participation. DSS undertook to provide the information as requested by Mr LAU. She said that the Administration would explore the possibility of private sector participation for the project.

### The Administration's plan to cope with growth in penal population

47. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the arrangements to cope with the future demand for penal places given the present proposal of a prison complex at a reduced scale. He asked whether the Administration had plans for other prison developments. Mr WONG Sing-chi also sought confirmation on whether the Administration would expand the scale of the development to provide more than 7 220 places if future forecast indicated a greater demand for penal places.

48. In response, DSS said that to address members' concerns raised at the said meetings of the Security Panel, the Administration had reduced the scale of co-location from a full-scale provision of 15 000 penal places to cope with the expected increase in demand up to 2024 to a medium-sized complex to provide 7 220 places. The proposed prison complex would replace existing penal facilities on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon plus reception facilities scattered in the territories and would provide an additional 2 600 places. Other existing penal facilities would continue to be in operation after the completion of the proposed prison complex, bringing the total penal capacity under the Correctional Services Department to 13 860. With this proposed prison complex, the overall penal facilities in the territory would be able to cope with the expected growth in penal population up to 2015. She confirmed that under the planning time frame up to 2 015, the Administration had no plans for expansion of the proposed prison complex beyond the promised 7 220 places.

49. Mr TAM Yiu-chung suggested that the Administration should tackle the overcrowding problem in female prisons at source through liaison with the Mainland authorities to control the issuance of double-entry permits to women who had been arrested and/prosecuted for prostitution in Hong Kong.

### Environmental impact of the proposed prison complex

50. Referring to Annex C of Enclosure 4 to the paper, Mr WONG Yung-kan expressed concern about the impact of the proposed development on the marine ecology and fisheries resources in the surrounding waters, in particular the impact of the proposed reclamation. In this connection, he urged the Administration to conduct comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before deciding on the feasibility of the project. He also requested the Administration to work out necessary mitigation measures and reasonable compensation packages for affected fishermen. Mr TAM Yiu-chung shared Mr WONG's concerns about the possible impact of the works on the marine ecology and fishery industry, and urged the Administration to consider measures to minimize the environmental impacts at an early stage.

51. In reply, DCE advised that the feasibility study would include an EIA study to identify the potential environmental impacts arising from the development and to determine the environmental acceptability of the project. The

public, including green groups and the fishery industry, would be consulted on the EIA report.

52. Ms Emily LAU declared interest as a member of the Conservancy Association. She pointed out that from the numerous submissions she received recently on the proposed prison development, it was obvious that the proposal was facing strong opposition from various sectors of the community, including a number of green groups and local residents. Noting that the Administration had only consulted the Island District Council (IDC) on the proposal and consultation with the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) and the public would only be conducted during the feasibility study, Ms LAU requested the Administration to consult the public and interested parties on the environmental aspects of the project before commencing the feasibility study. She commented that in view of the strong objection from the community against the proposed prison complex, she could not support the proposal of conducting a feasibility study, which might result in wastage of public funds if the prison complex proposal was subsequently turned down.

53. DSS pointed out that the proposed prison development was a Designated Project under the EIA Ordinance and it had to follow the statutory EIA process and required an environmental permit for its construction and operation. She assured members that the Administration would undertake further consultation (including consultation with the fishermen communities and interested green groups) at an early stage of the proposed feasibility study and present the report of the EIA study for public inspection in accordance with the EIA Ordinance. The ACE and IDC would also be consulted upon the completion of the EIA study.

54. Ms Emily LAU maintained her view that the Administration should consult the public and interested green group before starting the feasibility study in view of the controversial nature of the proposal. She cautioned that ignoring public views during the early planning stage of such a controversial capital works project might repeat the precedent of the controversial proposal of the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line across the wetland in Long Valley (the Long Valley incident). She reiterated that proceeding with the feasibility study without conducting proper public consultation might result in wastage of public resources.

55. The Chief Engineer/Development, Civil Engineering Department advised that the proposed feasibility study would be carried out in two stages. The first stage would last for about eight months during which the feasibility of different options of pursuing the development would be explored and public consultation would be undertaken. The findings would then be submitted to ACE for consultation and the second stage of the feasibility study would commence only if the project proposal was considered feasible based on the findings of the first stage study. DCE added that consultation with the public at the present stage would not be fruitful as some very basic information relating to the proposed works, such as the mode of transport link to be constructed, would not be available until the feasibility of different options had been explored under the first stage of the feasibility study. Ms Emily LAU, however, did not accept the Administration's

explanation and remarked that she would object to the proposal if public consultation was not undertaken in the first instance.

Admin

56. Mr IP Kwok-him, while pointing out that the manner in which the feasibility study should be conducted could be further explored, did not agree that the entire feasibility study should be shelved until public consultation with green groups had been completed. Mr IP considered that findings of the feasibility study were necessary to assess the suitability of the proposed site of the prison complex at Hei Ling Chau. He therefore suggested that the Administration should consider whether the works included in this proposal could be undertaken in stages such that the need to proceed with the later stage(s) of the works could be reviewed in the light of the result/outcome of the earlier stages of works.

57. Dr David CHU supported the proposed feasibility study in principle and commented that the justifiability of the objections raised by green groups could not be ascertained without the findings of the feasibility study.

58. Miss CHOY So-yuk expressed grave concern about the potential environmental impact of the proposed prison complex. In view of the strong opposition from green groups, she asked whether the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) was confident that this proposal would not repeat the Long Valley incident. DEP responded that according to the preliminary assessment undertaken by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the proposed prison complex probably would not have significant environmental impact. Nevertheless, the environmental impact of the proposed works on the marine habitat and water quality had to be assessed in the comprehensive EIA covered by the proposed feasibility study. DEP pointed out that the Administration needed the information from the EIA to consider the issues raised by green groups and local residents.

