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Panel on Home Affairs

**Subcommittee to Follow Up the Outstanding Leisure and
Cultural Services Projects of the Former Municipal Councils**

**Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 31 October 2005 at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Chairman)
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP

Member attending : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH

Members absent : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Public Officers attending : Home Affairs Bureau
Dr Patrick C P HO, JP
Secretary for Home Affairs

Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau

Miss Amy TSE
Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the
Treasury (Treasury) 3

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms Kitty CHOI Kit-yu, JP
Deputy Director (Administration)

Mr Eddy YAU Kwok-yin, JP
Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 3

Mr LEE Yuk-man
Acting Assistant Director (Libraries and Development)

Mrs Karen YUEN
Chief Executive Officer (Planning) 1

Mr Peter KAN
Chief Executive Officer (Planning) 2

Architectural Services Department

Mr Wilson LEE
Project Director 3

Mr Patrick HAU Hon-fai
Senior Project Manager 124

Clerk in attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Ms Amy YU
Council Secretary (2)3

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I. Election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman (if required)

Members agreed that there was no need for re-election of the Chairman of the Subcommittee.

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II. Meeting with the Administration

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)185/05-06(01) & (02) and CB(2)254/05-06(01)]

Venues for the 2009 East Asian Games and the impact of the relevant works on the implementation of the outstanding ex-Municipal Council leisure and cultural services projects

2. The Chairman informed the meeting that Hon Albert CHAN, who had withdrawn his membership of this Subcommittee, had sent her a letter expressing concern about the impact of the sports facilities projects for the 2009 East Asian Games (EAG) on the implementation of the outstanding ex-Municipal Council (Ex-MC) leisure and cultural services (LCS) projects.

[*Post-meeting note* : Hon Albert CHAN's letter tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)258/05-06(01) on 1 November 2005.]

3. The Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) said that the Administration planned to spend \$1 billion on sports facilities. The plan included \$300 million on the development of the proposed Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground and \$700 million on the refurbishment of existing facilities which would be upgraded to meet the international standards for holding the competition events for the 2009 EAG. SHA pointed out that the enhancement of existing facilities as well as development of new facilities were actually required for the long-term sports development of Hong Kong and also for use by the local community, and not just for the 2009 EAG. He said that among the existing facilities that would be upgraded and enhanced were the ageing Queen Elizabeth Stadium, Hong Kong Coliseum and Kowloon Park Indoor Swimming Pool. He added that the renovation works were necessary as a result of the ageing of venues, and the Administration had taken the opportunity to include facilities to cater for future large-scale sports events including the 2009 EAG.

4. With reference to Annex 1.2 to the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)185/05-06(01)], Deputy Director (Administration) (DD(A)) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) supplemented that existing facilities to be upgraded and enhanced included Hong Kong Stadium, Victoria Park Tennis Centre, Hong Kong Squash Centre, Lai Chi Kok Park Sports Centre, Ma On Shan Sports Centre, Shek Kip Mei Park Sports Centre, Siu Sai Wan Sports Ground, Stanley Main Beach Water Sports Centre, Tseung Kwan O Sports Centre, Western Park Sports Centre, and the three sports venues mentioned by SHA above. DD(A) said that the estimated cost for the refurbishment of these facilities took up about 20% of the total estimated cost for the 44 LCS projects in Annex 1.2 which would commence construction soon.

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Admin 5. DD(A) informed members that the Administration would consult the Panel on Home Affairs on the funding proposal on hosting the 2009 EAG in the following one to two months.

6. Mr Patrick LAU pointed out that Macau had spent \$4 billion on the venues for the ongoing 4th EAG, which was far more than the estimated budget for the 2009 EAG. He asked whether the Administration had undertaken that it would invest at least a certain amount of money for holding the 2009 EAG. SHA replied in the negative and explained that the Administration's assessment was that the various events of the 2009 EAG could be accommodated in the new sports venue to be commissioned for operation in the next few years and in existing venues with appropriate upgrading works. SHA added that the situation in Macau was different because it had to build many new facilities to hold the 4th EAG whereas Hong Kong already had many facilities which, with appropriate upgrading works, could cater for the needs of holding international events.

