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Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

Minutes of the 15th meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 25 June 2003, at 9:00 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 Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
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

Member attending:

Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP

Members absent:

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP

Public officers attending:

Miss Elizabeth TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works)
Mr Thomas TSO, JP	Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) 1
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Miss Candy NIP	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mr Robin GILL, JP	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Welfare)
Mrs Carrie LAM, JP	Director of Social Welfare
Mr C H YUE, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr Patrick LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Infrastructure and Research Support)
Mr CHEUNG Hing-wah	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth and Corrections)
Mr Eddie POON	Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport)
Mrs Loran MAO	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services) ¹
Mr CHUNG Ling-hoi, JP	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Performance Arts)
Mr CHU Kin-hong	Regional Highway Engineer (New Territories Region), Highways Department
Mr Eddy YAU, JP	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services) ³
Mr Michael WONG	Deputy Secretary for Security (3)
Mr Alan CHU	Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (D)
Mr WAI Chuen	Commander, Border Division Immigration Department
Miss Margaret FONG	Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport) ³

Mr Patrick CHAN	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)6
Mr MAK Chai-kwong, JP	Director of Highways
Mr MAK Wai-pui	Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (3) Highways Department
Mr LEE Yan-ming	Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West Transport Department
Ms Ernestina WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)5
Mr E J ROBLIN, JP	Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (1) Highways Department
Miss Eliza YAU	Principal Assistant Secretary for Security (E)
Mr Arthur NG, JP	Director of Finance, Administration and Planning Hong Kong Police Force
Mr Peter C BURBIDGE-KING	Acting Regional Commander, Marine Hong Kong Police Force
Ms Barbara R WILLISON	Chief Superintendent, Planning and Development Branch, Hong Kong Police Force
Ms Annie CHOI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Environment)2
Dr Ellen CHAN	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Facilities)
Dr Thomas CHUNG	Principal Medical and Health Officer Department of Health
Mr Martin CHEUNG	Chief Civil Engineer, Housing Department Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
Mr TSAO Tak-kiang, JP	Director of Civil Engineering
Mr MOK Yick-fan, JP	Assistant Director (Civil)/Land Development Civil Engineering Department

Clerk in attendance:

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

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Matthew LOO	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)3
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant 1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant 2

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS**PWSC(2003-04)34 1SO Residential training complex for juveniles in Tuen Mun**

Members noted that the Administration had consulted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services (WS Panel) on 12 May 2003 on this project. Dr LAW Chi-kwong, Chairman of WS Panel, reported that Panel members did not raise objection to the proposed construction of a residential training complex for juveniles (the Complex) in Tuen Mun. Some members expressed concern that residents in the neighbourhood might raise objection to the project in view of the large size and capacity of the Complex, and hence members suggested that the design for the façade of the Complex should not be imposing.

2. Dr LAW Chi-kwong further reported that Panel members were also concerned that the co-location of six homes in the same Complex might give rise to management difficulties. Moreover, for such a large institution, the management was prone to set numerous routines and regulations for young offenders to follow. This would not be conducive to the social rehabilitation of the youth. In response to members' concerns, the Administration had advised that no strong opposition from the local community was anticipated, and the relevant committee of the Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) had discussed and expressed support for the project. The Administration had also assured members that the design of the Complex would ensure that offenders admitted under different ordinances would be segregated and receive services at different facilities as appropriate.

3. Ms Emily LAU said that Members had long been concerned about the high operating cost of correctional/residential homes for young offenders. Noting that the total capacity of existing homes had reduced from 552 places to 380 places due to low utilization, she asked whether the operating cost per offender had consequentially increased. She also enquired about the total number of places to be provided in the new Complex and the estimated operating cost.

4. The Director of Social Welfare (DSW) advised that in view of the comments made by some LegCo Members and by the Director of Audit on the high operating cost of the correctional/residential homes, the Administration had taken proactive measures to tackle the issue of cost in recent years. These measures included the closing down of the Castle Peak Boy's Home (CPBH) and the Pui Yin Juvenile Home, which had reduced the total capacity of the homes from 552 places in 1998-99 to the current capacity of 380. The design capacity of the proposed new Complex was 388 places, which was calculated on the basis of the highest demand for the various services for young offenders in the past few years. Notwithstanding the fluctuating demand for such services, the Administration had to ensure that there were adequate places to meet the statutory requirements under different ordinances. She added that the proposed design capacity was considered appropriate but the

Department would take account of future developments in the commissioning of the new facility.

5. DSW also advised that the co-location of the homes would reduce considerably the operating cost of the probation services, resulting in annual savings of about \$20 million, which was about 20% of the current resources deployed. As a rough estimate, the operating cost per offender would be reduced by about 20%. The pooling of manpower resources through co-location also enhanced the flexibility in staff deployment, and it was expected that the staffing strength could be reduced by about 30%. DSW added that the estimate was a conservative one without reflecting scope for outsourcing which would be constrained by the issue of surplus staff in light of feedback of the second Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

6. In response to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry about the future use of the three urban sites presently occupied by Ma Tau Wai Girls' Home, Begonia Road Juvenile Home and Pui Chi Boys' Home, DSW advised that rationalization of the land use of these sites was only one of the considerations underlying the present proposal for co-locating the six homes in a new Complex. She said that two of the three urban sites were reserved for residential development.

7. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that Members of the Democratic Party (DP) supported the construction of the Complex and he had no strong view on the location of the Complex. He echoed Dr LAW Chi-kwong's concern about the quality of training and development programmes for young offenders, and requested the Administration to discuss this issue further with WS Panel. DSW responded that with the benefit of the upgraded facilities, the Administration would embark on an integrated and evidence-based approach to address the criminogenic needs of the mal-adjusted juveniles and young offenders. Study on reorganization of the existing services was underway and the Administration would report the progress to WS Panel in due course.

