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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 Thursday, 30 March 2006 at 8:30 am
in Conference Room B of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Member attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
- Members absent** : Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : Home Affairs Bureau
Mr SIN Pak-wing, Daniel
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs)
(Recreation & Sport)

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Ms CHOI Kit-yu, Kitty, JP
Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Administration)

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

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

Mrs YUEN CHAU Oi-wah, Karen
Chief Executive Officer (Planning)1

Mr KAN Tat-sing, Peter
Chief Executive Officer (Planning)2

Architectural Services Department

Mr LEE Hung-wai, Wilson
Project Director 3

Mrs Celina KWOK
Chief Project Manager 302

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Amy YU
Council Secretary (2)3

Action

I. Meeting with the Administration
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1532/05-06(01)]

25 priority leisure and cultural services (LCS) projects
[Annex 1 to LC Paper No. CB(2)1532/05-06(01)]

Fast-tracked timetable

Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Administration)
(DDLCS(A)) informed members that after taking into consideration the views of the professional bodies at the last Subcommittee meeting held on 1

Action

December 2005 and with the concerted efforts of the relevant bureaux/departments, the Administration was able to further advance the implementation schedules for 11 of the priority projects by about three to 12 months. She invited members to note that under the revised fast-tracked timetable for the 25 priority projects, a total of 19 projects would start works in 2007 or 2008. As for the remaining six projects, DDLCS(A) explained that their construction could only commence in 2009 or 2010 because of their relatively large scale, technical complexity involving special processes such as environmental and traffic impact studies, or changes to project scope as initiated by the District Councils (DCs) concerned.

2. In response to the Chairman, DDLCS(A) briefed members on the following projects which could only commence construction in 2009 or 2010 owing to changes to project scope initiated by DCs –

- (a) *“Construction of an Annex Building for the Ko Shan Theatre” (Item No. 20 in Annex 1)*

In early 2005, the Kowloon City DC (KCDC) agreed that the new performance venue to be built in the Annex Building would have 300 seats. Subsequently, after the Project Definition Statement had been completed, KCDC strongly requested for increasing the seating capacity to 600. On the other hand, the Cantonese Opera Association was of the view that the Administration should proceed with the original 300-seat plan so that the project could be implemented as soon as possible. The Administration would continue to discuss with KCDC on the matter.

- (b) *“Ecological Park at Tso Kung Tam Valley, Tsuen Wan” (Item No. 25 in Annex 1)*

The proposed Ecological Park occupied a massive piece of land and the original project scope involved construction of buildings such as an exhibition hall on insects and a Chinese medicine garden. To expedite the opening of the Park for public use, the Administration had recently agreed with the Tsuen Wan DC (TWDC) that some simple facilities, such as jogging trails, would be constructed at the site. The Administration needed to further review with TWDC on the scope of the project with a view to expediting the opening of the Park.

- (c) *“Leisure Centre in Area 33, Tai Po” (Item No. 23 in Annex 1)*

The original proposal was to turn the existing outdoor swimming pool in Tai Po into a heated one during winter by adding a cover and a water-heating system to the existing facilities. After detailed study, the Administration concluded that it was not technically feasible to build such a cover at the site and the project was also not cost-effective. The

Action

Administration therefore made an alternative proposal of adding a 25m x 25m indoor heated swimming pool to the leisure centre to be built in Area 33, Tai Po. The Tai Po DC (TPDC) initially agreed to this proposal. However, TPDC recently requested for a standard indoor heated swimming pool of 50m x 25m.

3. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming said that TPDC's original proposal was to build a heated swimming pool at the site adjacent to the existing swimming pool. He pointed out that the idea of adding a cover and a water-heating system to the existing swimming pool was actually suggested by the Administration rather than TPDC. He stressed that what Tai Po residents wanted was a standard heated swimming pool.

4. In response, Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 3 explained to members that the site adjacent to the Tai Po Swimming Pool as originally proposed by TPDC was irregular in shape and small in size and could not accommodate even a 25m x 25m swimming pool. He also explained that unlike a swimming pool complex, an indoor leisure centre was not big enough to house a standard swimming pool of 50m x 25m. This was the reason why the Administration proposed to construct a 25m x 25m indoor heated swimming pool in the leisure centre in Area 33. He stressed that the current proposal was the most cost-effective option. DDLCS(A) supplemented that according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG), there were already sufficient swimming pools in Tai Po and the request for a bigger heated swimming pool was hard to justify.

5. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern that even under the fast-tracked timetable, most of the 25 priority projects would not commence construction until 2008 or later. Mr Patrick LAU shared Mr WONG's concern. Mr WONG also asked whether the implementation schedules of the priority projects could be further advanced.

6. DDLCS(A) responded that the Administration had explored every possible way to expedite the implementation of the 25 priority projects, such as by making in-year funding bids and allowing the time span for some procedures to overlap, and the fast-tracked implementation timetable for the priority projects was already very compressed. Project Director 3 (PD3) of the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) supplemented that if the implementation schedules were to be further compressed, the quality of the projects might be adversely affected.

7. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether there was any upper limit on the Government's annual spending on LCS projects, and if yes, whether it was the reason why the priority projects could not be further expedited. DDLCS(A) replied in the negative and explained that LCS projects accounted for only a very small percentage of the \$29 billion annual budget for public works. In

Action

Admin

response to Mr WONG, she also informed the meeting that since the establishment of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in 2000, a total of about 60 projects involving some \$10 billion had been completed and commissioned for public use. In the five-year period from 2005-06 to 2009-10, it was anticipated that about 52 projects totalling around \$6 billion would commence construction. Mr WONG requested the Administration to provide information to the Subcommittee on the amount of resources to be spent on LCS projects annually for the upcoming years. DDLCS(A) agreed.

“District Open Space in Area 18, Tung Chung” (Item No. 16 in Annex 1)

8. Noting that the “District Open Space in Area 18, Tung Chung” project would not commence construction until mid 2008, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether its implementation schedule could be advanced. DDLCS(A) said that the Islands DC had recently requested for adding the latest skate-board facilities to the project, resulting in the need to revise the Project Definition Statement and the Technical Feasibility Statement of the project. She further said that as the Administration had little experience in providing this type of recreational facilities, it was anticipated that more time would be needed for the planning of this kind of facilities. In view of this change in project scope, the Administration was not able to further advance the works start date of this project. Nonetheless, she undertook that the Administration would try its best to stick to the original completion date of the project.

9. In response to Mr WONG Kwok-hing, PD3 explained that although the skate-board facilities accounted for less than one-tenth of the project, the Administration could not implement the other parts of the project first, because it was necessary to ascertain the technical feasibility and the cost of the whole project before seeking funding for its implementation. PD3 reiterated that there was little room for further compressing the schedule of the project, but the Administration would make every effort to expedite its progress wherever possible.

Projects in Tin Shui Wai

10. In response to Miss CHOY So-yuk, DDLCS(A) briefed members on the latest position of a number of projects in Tin Shui Wai (TSW). In respect of the “District Open Space in Area 107, TSW” project (item no. 2 in Annex 1), a 7-a-side soccer pitch and four basketball courts would be completed with priority in mid 2006 and mid 2007 respectively. It was also anticipated that the district open space project in Area 107 would commence construction early next year. As for the “Leisure Centre Area 101, TSW” project (item no. 18 in Annex 3.1), she invited members to note that it was one of the 19 projects recommended by the Administration for proceeding with planning work. The Administration would consult the Yuen Long DC as soon as possible on types of facilities to be built in the leisure centre. She further advised that the

Admin

Administration would provide information on the progress of the various LCS projects in TSW North for the reference of the Subcommittee.

“Improvement works to Victoria Park Tennis Court” (Item No. 3 in Annex 1)

11. Referring to the “Improvement works to Victoria Park Tennis Court” project in Annex 1, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked why the anticipated works start date had been deferred from 2006 to early 2007.

12. Chief Project Manager 302 (CPM302) of ArchSD explained that the reason for the delay was that some international tennis tournaments had been scheduled to be held in the venue. She said that the Administration had already advanced the commencement date of the project from mid 2007 to early 2007 by expediting some pre-construction works. She further said that the project would be completed in time for the 2009 East Asian Games.

74 outstanding LCS projects

[Annexes 3.1 and 3.2 to LC Paper No. CB(2)1532/05-06(01)]

Review outcome

13. DDLCS(A) informed members that the Administration had recently completed reviewing the 74 outstanding LCS projects in consultation with DCs. Based on the comments of and the priorities accorded by DCs, and having special regard to the needs of new towns as well as old urban areas, the Administration recommended to take forward 19 of these projects as well as another two new projects.

14. As for the remaining 55 projects, DDLCS(A) said that the Administration would conduct annual reviews with DCs to examine their priorities. She further briefed members on the main reasons for not taking forward these 55 projects at the present stage as follows –

(a) some projects would be taken forward by phases by way of minor works items (with capital cost not exceeding \$15 million each), so that the LCS facilities concerned could be open for public use as soon as possible. The “Kwai Chung Park” project (item no. 14 in Annex 3.2) was an example of this. At the request of Mr WONG Kwok-hing, DDLCS(A) agreed to provide information to the Subcommittee in writing on how this project would be taken forward in stages through minor works items.

(b) some projects were part and parcel of the Housing Department (HD)’s integrated development plans, and their implementation had to dovetail with that of the integrated development plans. For instance, the implementation of the “Improvement to Cheung Sha Wan Playground”

Admin

Action

project (item no. 6 in Annex 3.2) had to tie in with the recommended restructuring strategy of Cheung Sha Wan district.

- (c) some project sites fell within the scheme areas of infrastructures currently under planning, such as the Central Kowloon Route and the West Kowloon Cultural District. Further planning of these projects would not be possible until implementation details for the infrastructures were finalized.
- (d) some project sites could not be made available for the development of LCS facilities for the time being. For example, the site concerned involved private ownership (such as the “Hung Lau Park” in Tuen Mun), or part of the site was currently being used for other purposes (such as the “Park and Ride Scheme” in “District Open Space Area 27D Fanling/Sheung Shui”).
- (e) the population size of the area did not meet the criterion in the HKPSG for the provision of the LCS facility concerned for some projects. The Administration, however, would consider implementing these projects as minor works items where it would be more cost-effective to do so.