Admin 7. Mr Patrick LAU suggested that the enhancement works should include designs to feature local characteristics for different places in Hong Kong so that the participants and athletes of the sports events of the 2009 EAG could know more about Hong Kong and its local characteristics. SHA said that the Administration would give thought to Mr LAU's suggestion in the thematic design works. DD(A) supplemented that the Administration had conducted a visit to Athens to study the venues for hosting the Olympic Games there. She said that the Administration would consider adopting the same colour tone and thematic design for various venues selected for holding the competition events of the 2009 EAG, in order to create a coherent theme for the Games. She added that some members of the architectural sector had advised that such an approach would not cost too much money.

Admin 8. Mr Patrick LAU considered that the venue arrangement for the Olympic Games held in Athens was not a very good example for Hong Kong to make reference to because Athens had built a lot of new facilities to host the Olympic Games. He suggested that the Administration should rather learn from the experience of the Olympic Games held in Los Angeles where the government had also made use of existing facilities as far as possible to accommodate the competition events. SHA said that the Administration would consider Mr LAU's view.

9. Mr WONG Kwok-hing sought clarification as to whether the above enhancement works would delay the implementation of the rest of the 44 projects in Annex 1.2. SHA responded that the Administration would be proceeding to implement the projects mentioned by DD(A) in paragraph 4 above with or without the 2009 EAG, and it had only taken the opportunity to include facilities to cater for the 2009 EAG. He confirmed that the

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enhancement works would not affect the implementation of the other projects. Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 3 (DS(Tsy)3) pointed out that funding had been provided for the 44 projects and their implementation, therefore, would not be affected by works projects relating to the hosting of the 2009 EAG.

Report on the ex-MC projects

Implementation of the 25 priority projects

10. DD(A) informed members that LCSD had successfully bid for funds in the current year for the implementation of 15 out of the 25 priority projects. These 15 priority projects had been included in Annex 1.2. DD(A) added that the Administration would take forward the remaining 10 priority projects in accordance with the revised implementation schedule submitted to this Subcommittee earlier.

11. Referring to the “Improvement works to Victoria Park Tennis Centre” project [item no. 2 of Annex 2 to LC Paper No. CB(2)185/05-06(01)], Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked why the anticipated completion date had been deferred from early 2009 to mid-2009.

12. DD(A) explained that the reasons for the slight delay were to tie in with improvement works to the swimming pool complex in Victoria Park and to avoid canceling some international tournaments already scheduled to be held at relevant venues.

Level of provision of major LCS facilities as compared to the standards and guidelines in HKPSG

13. Referring to Annex 3 to LC Paper No. CB(2)185/05-06(01), the Chairman expressed serious concern about the shortfall in LCS facilities, e.g. open space and sports centres, in many districts including Sha Tin, Yuen Long and Tsuen Wan, etc. She urged the Administration to address the shortfall.

14. DD(A) explained that the planning guidelines stated in HKPSG had been formulated to provide an equitable basis for the reservation of land for recreation facilities and open space, and should be applied with reference to the situation on the ground. She invited members to note that the provision of open space, as shown in Annex 3, did not include the open space provided within public housing estates and comprehensive residential developments. She pointed out that local open space had actually been provided for residents within public housing estates and comprehensive residential developments. She informed members that according to the Housing Department (HD), a total of some 600 hectares of open space was provided within public housing estates.

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She said that the Administration would take into account the existing provision of LCS facilities in the respective districts and make reference to other relevant factors, such as the views of the District Councils (DCs) and the changing needs of the community, in considering whether to proceed with new LCS projects. In response to the Chairman's concern, DD(A) said that the Administration had accorded priority to the implementation of the "Local Open Space in Areas 25, 25A and 25B, Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long" project in order to address the shortfall in open space there. It would also take into consideration the shortfall in sports centres in Sha Tin during its review of the 74 outstanding LCS projects.