8. Mr Henry WU enquired about the allocation of places for male and female offenders in the Complex, and asked whether there would be flexibility in adjusting the allocation of places to meet changing needs. DSW advised that there would be 248 places for male offenders and 140 places for female offenders in the Complex. For male offenders, 204 places would be allocated for reformatory services (156 places for long-term residents and 48 places for short-term residents) and 44 places for place of refuge and place of detention. For female offenders, 48 places would be allocated for reformatory services (32 places for long-term residents and 16 places for short-term residents) and 92 places for place of refuge and place of detention. This planned arrangement was based on the actual service demand in the past few years and the statutory requirements for places under different ordinances. DSW also advised that male and female long-term residents would be housed separately in the two dormitory blocks at the two ends of the Complex. One dormitory block would be reserved for young offenders requiring short-term probation and for illegal immigrants pending inquiry and repatriation. This arrangement would provide

flexibility to meet changes in service demand of male and female offenders.

9. In response to Mr Henry WU's enquiry on whether the open spaces for the two basketball courts/football courts could be combined for better utilization, DSW advised that the Administration had made reference to the design of similar co-located facilities for young offenders in overseas countries. It was a common design practice that certain facilities such as basketball courts/football courts for the respective use of male and female offenders were segregated. DSW also said that, in addition to the facilities for outdoor activities, adequate indoor space would be provided for small group activities of offenders. The Director of Architectural Services (D Arch S) added that an open space had been reserved for providing a green corner in the Complex and he would follow up the detailed requirements with DSW.

10. Noting that the Administration had consulted only TMDC on the project, Ms Emily LAU was concerned that some objections from the local community might not have been properly addressed. DSW advised that in view of the remote location of the site which was formerly occupied by CPBH, no strong opposition from the local community was anticipated. TMDC members had not expressed objection nor any strong view on the project. They only requested a less imposing design for the façade of the Complex and that more trees be planted on the site. The Administration would ask the contractor to take TMDC's views into account in drawing up the design.

11. Mr Henry WU referred to the consultants' fees for quantity surveying services and said that he was not aware of the need for such consultancy services in other public building projects. He enquired whether these services could be undertaken by in-house staff of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD). In reply, D Arch S advised that under normal circumstances, ArchSD would undertake the quantity surveying services. For this project, the services were contracted out because ArchSD did not have adequate manpower resources to take up the job.

12. While agreeing that a less imposing design should be adopted for the complex, Ms Emily LAU noted that no computer rendering drawing of the Complex was provided to members. D Arch S explained that since the Complex was a design-and-build project, the design of the Complex was yet to be drawn up and hence no computer rendering drawing was available at this stage. DSW added that the Administration would require the contractor to incorporate environmental protection measures in the design of the Complex. She also advised that the existing three-storey main building on the project site, which was classified as a Grade III historical building, would be refurbished and turned into one of the administration blocks of the Complex.

13. Miss CHOY So-yuk asked for more information about the felling of existing fruit trees on the project site due to land clearance. She also requested that the Administration should include tree-felling information in all future proposals

submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC). Such information should include the number of trees with height exceeding 5m and diameter exceeding 0.8m which would be hewed down under each project.

14. In reply, the Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) (PSW) advised that the Administration would normally incorporate in PWSC submissions information on old trees and trees of rare species affected by public works projects. It had been an established practice to conduct tree survey for a public works project. The tree survey normally covered the species and the girths or diameters of trees which would be affected by implementation of a particular project. Particular attention would be paid to old trees and trees of rare species. The design of a project would be revised to minimize the impacts on these trees and/or transplanting of these trees would be arranged. Felling of trees would be the last resort. Where appropriate, compensatory planting would be carried out.

Admin 15. At the request of Miss CHOY So-yuk, PSW agreed to include tree-felling information and/or planting proposals in future PWSC submissions. In particular, the following information would be included:

- (a) the number and species of trees affected;
- (b) the number of trees with height exceeding 5m and diameter exceeding 0.8m which would be hewed down; and
- (c) compensatory planting arrangements for the loss of woodland/trees, including replanting, if any.

Admin 16. The Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)³ said that owing to time constraints, it might not be feasible to incorporate the required information in the submissions for the coming PWSC meeting on 2 July 2003, but she undertook to provide the information by verbal report at the meeting or by a separate information note.

Admin 17. PSW added that the Administration had set up a Steering Committee on Greening to oversee the greening policies in Hong Kong, and he undertook to provide members with the relevant guidelines for public works projects under Government's greening policies.

18. As regards the need for tree felling for this project, D Arch S said that the fruit trees affected should not be special and/or rare species, and they were planted by some residents in the neighbourhood. He also advised that the contractor would be required to propose compensatory planting arrangements for the project.

19. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)31

**244ES
297EP**

**Secondary school in Area 38A, Sha Tin
Primary school in Area 38A, Sha Tin**

20. Mr LAU Ping-cheung declared interest that the company he worked for might bid for the contract for this project.

21. Ms Emily LAU expressed support for the proposal. In reply to her enquiry about the surplus provision of primary school places, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Infrastructure and Research Support) (PAS(IRS)) said that by the 2007/08 school year when whole-day primary schooling was implemented virtually for all students, it was estimated that there would be about 10% surplus provision of primary school places, including school places in through-train schools and private schools. A surplus provision would help inject a market mechanism to the education system, providing choices for parents and students and impetus for schools in the pursuit for self-improvements. Ms Emily LAU said that she would follow up the operation of the surplus provision at the LegCo Panel on Education.

22. In reply to Mr Henry WU, PAS(IRS) confirmed that the running track was a shared facility for the two proposed schools.

23. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed support for the proposal. He noted that a variety of facilities would be provided in the proposed schools, and was concerned whether the school sponsoring body concerned had been consulted on these facilities. In response, PAS(IRS) confirmed that the school sponsoring body participated in the design of the schools and agreed to the planned provision of facilities.

24. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the environment of the school site, in particular, the location of a refuse collection point adjacent to the school site, and asked the Administration to consider relocating it. He was also concerned that the high voltage transformer facilities near the school site might pose health hazards to the users of the school, and said that the Administration should address this issue. He also suggested planting more trees on the side of the site facing the Lower Shing Mun Road to minimize the visual impact caused by hearses using the road to the Po Fook Memorial Hall and Fu Shan Crematorium.

