

LegCo Panel on Health Services

Remodelling of the Tuen Mun Polyclinic Building for the Establishment of an Ophthalmic Centre

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the remodelling of the Tuen Mun Polyclinic (TMPC) Building for the establishment of an ophthalmic centre.

Justifications for the Remodelling Project

2. At present, the Hospital Authority (HA) provides medical services for Yuen Long and Tuen Mun districts through its New Territories West (NTW) hospital cluster, which comprises Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH), Pok Oi Hospital (POH), Castle Peak Hospital and Siu Lam Hospital. Yuen Long Yung Fung Shee Ophthalmic Centre (YLYFSOC), which is under the management of TMH, is the key ophthalmic outpatient clinic providing comprehensive ophthalmic services to residents in the North West New Territories (NWNT) and serves as a major referral centre for secondary and tertiary ophthalmic care of the region.

3. YLYFSOC was set up in the late 1970s with a planned total annual patronage of about 30 000 attendances / operations only. Over the years, the demand for ophthalmic services in the NWNT has grown tremendously. The total annual throughput of YLYFSOC in 2001-02 amounted to 106 954 specialist outpatient (SOP) attendances, 1 158 major operations, 531 intermediate operations and 2 843 minor operations, and was four times the originally planned capacity. Compared with the throughput of 71 728 SOP attendances, 912 major operations, 281 intermediate operations and 2 095 minor operations in 1996-97, service volume has increased by 50%. According to the latest projections of the Census and Statistics Department, the population in the NTW cluster will increase by 15% from 1 062 500 in 2002 to 1 216 800 in 2010. The existing facilities of YLYFSOC are grossly inadequate in terms of space, provision and design to cope with the high service demand and the present-day service requirements, not to mention the future service demand. For instance, with only four consultation rooms, two to three doctors have to share a consultation room in providing consultations and treatment to patients, thus compromising the privacy of

patients. As there is only one operating theatre, the average waiting time for operations has been unreasonably long: 24 months for major operations and 26 months for intermediate / minor operations.

4. The expansion of YLYFSOC to cope with the increasing demand for ophthalmic services in the NTW cluster has been long overdue. We have considered expanding YLYFSOC in-situ. This is however not feasible as there are no vacant premises in the building where the centre is currently located. On the other hand, vacant premises are available at the TMPC Building following the relocation of TMPC to TMH upon the completion of the Tuen Mun Ambulatory Care Centre under 35MM “Tuen Mun Hospital – relocation of Tuen Mun Polyclinic” in end 2001. We therefore propose to refurbish the vacant premises at the TMPC Building for the reprovisioning and expansion of YLYFSOC. The new ophthalmic centre will have 12 consultation rooms and three operating theatres with an annual handling capacity of around 120 000 SOP attendances, 2 300 major operations, 600 intermediate operations and 3 200 minor operations. To provide a comprehensive range of eye services, the centre will introduce new services such as day surgery, eye electrophysiological studies and low visual aid services. Tertiary ophthalmic care in the NTW cluster and secondary ophthalmic care in Tuen Mun district would in future be provided by the new ophthalmic centre at the TMPC Building, while secondary ophthalmic care in Yuen Long district would be provided by the new eye clinic to be set up at POH upon completion of project 5ME “Redevelopment and Expansion of Pok Oi Hospital” in end 2006.

Project Scope

5. The scope of the project comprises mainly :
- (a) the refurbishment of the vacant premises at the TMPC Building for reprovisioning and expansion of YLYFSOC; and
 - (b) upgrading the existing building services (including electrical and mechanical installations, fire services installations, plumbing/drainage installations and lift services) of the entire TMPC Building, which was constructed in the 1970s, to meet the current statutory requirements and standards as well as the operational needs of the new ophthalmic centre. We shall also take the opportunity to conduct basic touching up and re-painting

works for the other floors of the TMPC Building¹ affected by the remodelling works of the ophthalmic centre.

Project Cost

6. The estimated cost of the project is in the region of \$87 million in money-of-the-day prices, of which building construction accounts for \$61 million, and furniture and equipment, \$20 million².

Public Consultation

7. HA consulted the Social Service Committee of the Tuen Mun District Council on 12 November 2002. Members of the Committee supported the proposed project.

8. HA consulted the Social Services, Housing and Publicity Committee of the Yuen Long District Council on 13 January 2003. While members of the Committee generally supported the proposed project, they raised concerns about the transportation problems to be encountered by Yuen Long residents in view of the long commuting distance between Yuen Long and the new ophthalmic centre. HA has reflected the concerns of the Yuen Long District Council to the Transport Department and requested the Department to consider enhancing the public transport service between Yuen Long and the new ophthalmic centre in Tuen Mun.

Way Forward

9. We plan to seek the approval of the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council in May 2003 to fund the project at an estimated cost of about \$87 million. Subject to FC's approval, the construction works will commence in late 2003 for completion in early 2005.

¹ The ophthalmic centre will take up about 70% of the floor area of the TMPC Building. The remaining floors house a renal dialysis centre, a Social Hygiene Clinic and the Tuen Mun Community Nursing Service Centre.

² We are in the process of finalising the project cost, and we are only able to provide rough estimates of the project cost as well as major cost components at this stage.

Advice Sought

10. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

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