

**LegCo Members' meeting with
Wan Chai District Council members
on 23 May 2002**

Issues raised by Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) members at the meeting

- (a) WCDC members gave an account of the incident in which dozens of large trees had been felled at a private site at Blue Pool Road by the owner concerned in December 2001. The incident had revealed that existing legislation was inadequate to prevent unnecessary felling of trees, and no government department seemed to have the authority to stop the felling of trees on private land. WCDC members pointed out that land leases before 1940 did not contain any clauses on tree protection.
- (b) According to WCDC members, they had not been informed of the felling of trees at Blue Pool Road, which was of quite a large scale. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had actually given permission for the tree-felling in this incident, without consulting WCDC. WCDC members considered that the Administration should review the procedure for granting approval to tree-felling applications and improve the relevant legislation. They suggested that a mechanism should be put in place to require developers and owners to notify the relevant DC of any tree felling proposal in the district.

Issues raised by LegCo Members at the meeting

- (a) LegCo Members agreed that there was inadequate legislation on tree protection. Some Members said that AFCD was concerned about protection of trees which were of rare species, whereas the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) was responsible for trees planted within five metres along roadside. They shared WCDC members' concern and pointed out that there were other tree felling incidents in Hong Kong recently.
- (b) A LegCo Member hoped that conservation of trees on private land could be covered by the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) which was being reviewed by the Government. She suggested that the Administration should also require contractors for slope maintenance service to preserve the trees while undertaking maintenance works for slopes on private land.
- (c) Some LegCo Members expressed that the issue of tree preservation on private land was complicated as it involved the right of property on such land. They suggested that the Administration could improve the existing legislation by making reference to overseas countries which had legislation on conservation of trees on private land.