25. Mr LAU Ping-cheung raised concern that smoke emitted from the Fu Shan Crematorium might affect the school, and enquired whether the Administration had conducted Environmental Impact Assessment for the project. He also suggested that the Administration request the related bodies to adjust the operating hours of the crematorium to reduce the impact on the schools.

26. Ms Emily LAU supported Mr LAU Kong-wai's suggestion that the refuse collection point should be relocated. She also urged the Administration to consider building underground refuse collection points in future.

27. Mr Andrew WONG pointed out that there were some public housing estates in the vicinity of the school site, and considered that members' concerns on the environmental impacts arising from the transformer facilities and crematorium should have been addressed in the EIA for the public housing estates.

Admin

28. On members' concerns about the possible nuisance caused by the refuse collection point, PAS(IRS) said that he had discussed the issue with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), which had agreed to adjust the refuse collection schedule with a view to reducing the nuisance caused to the schools. Nevertheless, he undertook to follow-up with FEHD on the feasibility of relocating the refuse collection point and to report the outcome to members before the relevant Finance Committee (FC) meeting. PAS(IRS) also undertook to follow-up Mr LAU Ping-cheung's suggestion about the operating hours of the crematorium with the Po Fook Memorial Hall. D Arch S also advised that the Administration had conducted Preliminary Environmental Reviews for the project and it was concluded that the site was suitable for school development, and the transformer facilities and crematorium would not cause significant environmental problems. As regards Mr LAU Kong-wah's suggestion that more trees should be planted on the site, D Arch S agreed to follow-up the suggestion with the contractor with a view to minimizing the visual impacts caused by hearses.

29. In response to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry about the general design of schools, PAS(IRS) advised that schools completed in 2005 and beyond would generally adopt a non-standard design.

30. Mr Henry WU referred to the reference cost of schools and enquired about the need to commission consultants for contract administration and site supervision for the project. In reply, D Arch S advised that ArchSD would provide these services under normal circumstances. For this project, the services were contracted out because ArchSD did not have adequate in-house manpower resources to provide the services.

31. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)27	258ES	Secondary school in Area 104, Tin Shui Wai
	321EP	Primary school in Area 104, Tin Shui Wai

32. Mr TAM Yiu-chung commented that the Administration's planning of school place provision for Tin Shui Wai (TSW) had failed to meet the demand of the district. Most students in TSW north had been allocated to schools in the southern region, and the resulted transportation expenses had aggravated the financial burden of the parents. In reply to his enquiry about the estimated annual recurrent

expenditures of the proposed schools, PAS(IRS) advised that the estimated annual recurrent expenditure of \$42.6 million for the secondary school and \$23.7 million for the primary school had included staff cost and the maintenance cost for the school premises.

33. Mr TAM Yiu-chung suggested that to better utilize the facilities in the new schools, the Administration should open these facilities for use by the local community during non-school hours. PAS(IRS) responded that the Administration would sign services agreements with aided schools. Under the terms of the agreements, the buildings and facilities unless not practicable should be made available for community and other activities in accordance with the schedules of charges issued by the Education and Manpower Bureau.

34. On Ms Emily LAU's concern whether the public was well-informed of the hiring arrangements of school accommodation for community activities, PAS(IRS) advised that the Administration had issued guidelines to schools for the hiring of school accommodation which included recommended hiring rates. Relevant information had also been uploaded onto the Government's Website for public information.

35. Mr Henry WU noted that no consultants would be commissioned for the proposed school projects. In reply to his enquiry, D Arch S said that in order to meet the imminent need for school places in TSW, the Administration had advanced this project by one year for completion in 2005. To facilitate the expeditious implementation of the project, the Administration had adopted the standard school design for the schools and hence there was no need to engage consultants for the design of the schools. D Arch S also affirmed that services would be contracted out only when ArchSD did not have adequate in-house manpower resources or the necessary expertise to undertake the services.

36. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether the schools would be used as a through-train school. PAS(IRS) advised that the primary school had been allocated to Chiu Yang Primary School of Hong Kong for the implementation of whole-day primary schooling, but for the secondary school, the Administration was in the course of identifying a suitable school sponsoring body. At this stage, only the carpark and basketball court had been designated as common facilities for both schools. When the school sponsoring body for the secondary school was confirmed, the Administration would further discuss with the school sponsoring bodies of the two schools to see if the sharing of other facilities was desired.

37. In response to Mr Henry WU, D Arch S confirmed that provision of flagpoles did not involve technical problems and it was up to individual schools to decide on such provision.

38. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)30 306EP Primary school at Shek Pai Street, Kwai Chung

39. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the progress of implementation of whole-day primary schooling in Kwai Chung District. In reply, PAS(IRS) advised that in addition to the proposed primary school at Shek Pai Street, three school sites had been identified for further school construction projects. The Administration planned to complete all these projects by the 2007/08 school year so that whole-day primary schooling could be fully implemented in the district.

40. Noting that dancing was popular among young people, Ms Emily LAU enquired whether dancing facilities would be provided in schools. PAS(IRS) advised that student activity centres, multi-purpose areas and assembly halls in schools would provide adequate space for dancing activities.

41. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)32 97ET Reprovisioning of Society of Boys' Centres Shing Tak Centre School at New Clear Water Bay Road, Kwun Tong

42. Mr Kenneth TING expressed support for the proposal. He was however concerned about the huge increase in the annual recurrent expenditure of the school from about \$17.8 million to \$24.8 million upon reprovisioning. PAS(IRS) advised that the increase in annual recurrent expenditure was mainly attributable to the increase in school places from 105 to 150 and the additional maintenance costs required for the enlarged school premises after reprovisioning.

Admin

43. Ms CHOY So-yuk reiterated her concern about the tree-felling information for public works projects. In response, PSW undertook to provide members with the tree-felling information for the projects considered by PWSC at this meeting before these projects were considered at the relevant FC meeting.

44. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)33 379RO Cherry Street Park, Tai Kok Tsui

45. Ms Emily LAU stated support for the provision of more public open spaces in Hong Kong. As regards Yau Tsim Mong District, she noted that the existing provision of public open spaces for the district was only 396 000 square metres (m²) which was far from meeting the standard provision of 520 000 m² under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. She therefore opined that where possible, more public open space should be provided in Yau Tsim Mong District. Referring to

the layout plan of the proposed Cherry Street Park (the Park), she enquired about the designated land uses of the G.I.C. site in the middle of the site for the Park, the site between Hoi Fu Court and the Tai Chi area at the northern part of the Park, and the site next to the 7-a-side artificial turf football pitch at the southern part of the Park. She asked whether it was possible to incorporate these sites into the Park.

46. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sports) (PAS(R&S)) advised that the G.I.C. site was reserved for school development, and the other two sites were designated for residential or other uses. He said that he agreed with Ms LAU that the site for the Park was not entirely satisfactory. However, it would take quite some time to apply for changes to the designated land uses of the G.I.C. site and the other two adjacent sites. In order to meet the pressing need to provide more leisure and recreational facilities in the district, the Administration considered it more desirable to implement the project without delay by utilizing the available space to provide the Park to relieve the current shortfall. He further said that the Administration had reviewed the provision of leisure and recreational facilities in the district and proposed to include a 7-a-side artificial turf football pitch, basketball cum volleyball courts and tennis courts in the Park, as there were serious shortfalls of these facilities in the district. Facilities for children and the elderly would also be provided in the Park. The Administration expected that the Park, with both active and passive recreational facilities, would benefit about 50 000 residents, and about 60% of these residents were living in public housing estates and estates under the Home Ownership Scheme.

47. While concurring that the provision of leisure and recreational facilities for Yau Tsim Mong District should not be delayed, Ms Emily LAU was not convinced that the three sites she mentioned above could not be incorporated into the Park. She considered it unreasonable to have a school in the middle of the Park. The use of the two residential areas should also be reviewed.

48. Mr WONG Sing-chi shared Ms Emily LAU's view that an integrated and larger site should be allocated for the Park, but he considered that the project should not be delayed in order to meet the pressing need of residents in the district. He also opined that more trees should be planted in the Park to alleviate the noise and air pollution generated by the road traffic in the vicinity.

49. Mr James TO said that Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) had studied the proposal and unanimously urged the Administration to develop the Park expeditiously despite the unsatisfactory site. Mr TO said that in view of YTMDC's position, he would support the present proposal but he would still urge the Administration to actively consider incorporating the G.I.C. site into the Park. He also pointed out that the small patch of land next to the toilets, changing rooms and management office at the northern part of the Park was reserved for a petrol filling station. He considered it highly undesirable to have a petrol filling station so located and requested the Administration to reconsider it.

Admin

Admin

50. In response, the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands)¹ (PS(PL)) said that in planning for open spaces, the Administration would try to maintain the continuity and integrity of the sites concerned as far as possible. Since he did not have the full details regarding the case in question, he undertook to check the commitments made in respect of the G.I.C. site and the other two sites mentioned by Ms Emily LAU and advise on the feasibility to incorporate these sites into the Park before the relevant FC meeting. He also undertook to review the planned land use of the small patch of land referred to by Mr TO.

51. In this connection, Mr James TO supplemented that during the YTMDC's discussion of the proposal, the majority of YTMDC members opined that the G.I.C. site should be incorporated into the Park. All YTMDC members unanimously supported the relocation of the planned petrol filling station, but did not express strong views on whether the two sites designated as residential areas should be incorporated into the Park.

52. Miss CHOY So-yuk commented that the size and integrity in the design of a park would affect its level of patronage. Many leisure and recreational facilities were underutilized because their designs were not user-friendly. She suggested that if it was necessary to retain the G.I.C. site, the G.I.C. site should be relocated so that the Park would not be divided into two parts. If such relocation was not feasible, the G.I.C. site should be temporarily incorporated into the Park before the development on it took place. Miss CHOY also opined that some passageways connecting the northern and southern parts of the Park should be provided. PAS(R&S) advised that there would be passageways across the G.I.C. site connecting the northern and southern parts of the Park.

53. Noting that the size of the G.I.C. site was smaller than a 7-a-side artificial turf football pitch, Mr Henry WU doubted if it was suitable and adequate for school development. He also pointed out that the current arrangement of dividing the Park into two parts would create management problems. Mr WU supported other members' views that the G.I.C. site should be incorporated into the Park.

Admin

54. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether the northern and southern parts of the Park would be developed by phases so that some facilities would be open to the public without awaiting the completion of the whole Park. D Arch S advised that the construction works would take about 22 months for completion in August 2005. The Administration had no plan to develop the Park by phases, but he agreed to follow-up Mr YEUNG's suggestion.

55. Noting that the proposed Park was located in the new reclamation area which was far away from Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei, Ms Emily LAU and Miss CHOY So-yuk enquired whether adequate facilities would be provided for residents from these two districts to access the Park. In response, PAS(R&S) said that three footbridges would be provided. One would end at the G.I.C. site in the middle of the

project site, and the other two would be located near the Tai Chi area at the northern part of the Park and the 7-a-side artificial turf football pitch at the southern part of the Park respectively. PAS(R&S) added that residents in Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei might make use of the leisure and recreational facilities provided in the existing Anchor Street Playground. The proposed Cherry Street Park was planned to serve mainly residents and students in the new reclamation area.

56. Ms Emily LAU and Miss CHOY So-yuk opined that the Administration should consider providing more footbridges for residents in Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei to facilitate their easy and convenient access to the Park. In response, PS(PL) pointed out that the site of the Park was within five to eight minutes' walking distance from Mong Kok or Yau Ma Tei. He pointed out that the capital cost of a standard footbridge could be as high as some \$100 million, and hence provision of additional footbridges to facilitate convenient access to the Park had to be carefully considered.

Clerk
Admin

57. The item was voted on and endorsed. Ms Emily LAU requested to separate the discussion and voting of this agenda item from other Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) items at the relevant FC meeting.