15. The Chairman considered that the table in Annex 3 failed to provide accurate information on the actual provision of open space in each district. Mr Patrick LAU said that it should be the Planning Department (PD) to compile information on the existing level of provision of LCS facilities in each district since HKPSG was drawn up by PD. DD(A) explained that PD adopted a different approach for the calculation of open space. The Chairman requested the Home Affairs Bureau to coordinate with PD and HD in compiling information on the actual provision of open space in the 18 districts and provide an updated table for this Subcommittee as well as DCs for reference. DD(A) agreed to follow up.

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16. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern about the shortfall in LCS facilities in Tung Chung to meet urgent needs arising from rapid growth in population. DD(A) responded that the Administration was fully aware of Tung Chung residents' needs for LCS facilities and had planned to provide swimming pool facilities to residents in Tung Chung as soon as possible even though the estimated future population size of Tung Chung did not meet the criterion for provision of a swimming pool complex. DD(A) further said that LCSD had reviewed the scope of the swimming pool complex project for Tung Chung and proposed that the project be implemented in two phases, as detailed in the Administration's letter dated 28 October 2005 [LC Paper No. CB(2)230/05-06(01)].

Resources spent on LCS projects before and after the dissolution of MCs

17. Referring to paragraphs 6 to 8 of the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)185/05-06(01)], Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked why the number of LCS projects which commenced construction in the period from 1995-96 to 1999-2000 had been reduced from 65 to 38 in the period from 2000-01 to 2004-05, and the project costs had correspondingly decreased from \$8.347 billion during 1995-96 to 1999-2000 to \$3.495 billion during 2000-01 to 2004-05. DD(A) responded that the reduction was mainly due to the economic downturn in the past few years. She pointed out that with the general economic situation improving, LCSD had successfully bid for funds for the implementation of 15 priority projects this year, and the anticipated number of

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active LCS projects that would commence works in the next five years would increase again.

18. Mr WONG also asked why the number of minor works items implemented by LCSD during 2000-01 to 2004-05 would be reduced from 100 to 52 during 2005-06 to 2009-10. DD(A) clarified that the 52 projects were not minor works items but capital works projects which would start works in the next five years.

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19. As requested by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, DD(A) agreed to provide details of –

- (a) the 52 active LCS capital works projects which would commence construction works in the next five years during 2005-06 to 2009-10; and
- (b) the 20-plus minor works items approved in the current year, involving a total cost of \$130 million.

20. Referring to Annex 4 to the same paper, Mr LAU Wong-fat asked why no LCS capital works project started works in 2001-02. DS(Tsy)3 explained that it would normally take about two years from planning to the commencement of works for small-scale capital works projects, and it would take even longer for more complex projects. She further said that since the former MCs were dissolved in January 2000, LCSD had taken over the outstanding ex-MC projects. As the planning and design of the projects took time, it explained why shortly after the dissolution of the former MCs, i.e. in 2001-02, no LCS capital works projects started works.

Review of the 74 outstanding LCS projects

21. Mr LAU Wong-fat asked about the current position of the above review. DD(A) replied that the Administration had commenced reviewing the 74 outstanding LCS projects in consultation with DCs, which was expected to complete around January 2006 and the Administration would then report the outcome to the Subcommittee. She said that the Administration's present assessment was that about 20 of them could be taken forward in the next step. Members noted that so far the Administration had consulted some of the DCs including Sai Kung DC, North DC, Kowloon City DC, Eastern DC and Yau Tsim Mong DC. The Chairman requested Mr LAU Wong-fat to inform DCs of the ongoing consultation on the 74 outstanding projects and the Subcommittee's plan to ask the Administration to report the outcome in early 2006.