59. Dr LAW Chi-kwong also opined that the present proposal appeared to share similar characteristics with the Long Valley incident. While he would not object to the proposed feasibility study, Dr LAW urged the Administration to seek the views of interested green groups at an early stage of the EIA so that their concerns could be taken into consideration and adequately addressed.

60. Ms Cyd HO referred to paragraph 22 on the public consultation the Administration planned to undertake. Commenting that the Security Bureau had poor records on handling views received during public consultation, Ms HO sought information on the Administration's criteria in assessing and analyzing the views received, as well as the proper channel for the public to make written submissions, during the public consultation.

61. Mr Abraham SHEK shared Ms Emily LAU's view that the Administration should conduct public consultation at an early stage of the project proposal. He pointed out that the proposed prison complex involved a huge capital cost of \$12 billion. Given the present stringent financial position, extra care should be exercised in approving project proposal of such a scale. He suggested



that the Administration should conduct the EIA in the first instance to find out the environmental impact of the project and proceed to other parts of the feasibility study only if findings of the EIA could address the environmental concerns of the community.

62. Mr LAU Ping-cheung also expressed concern about the impact of the proposed prison complex on the marine ecology, given the large scale reclamation works involved. He asked the Administration to advise on the cost for the reclamation and to consider whether existing land could be identified in outlying islands for the prison complex to minimize the extent of reclamation.

63. The Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works) (PSETW(TW)) responded that the objections raised by green groups and local residents were primarily based on the proposed site of the prison complex, without taking into consideration other details of the proposal. PSETW(TW) said that it would not be advisable to hold up the proposed study since the findings of the study were essential for assessing the environmental impact of the project.

#### Using in-house resources for the feasibility study and site investigation

64. Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired whether the engagement of consultants was necessary for the proposed feasibility study. Given the current stringent financial position, Mr LAU opined that the Administration should try to identify in-house resources to take up the work instead. Miss CHOY So-yuk echoed Mr LAU's view. In reply, DCE explained that for the feasibility study, expertise in various areas was required for the necessary engineering, traffic and transport, marine, water supplies, sewerage, drainage and geotechnical studies. It would not be possible for any single Government department to take up the study independently. Moreover, as the EIA constituted a major part of the feasibility study and DEP would assume a supervisory role in the conduct of the EIA, it would not be appropriate for the EIA to be carried out by Government in-house staff. Responding to Mr LAU's enquiry on the possibility of deploying in-house staff for the preliminary site investigation works under paragraph 15(b), DCE said that the expertise required for carrying out the works concerned, including a geophysical survey and laboratory testing, could not be provided by in-house resources.

65. Mr LAU Kong-wah maintained his view that the Administration should try to identify in-house resources, through inter-departmental resource re-deployment, for the works covered by the feasibility study. He asked the Administration to review critically whether it was feasible to deploy in-house staff, if necessary from various departments, to take up the feasibility study for this project to obviate the engagement of consultants. Mr SIN Chung-kai shared Mr LAU's concern and urged the Administration to also critically review the necessity of engaging consultants in preparing proposals for capital works projects in future. Mr IP Kwok-him shared the views of Mr SIN and Mr LAU.

Admin

66. In response, DS(Tsy)3 and PSETW(TW) advised that there were established policy and procedures for engaging consultants for capital works projects. The proponent department should examine the availability of in-house resources, in terms of both manpower and expertise, before proposing to engage consultants to undertake works for capital works projects. DS(Tsy)3 pointed out that in identifying the availability of expertise and manpower, the Controlling Officers would take into account their operational needs and would not confine their search within their respective departments only. PSETW(TW) added that additional expertise and specialist work would be needed for conducting the site investigation, regardless of through in-house re-deployment or engagement of consultants. He pointed out that the cost-effectiveness of deploying in-house staff for the site investigation work had to be examined taking into consideration the need to make arrangements for taking up the existing workload of the staff concerned. The Administration undertook to provide information before the relevant FC meeting to confirm and explain whether it was feasible for Government in-house staff to undertake all or part of the works included in this proposal instead of engaging consultants as currently planned.

67. The item was put to vote. Ms Emily LAU requested a division. The division bell had been rung for one minute. 16 members voted for the item, 4 voted against and 1 abstained. The individual votes were as follows:

*For:*

Mr Kenneth TING  
Dr David CHU  
Mr Fred LI  
Mr CHAN Kam-lam  
Mr SIN Chung-kai  
Mr Andrew WONG  
Mr WONG Yung-kan  
Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung  
Mr LAU Kong-wah  
Ms Miriam LAU  
Dr LAW Chi-kwong  
Mr TAM Yiu-chung  
Dr TANG Siu-tong  
Mr WONG Sing-chi  
Mr IP Kwok-him  
Mr LAU Ping-cheung

*Against:*

Ms Cyd HO  
Ms Emily LAU  
Mr Abraham SHEK  
Mr Albert CHAN

*Abstained:*

Mr Eric LI

Admin &  
Clerk

68. The Chairman declared that the item was endorsed by the Subcommittee. Mr LAU Kong-wah requested that this item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting so that members had an opportunity to discuss the supplementary information provided by the Administration.

**Items PWSC(2002-03)92, 93, 94, 96 and 98**

69. As the meeting had overrun, members agreed that the remaining items on the agenda, i.e. Items PWSC(2002-03)92, 93, 94, 96 and 98 would be deferred to the next scheduled meeting on 9 April 2003 or another meeting to be arranged.

70. The meeting ended at 1:05 pm.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
8 April 2003