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS

PWSC(2003-04)42 383RO Additional open space adjacent to Tsuen Wan Town Hall

58. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)43 243RS Indoor recreation centre in Area 17, Tin Shui Wai

59. Mr Henry WU opined that there should be passageways to connect the proposed indoor recreation centre and the adjacent football pitch in view of their similar nature. In response, the Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services)³ said that the football pitch was managed by the Housing Department and it was fenced off. However, some passageways connecting the indoor recreation centre and the football pitch would be provided.

60. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)26**151TB****Installation of air-conditioning system at the Lo Wu Cross Boundary Footbridge**

61. Members noted that the Administration had consulted LegCo Panel on Security (Security Panel) on this project on 6 May 2003. Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of the Security Panel, reported that all members present at the meeting supported the proposed installation of air-conditioning system at the Lo Wu Cross Boundary Footbridge (LW Footbridge). The Administration had also undertaken to consider some members' suggestion that the exterior walls of LW Footbridge could be rented out for advertisements after it was enclosed in order to generate some income.

62. Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the proposal and sought clarification on the total estimated capital cost of the project and the "equal cost sharing" basis that the Administration had agreed with the Mainland authorities. She also asked whether the actual construction unit cost was \$23,478 per m² of construction floor area (CFA) or should be two times the amount.

63. In reply, PSTW and D Arch S advised that according to the agreement between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) and the Mainland authorities, the improvement works would be carried out on the basis of uniform design and both parties would fund their own part of the project. The estimated capital cost of \$39.7 million represented the capital cost for the section of the LW Footbridge within the boundary of HKSAR and was based on the price factors in Shenzhen. The estimated construction unit cost for the Hong Kong section was \$23,478 per m² of CFA.

64. Mr Albert CHAN said that he supported the proposed improvements to the LW Footbridge but reiterated his objection to entrusting the HKSAR's section of the footbridge to the Shenzhen Authorities. He considered that the Administration had not given due consideration to the unemployment problem in Hong Kong and adopted the entrustment arrangement for the sake of administrative convenience only. He also asked for more details about the downward adjustment of the capital cost from \$50.35 million based on the price factors in Hong Kong to \$39.7 million based on the price factors in Shenzhen.

65. In reply, the Deputy Secretary for Security (3) and D Arch S advised that the downward adjustment in the estimated capital cost was to take into account the price differences between Hong Kong and the Mainland. As a uniform design would be adopted for the entire footbridge, there were no large differences in the prices for construction materials and facilities used, and the main disparity would be the wages of workers of the two sides.

66. Mr Albert CHAN requested the Administration to provide the estimated capital cost of the Shenzhen section of LW Footbridge. D Arch S said that the

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respective estimated capital costs for the Hong Kong section and the Shenzhen section of the LW Footbridge would be roughly the same given the uniform design, except that the two sides would procure and install their own air-conditioning systems, and one side footbridge linking the LW Footbridge and Lo Wu Terminal Building would be constructed in the Hong Kong side. At the request of Mr CHAN, D Arch S agreed to provide the estimated total capital cost and the unit construction cost of the Shenzhen section of the LW Footbridge, and the respective contract prices of the Hong Kong section and the Shenzhen section after the tendering exercise.

67. The item was voted on and endorsed. Mr Albert CHAN requested that his objection to the proposal be recorded.

HEAD 706 - HIGHWAYS

PWSC(2003-04)44 788TH New boundary bridge between Lok Ma Chau and Huanggang

68. Members noted that the Administration had consulted LegCo Panel on Transport (Transport Panel) on this project on 23 May 2003. On behalf of Ms Miriam LAU, Chairman of Transport Panel, the Chairman of PWSC reported that members of Transport Panel generally agreed to the need to the proposed boundary bridge to facilitate logistics development in Hong Kong and to cope with the growth of traffic at the Lok Ma Chau boundary crossing. However, some members had expressed grave concern that the arrangement to entrust the design and construction of the HKSAR bridge section to the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government (SMPG) would seriously undermine local employment opportunities. At the request of members, the Administration had provided supplementary information on the entrustment arrangement and the traffic situation at San Tin Public Transport Interchange (PTI) after the meeting.

69. Mr LAU Kong-wah raised concern about the measures to be taken by the Administration to improve the local road network so as to cope with the increasing traffic brought by the new boundary bridge. The Deputy Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)³ (DS(T)³) referred to the supplementary information provided to the Transport Panel and advised members on the improvement measures being planned or implemented in the vicinity of the San Tin PTI. She said that the 2 480 car parking spaces available in the area were considered sufficient to meet the off-street parking demand in the San Tin area but illegal parking was observed from time to time on the side roads off Castle Peak Road. The Police had stepped up enforcement actions against illegal parking on these roads. The Administration also planned to erect barriers along the pavement of Lok Ma Chau Road and Chau Tau Road to prevent illegal parking.

70. DS(T)³ also said that the Administration planned to set up a passenger service centre in the San Tin PTI and to provide two additional loading/unloading

bays for LMC border shuttle buses (Yellow Bus). The relevant works were scheduled for completion in late 2003. The lighting and air-conditioning facilities in San Tin PTI would also be improved. Consideration was being given to redesigning the traffic routing of Yellow Bus within the San Tin PTI to improve the circulation of vehicles within the PTI.

71. Mr LAU Kong-wah commented that the measures outlined by the Administration were mainly targeted at the traffic flow within the PTI. He requested the Administration to consider more effective measures to address the traffic congestion problems in the vicinity of the San Tin PTI. He also pointed out that pedestrian road crossing facilities and U-turn facilities were inadequate. The road surface was also uneven and there were frequent flooding incidents in the area.

72. In response, DS(T)3 advised members that the Administration had considered measures to alleviate traffic congestion near the San Tin PTI. In particular, the San Tin section of Castle Peak Road between the San Tin PTI and the slip road of the San Tin Interchange would be widened from two to three lanes to improve the traffic condition in the area. Works had commenced in mid October 2002 for completion in December 2003. The southbound carriageway of San Sham Road at its approach to the elevated roundabout of the San Tin Interchange would also be widened from two to three lanes to improve the junction capacity. Relevant works were scheduled to start in early 2004 for completion by end 2004. To further improve the traffic situation, the westbound carriageway of Fanling Highway at its approach to the San Tin Interchange would also be widened to two lanes with one lane designated for cargo trucks and lorries. Relevant works were scheduled for commencement in 2005 and completion in 2007. At members' request, DS(T)3 agreed to provide supplementary information with plan(s) on measures to address the traffic problems in the vicinity of the San Tin PTI.

