

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HOUSE COMMITTEE

The Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD).

Progress

2. The Government is assessing the screened-in Proposals in detail. At the same time, the Government is conducting a public consultation exercise to help the public better understand the screened-in proposals and to facilitate an informed discussion. The public consultation, which includes exhibitions displaying the screened-in Proposals, discussion forums, briefing sessions for the Legislative Council and relevant statutory and advisory bodies, and meeting with District Councils, commenced in mid-December 2004. The public can express their views on the proposals by filling in the comment card distributed at the exhibition venues and uploaded onto the WKCD project website. In addition, views can be submitted by fax, by e-mail, by post or by participating in the discussion forums.

3. The main exhibition, after being held at the Hong Kong Science Museum since 16 December 2004, was moved to the City Hall on 5 February 2005 and will run until 28 March 2005. As at 7 February 2005, over 89 100 visits to the exhibition have been recorded. We will continue to stage smaller scale exhibitions in the districts to complement the main exhibition.

4. The Government has organised eight discussion forums between 20 December 2004 and 10 January 2005. About 1 000 people from the arts and cultural sector, professional bodies and community groups have attended.

5. The Government also arranged the screened-in proponents to present their proposals to the Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 16 December 2004, to the Town Planning Board on 20 December 2004 and to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee on

5 January 2005. The Secretary for Home Affairs has been visiting District Councils to consult them on the proposals since 25 January 2005.

6. As at 7 February 2005, more than 13 700 comment cards and 200 written submissions have been received. To enhance the credibility of and public confidence in the consultation exercise, the Government has appointed the Public Policy Research Institute of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University as an independent consultant. The consultant will analyse all views received during the public consultation exercise, including views received from comment cards, discussion forums, meetings with statutory and advisory bodies and all written submissions. It is also required to conduct three random telephone polls during the public consultation period and analyse the results to gauge and triangulate public views collected from different channels. To enhance transparency, the Government will make public all views received as long as there is no objection from the relevant authors.

Way Forward

7. Public opinion is of paramount importance for the WKCD project. The Government keeps an open mind when listening to public views, and will pay heed to public opinion and the overall and long term interests of Hong Kong when taking a decision after the completion of the public consultation. The Government will also keep the Legislative Council informed of progress of the project.

Background

8. In 1996, the then Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) carried out an extensive survey targeted at inbound tourists. Among the millions of tourists polled, 1.3 million tourists indicated that they were interested in cultural, entertainment and major events, and believed that Hong Kong should enhance the promotion of these activities among tourists. In 1998, the HKTA reported to the Legislative Council and proposed that an additional cultural and performance venue should be constructed. In the same year, the Chief Executive proposed in his policy address that Hong Kong should be developed into an Asian cultural and arts centre. One of the key plans was the project of the WKCD.

9. There have been several researches and studies relevant to the plan, including the "Cultural Facilities, a Study on their Requirements and the Formulation of New Planning Standards and Guidelines" commissioned by the Planning Department in 1999 and the "Consultancy Study for the Provision of Regional/District Cultural and Performance Facilities in Hong Kong" commissioned by the Home Affairs Bureau and Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2002. In addition, there were various subject specific surveys. We have also considered thoroughly the Policy Recommendation Report of the Culture and Heritage Commission published in 2003.

10. In April 2001, we launched an international competition on the best concept plan for development of the site. The first prize went to the concept plan submitted by a team led by Foster and Partners. We subsequently adopted this plan, with some modifications, as the basis of the project masterplan for the WKCD.

11. In September 2003, the Government launched an Invitation for Proposals (IFP) to invite submissions of Proposals from the private sector for the planning, design, financing and construction of the WKCD as an integrated development of world class arts, cultural, entertainment and commercial facilities, and for the subsequent operation, maintenance and management of those facilities. The Government has received five proposals by the close of submission on 19 June 2004. The Government has screened these proposals against the mandatory requirements and announced at the Legislative Council on 10 November 2004 the screening result.

**Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
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