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Procedures and lead-time for implementing the 25 priority projects

22. Mr Patrick LAU referred members to the table [LC Paper No. CB(2)185/05-06(02)] setting out the procedures and lead-time for implementing the 25 priority projects. He queried why it took such a long time for the implementation of “open space” projects since they did not even involve construction of buildings. He considered it unacceptably long for the preparation of design, working drawings and tender documents for implementing libraries cum indoor recreation centres to take 18 to 22 months and for swimming pool complexes to take 20 to 22 months. He also queried why it took such a long time of 36 to 46 months for the pre-construction work for implementing libraries cum indoor recreation centres and 38 to 46 months for the pre-construction work for swimming pool complexes. Mr LAU said that if these projects were handled by the private sector, it would take at most about 24 months from the start to the construction. He considered that there was a need to expedite the procedures and shorten the lead time required for implementing the 25 priority projects in order to meet urgent service needs.

23. Project Director 3 (PD3) of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) responded that actually Government Architects also took about 24 months to prepare the design and working drawings and tender documentation of a project. He pointed out that some of the implementation procedures, such as the preparation of the Project Definition Statement, the Technical Feasibility Statement and the selection and appointment of consultants took about 14 months. He added that taking the implementation of a swimming pool complex as an example, ArchSD, like private architects, also took about 20 to 22 months for the preparation of design and working drawings, etc. However, due to other procedures such as those mentioned above, the total lead time required for the pre-construction work added up to be 38 to 46 months.

24. Mr Patrick LAU pointed out that the private sector also had to hire consultants and conduct technical feasibility study but they had done such work within a much shorter time. He considered that it was unacceptably long for the appointment of consultants to take six months and the preparation of Technical Feasibility Statement to take another four months, for example. He added that private architects were even required to submit plans to seek the Lands Department (LD)’s approval.

25. PD3 explained that there was actually no big difference between the procedures for implementing projects by the private and the public sectors. He said that ArchSD also had to submit plans to various technical departments concerned, including LD, the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department, for approval.

26. PD3 pointed out that the procedures set out in the table were the prescribed process that public works projects were required to go through. He

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further briefed members on the actual work involved in the selection and appointment of consultants and why it took about six months to complete. Mr Patrick LAU pointed out that in the development of a private works project, the selection and appointment of consultants did not take such a long time. PD3 explained that this was because there were no prescribed procedures for a private developer to follow in his selection and appointment of a consultant to work for him. He pointed out that in order to ensure transparency and fairness, the Administration had to comply with the prescribed procedures for implementing public works projects.

27. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that it was unacceptable for the implementation of an “open space” project to take over four years from the start to completion of construction. PD3 responded that the construction time actually varied from 18 to 35 months, depending on the scale and complexity of the project involved. He added that the construction time had also included slippage due to inclement weather and unforeseen circumstances.

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28. The Chairman said that the Administration should strike a balance between the need for compliance with established procedures and ensuring efficiency. She considered that the Administration should explore if it was possible to shorten the lead time for implementing the 25 priority projects, which had been long awaited by residents. She also suggested that SHA should reflect members’ concern during his daily meetings with other Policy Secretaries to see if any improvements could be made. In response to members’ concern, PD3 agreed to review on the possibility of shortening the procedures. He supplemented that ArchSD had already resorted to different ways as explained at the meeting on 28 June 2005 to expedite the implementation of the 25 priority projects.

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Clerk

29. The Chairman suggested that the Subcommittee should invite representatives of professional bodies in the construction sector to attend the next meeting to give views on the procedures and lead time for implementing the 25 priority projects as set out in the table. Members agreed. The Subcommittee agreed that invitations would be extended to the following organisations –

- (a) the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS);
- (b) the Hong Kong Institute of Architects;
- (c) the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers;
- (d) the Hong Kong Construction Association; and
- (e) the Quantity Surveying Divisional Council of HKIS.

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As proposed by PD3, the Subcommittee agreed that representatives from the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau should also be invited to attend the next meeting.

Date of next meeting

30. Members agreed that the next meeting be held on 1 December 2005 at 8:30 am.

31. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:15 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 November 2005