Admin

73. Mr Kenneth TING expressed support for the proposal and pointed out that there were around 53 000 Hong Kong companies in Pearl River Delta Area and each company had suffered from an average loss of \$100,000 each year due to traffic congestion at boundary crossings. He also enquired whether there would be savings through the proposed entrustment arrangement. The Director of Highways (DHy) replied that savings could be achieved but the 90-metre (m) bridge section of the HKSAR to be entrusted to SMPG constituted only a small part of the project, and the majority of the works including the construction of a 250-m long approach viaduct would be undertaken by the HKSAR Government.

74. Mr Albert CHAN reiterated his objection to the entrustment arrangement and stated that he would not support the proposal.

75. Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the proposal but expressed grave concern about the impacts of the construction works on the cross-boundary traffic. She urged the Administration to take measures to ensure that the cross-boundary traffic in San Tin would not be unduly affected. DHy advised that the construction

works would not affect the northbound cross-boundary traffic, but some traffic diversion measures would be required for the southbound traffic. No serious traffic congestion was anticipated during the construction period. Some space within the existing vehicle holding area to the east of the bridge could be made use for diverting the traffic of the affected southbound lanes. He further advised that the Administration would require the contractor to propose traffic diversion measures for endorsement by the Transport Department and the Police. The requirements would be clearly stipulated in the works contract.

Admin

76. Ms Miriam LAU suggested that the construction works at those areas which would seriously affect cross-boundary traffic should be carried out at night time. She also considered that construction works during very busy periods such as the days before and after long holidays should be avoided. DHy agreed to consider Ms LAU's suggestions.

77. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**PWSC(2003-04)45 718TH Improvement to Tung Chung Road
between Lung Tseng Tau and Cheung
Sha**

78. Members noted that the Administration had consulted Transport Panel on 19 January 2001 and 25 January 2002 on the proposed improvements to Tung Chung Road (TCR). An information paper on the proposed improvements to the section of TCR between Lung Tseng Tau and Cheung Sha was also circulated to members of the Transport Panel on 20 May 2003.

79. Ms Emily LAU said that she had recently received many objections from members of the public to the proposed improvements to TCR, and she had referred these objections to the Administration for follow-up actions. She opined that the Administration should further explain the project to these objectors to address their concerns. In response, DHy said that the Administration had conducted a lengthy consultation on this project. The Islands District Council (IDC) had been consulted on 11 January 2001, 15 October 2001 and 10 June 2002, and six progress reports had been submitted to IDC between 2001 and 2003. With the assistance of IDC, the Administration had also conducted briefings for the residents in Tung Chung on the project. DHy said that while the majority of the residents in Tung Chung supported the project and called for its early completion, some residents objected to the project as they were concerned that it would affect the tranquil living environment in Tung Chung. As regards Ms LAU's recent referrals, DHy undertook to meet those residents and explain the project to them.

80. Ms Emily LAU said that some residents had complained that the Administration had not given adequate time for them to raise their objections to the project. DHy said that the Administration had followed the statutory requirement to

gazette the road scheme for the proposed improvement works and received 13 objections. In addition to the consultation with IDC, the Administration had conducted briefings for residents in Cheung Sha on the project. There was also wide media coverage on the project, and all related information had been uploaded onto the Government's Website for public inspection.

81. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for the improvement project on account of the need to improve the safety on TCR. In response to his enquiry about the progress of the improvement works to widen TCR between Pa Mei and Lung Tseng Tau, DHy advised that the works were in progress and were planned for completion by December 2003.

82. Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired whether the restrictions on vehicular access to TCR would be relaxed after the improvement works. DHy advised that the Administration was operating a dual-permit system restricting the number of vehicles using TCR. The system included the TCR Prohibited Zone Permit System and the Lantau Closed Road Permit System. Vehicles required both permits to travel on TCR between Shek Mun Kap Road and South Lantau Road from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm everyday. Vehicles possessing the Lantau Closed Road Permit could travel on that section of TCR outside the above period. Vehicles exceeding 5.5 tones were generally banned from using that section of TCR. DHy advised that the Administration was considering relaxing the restrictions imposed under the TCR Prohibited Zone Permit System after the improvement works. The Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West (CTE(NTW)) advised that the study on traffic arrangement of TCR after its improvement was in progress. The Administration was inclined to retain the Lantau Closed Road Permit System as South Lantau was a conservation area and hence there was a need to limit the traffic volume in this area.

83. While sharing the need to restrict the number of vehicles using TCR, Mr SIN Chung-kai considered that TCR should be open to all vehicles. He suggested that some other restrictive measures such as levying tolls on vehicles without permits be considered. DHy responded that the Administration needed to examine Mr SIN's suggestion as it might affect the overall development in South Lantau as well as the capacity of South Lantau Road to meet the increased traffic demand.

Admin

84. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the proposal. In response to his enquiry about the compensation for trees felled due to the project works, DHy advised that the Administration would replant 25 hectares to compensate for the trees felled. On Mr CHAN's suggestion that there should be a theme in designing the landscaping of the road and selecting the species of trees to be planted, DHy agreed to convey Mr CHAN's idea to the landscape architects responsible for the landscaping design of the project.

Admin

85. Mr Albert CHAN enquired whether the Administration would provide a PTI at Cheung Sha in anticipation of the need of Tung Chung residents for interchange services. DHy and CTE(NTW) said that some lay-bys would be provided near the roundabout at Cheung Sha. Owing to the site constraints of the roundabout that the adjacent land was not flat, only a limited number of parking spaces would be provided. CTE(NTW) also said that there would be public toilet facilities near the Cheung Sha roundabout.

Admin

86. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that in the past three years, he had repeatedly discussed with the Administration the need for a PTI and car parking facilities for interchange at Cheung Sha to serve Tung Chung residents. He was not satisfied that the Administration had not taken into account residents' need for a PTI and car parking facilities for interchange in the design of this road improvement project. In response to Mr CHAN's request, DHy and CTE(NTW) agreed to advise on the number of car parking spaces to be provided near the roundabout at Cheung Sha, and whether public toilet facilities would be provided there.

Admin

87. Mr Henry WU was of the view that the design of the lighting facilities along TCR should be in harmony with the environment. The Chairman and Ms Emily LAU shared Mr WU's view and said that diversity of designs in these facilities was preferred. DHy undertook to follow-up members' view with relevant departments.

88. Noting that the Administration had not sought the Chief Executive-in-Council's authorization of the road scheme but would seek the authorization before this proposal was submitted to FC, Ms Emily LAU sought explanation for this unusual arrangement. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)5 (PAS(T)5) advised that the project was gazetted on 1 November 2002. Upon the expiry of the two-month period allowed for the public to raise objections, it was necessary for the Administration to spend the past six months to resolve the objections received. To enable the works to commence by the end of 2003 to meet the pressing traffic demand on TCR, the Administration would need to obtain funding approval from FC before the end of the current LegCo session. PAS(T)5 stressed that this was an exceptional arrangement and the Administration would ensure that it would obtain the Chief Executive-in-Council's authorisation of the project prior to the FC meeting.

89. Ms Emily LAU said that she appreciated the urgency of the project, but the Administration should have made better planning to ensure that the established procedures were duly followed. She opined that any similar exceptional arrangement should be avoided in the future. PAS(T)5 noted Ms LAU's views.

90. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS**PWSC(2003-04)25 242LP Marine Police Outer Waters District Headquarters and Marine Police North Division at Ma Liu Shui, Sha Tin**

91. Members noted that the Administration had consulted the Security Panel on 6 March and 6 May 2003 on the construction of a purpose-built complex to accommodate the Marine Police Outer Waters District Headquarters (MOWDIST HQs) and Marine Police North Division (MNDIV). Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of Security Panel, advised that members of Security Panel supported the proposal in principle. At the meeting on 6 March 2003, members requested the Administration to explore other viable options in place of the proposed project, having regard to the stringent financial position of the Government. The Administration had subsequently re-examined the scope of the project to identify possible reduction in project cost, and reported to the Security Panel on 6 May 2003 that savings in the region of \$10 to \$13 million could be achieved. All members present at the meeting had expressed support for the proposal, except for Mr James TO who had stated the reservation of Members of the Democratic Party (DP) about the proposal.

92. Mr James TO said that Members of DP agreed that the existing accommodation of MNDIV was not satisfactory but considered that it was still marginally serviceable and there was no urgency to implement the project. Despite the high maintenance cost required and more than \$4 million had been spent in the past five years to sustain the serviceability of the building, Members of DP considered that the project should be withheld for a few years in view of the stringent financial situation of the Government.

93. The Director of Finance, Administration and Planning (D, FA&P) of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) responded that the existing temporary accommodation of MNDIV was converted from a non purpose-built building constructed about 20 years ago, and the present condition of the accommodation was far below acceptable standards. The old and deteriorating condition of the building structure had made any attempt to upgrade the operational facilities difficult. The shortfall of adequate accommodation and spaces for frontline staff had also made their working environment highly undesirable. D, FA&P said that although the building was still serviceable, it had reached the end of its economic life span, and the maintenance of the building was no longer cost-effective. In view of members' concerns raised at the Security Panel, the Administration had re-examined the project scope and as a result the project estimate had been adjusted downward.

94. Mr Henry WU noted that MNDIV was operating a total of 12 launches of various types but no pier had been included in the project site of the new complex. The Regional Commander, Marine (RC/M) advised that the launches could be

berthed at the flat waterfront facing Sha Tin Hoi and there was no need to provide special landing facilities for these launches in the complex.

Admin

95. Mr Henry WU was also concerned about the huge increase in annual recurrent expenditure from \$2.2 million for the existing accommodation to \$4.1 million for the new complex. In response, D, FA&P advised that a higher recurrent expenditure for the new complex was attributable to the much bigger size of the proposed new complex. HKPF would absorb the additional recurrent expenditure by redeployment of existing resources. At Mr WU's request, D, FA&P agreed to provide breakdowns on the annual recurrent expenditure incurred by MOWDIST HQs and MNDIV before and after the reprovisioning exercise.

96. Noting that the existing fitness room was much larger than the one proposed in the new complex, Mr Henry WU enquired whether the existing accommodation had been fully utilized. D, FA&P advised that there was a shortfall of standard facilities in the existing accommodation, and HKPF had to utilize the existing facilities such as the fitness room for a variety of functions with minimum alteration works made.

97. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong supported the proposal because the existing accommodation was converted from a ferry terminal built in 1983, and the facilities could hardly meet the present-day operational needs.

Admin

98. Mr James TO noted that the size of the report room and related facilities would increase from 6m² in the existing accommodation to 103m² in the new complex. He expressed reservation about the need for such a big report room as he suspected that only a small number of cases were handled at the report room of MNDIV. He also reiterated his view that the construction of the proposed complex should be deferred. At Mr TO's request, the Administration agreed to provide the number of cases handled at the report room of MNDIV over the past few years.

99. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 705 - CIVIL ENGINEERING

PWSC(2003-04)35

70DR

Low-level radioactive waste storage facility

100. The Chairman declared that he was the Deputy Chairman of the Guangdong Daya Bay Nuclear Plant/Ling Ao Nuclear Plant Safety Consultative Committee.

101. Mr Henry WU declared that he was the Vice Chairman of the Guangdong Daya Bay Nuclear Plant/Ling Ao Nuclear Plant Safety Consultative Committee.

102. Members noted that the Administration had consulted LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) on several occasions since 1994 on the long-term management of low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) in Hong Kong. Having examined different options, the Administration had reported to EA Panel in February 2002 its plan to build a long-term storage facility for LLRW at Siu A Chau (SAC). The Panel supported the proposal. The Administration had further informed EA Panel in June 2003 its plan to submit the project proposal to PWSC for endorsement.

103. In response to Miss CHOY So-yuk's enquiry about the option of transferring LLRW to a Mainland facility (Mainland option), PAS(E)2 advised that according to the Guangdong Environmental Protection Bureau (GDEPB), the Mainland option would cost RMB¥316 million (approximately HK\$290 million) which covered the storage and disposal of the existing LLRW in Hong Kong for 80 years. However, GDEPB had not been able to provide the costs for storage and disposal of future LLRW. Compared with the Mainland option, building a long-term storage facility in Hong Kong would allow the Government more flexibility in managing future LLRW. Furthermore, the cost for the Mainland option would be a lump sum payment and this removed the possibility of any future cost reduction through efficiency gains or technological advancement in handling LLRW. In view of the above factors, the building of a LLRW storage facility at SAC was preferred. PAS(E)2 also advised that most members of EA Panel supported that Hong Kong should build its own LLRW storage facility to manage its own LLRW.

104. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the arrangements for visiting SAC after the commissioning of the LLRW storage facility. In response, PAS(E)2 advised that the radiation level outside the facility would be the same as the normal natural background. However, warning signs would be erected to advise visitors not to enter the facility compound.

105. On Miss CHOY So-yuk's concern about the visual impact of the storage facility at SAC, PAS(E)2 said that the facility only covered about 0.6 hectare of the 70-hectare SAC, and hence its visual impact would be minimal. Furthermore, the Administration had completed the Environmental Impact and Safety Assessment study on the proposed SAC facility in 1995, and would implement the recommendations made in the study on the use of materials and the height of the storage facility to minimize its visual impact.

106. Mr Henry WU expressed reservation about the need to employ a contractor to operate the storage facility and to carry out monitoring work, as he understood that the Department of Health had been monitoring the radiation levels of the existing LLRW storage facility. PAS(E)2 advised that the proposed storage facility was under a Design-Build-and-Operate contract and the contractor would operate the storage

facility for 10 years in accordance with the performance requirements laid down in the contract. In addition to the daily operation of the systems, the contractor would also be responsible for 24-hour monitoring of the LLRW storage facility and LLRW transportation. PAS(E)2 said that the existing LLRW store, being a disused air-raid tunnel, did not require regular maintenance apart from the structure. Furthermore, although radiation monitoring was recorded continuously, there was no arrangements for 24-hour security surveillance. The contractor would provide these services in the new facility at SAC. Mr WU doubted the need to provide regular maintenance for the storage facility, and maintained his view that the Administration should take up the monitoring work.

107. In response to Mr Henry WU's enquiry about the radiation level of the existing LLRW storage facility in the disused air-raid tunnel at Queen's Road East, PAS(E)2 advised that the Administration had been monitoring the radiation levels in the vicinity of the tunnel and found that they were within the normal background levels of Hong Kong.

108. Mr LAW Chi-kwong said that Members of DP supported the proposal and reiterated their view that it was inappropriate to transfer LLRW to the Mainland. Ms Emily LAU said that she shared this view.

109. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 711 - HOUSING

PWSC(2003-04)36

571CL

Site formation at Lung Wah Street

110. Mr IP Kwok-him recapped that residents in the district had initially objected to the site formation at Lung Wah Street for private housing development as the works involved the leveling of a natural hillside into a building platform. The project was subsequently supported because the Administration had given assurance that the site would be used for urban renewal in the Western District by providing rehousing flats. Mr IP said that he would support the present proposal to increase the approved project estimate as the project had already commenced, but he urged that the Administration should be more responsive to public views on such large-scaled public works projects in future.

111. Ms Emily LAU pointed out that it was rare that the tender outturn price for a public works project was higher than the approved estimate, and enquired about the underlying reasons. In response, the Director of Civil Engineering (DCE) advised that the Administration had initially expected that tenderers would be more aggressive in making their tender bids given the intense competition in the market. However, the tender prices turned out to be more conservative, which probably reflected that tenderers were cautious about the difficult site and the tight construction programme.

112. In reply to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry on whether the required additional works were unpredictable, DCE briefly explained the required additional works set out in paragraphs 6 to 8 of the Administration's paper. He pointed out that for the purposes of establishing the feasibility of the project and estimating the project cost, the Administration had carried out site investigation works on several locations of the site to estimate the quantities of rock that needed to be excavated for piling works. As the project site was on the hillside where the profile of rock varied greatly, it was found during construction that the amount of rock needed to be excavated exceeded the original estimation. The profile of rock in areas not covered by site investigation boreholes was much higher than the levels assumed at the design stage. This was the main reason for the increase in project cost.

113. In view of the technical difficulties of the project and public objections, Ms LAU commented that the Administration should not have pursued this project at the beginning. In reply to her enquiry, the Chief Civil Engineer of Housing Department advised that the site was previously planned to facilitate urban renewal by providing rehousing flats and was designated as Residential (Group B) in the Outline Zoning Plan. The Administration would consult the Central and Western District Council if any change in the land use of this site was proposed.

114. Miss CHOY So-yuk was concerned about the condition of the old banyan tree preserved at the site. She said that during her recent visit to the site, she found that many main branches of the tree had been trimmed away. She urged the Administration to take measures to protect the tree. In response, DCE advised that as required in the contract of the project, the contractor had appointed an independent botanical scientist to monitor the health of the tree and submit monthly report to the Administration on the tree condition. DCE said that he had visited the site recently and noted that the tree remained healthy.

115. In response to Miss CHOY So-yuk's enquiry about the need of the retaining walls, DCE advised that the retaining walls were necessary, as there were many slopes in the site. These retaining walls could not be replaced by other measures such as planting trees on these slopes. As regards Miss CHOY's suggestion to plant banyan trees on the retaining walls facing residential areas, DCE advised that the Administration would arrange to landscape the retaining walls, and he would consult the landscape architect on the suitable types of trees and plants, including banyan trees.

116. The item was voted on and endorsed.

117. The meeting ended at 1:10 pm.