15. DDLCS(A) further said that apart from taking forward the outstanding ex-Municipal Councils (ex-MCs) projects in stages, the Administration would also continue to take on board new and justified projects to cater for the needs of different districts. She invited members to note that of the 60-odd projects which were completed and commissioned in 2000-01 to 2004-05, around 40 were non-ex-MCs projects; of the 25 priority projects, 4 were non-ex-MCs projects; and among the 21 projects to be taken forward in the next stage, two were new initiatives. In addition to these capital works projects, LCSD would also seek funding support from the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau on an annual basis for implementing minor works items to meet local demands. For instance, for rural areas where the population size did not meet the standards for provision of large scale recreational facilities, the Administration would implement minor works items to meet the needs of residents. She stressed that there was no upper limit on the amount to be spent on minor works items each year.

16. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming requested the Administration to provide to the Subcommittee an implementation schedule for the 21 projects recommended to be taken forward in the next stage. DDLCS(A) replied that the Administration had just completed its consultation with all DCs in mid March and would proceed with the planning work for the 21 projects as soon as possible. Meanwhile, LCSD had to work on the implementation of the 25 priority projects and would need some time before it could work out the timetable for the other 21 projects. She assured members that the Administration was

Action

committed to take forward these 21 projects and undertook to provide a tentative timetable in about six months.

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“Tai Po New Civic Centre” (Item No. 38 in Annex 3.2)

17. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming expressed dissatisfaction that the “Tai Po New Civic Centre” project had remained stagnant. He drew to the attention of members that the project site had been left derelict for some twenty years and requested the Administration to confirm as soon as possible whether the project would proceed, and if not, the reasons for that and what recreational facilities would be built in place of a civic centre.

18. DDLCS(A) explained that the development of new civic centres in Hong Kong including this project was subject to the overall policy and long-term development plan for provision of cultural and performance facilities. She said that the Home Affairs Bureau was currently working on the policy on the future development of civic centres in Hong Kong and would submit the relevant policy paper to the Panel on Home Affairs for discussion in due course.

Admin

19. Noting from the Administration’s paper that LCSD would explore the feasibility of developing the “Tai Po New Civic Centre” project through the Private Sector Finance (PSF) approach after the outcomes of the pilot PSF projects in Kwun Tong and Tseung Kwan O were known, the Chairman enquired about the current position of the Administration’s study on the PSF approach.

20. In response, DDLCS(A) informed members that the Administration had encountered quite a lot of difficulties in taking forward the two pilot PSF projects. Issues which needed to be resolved included –

- (a) whether the Administration should award a land grant to a private developer in exchange for the construction of recreational facilities;
- (b) whether the facilities should be managed by the Administration or the private developer; and
- (c) the charging mechanism for the facilities.

DDLCS(A) added that the Administration was finalising its study on the PSF approach and would get back to Members and the DCs concerned as soon as possible on whether the two pilot projects would be further taken forward.

Admin

Action

Provision of open space in the 18 districts
[Annex 2 to LC Paper No. CB(2)1532/05-06(01)]

21. Members noted that in response to the Subcommittee's request at the meeting on 31 October 2005, the Administration had compiled information on the overall open space provision of LCSD and HD in the 18 districts as compared to the standards and guidelines stated in the HKPSG.

22. DDLCS(A) said that counting the open space provided by the two departments together, the open space provision in the 18 districts was adequate to meet the HKPSG except in two districts, namely Yau Tsim Mong and Yuen Long. She further said that for the Yau Tsim Mong district, open space to be provided within the West Kowloon Cultural District should be able to relieve the shortfall in open space to a large extent in the future. As for the Yuen Long district, a number of open space projects in Tin Shui Wai were currently under active planning.

23. Miss CHOY So-yuk said that the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) had been fighting for the construction of a pet park in Yau Tsim Mong, which could help to relieve the shortfall in open space in the district. She added that DAB would like to suggest for the Administration's consideration that a pet park be built at Ferry Point or the site beside Metro Harbour View, Tai Kok Tsui. DDLCS(A) said that the Administration would consider these suggestions and continue to work with the Yau Tsim Mong DC to find a suitable site for a pet park.

24. Referring to Annex 2 of the Administration's paper which showed that the Eastern district had 15.3 hectares of surplus open space, Miss CHOY further said that the open space in the Eastern District was not evenly spread and there was actually an acute shortage of open space in the areas between North Point and Quarry Bay. She also pointed out that the Victoria Park was a territorial, rather than a district, park and should not, therefore, be counted as open space in the Eastern District.

25. In response, DDLCS(A) confirmed that the Victoria Park had been included in calculating the amount of open space in the Eastern district as the Park was managed by LCSD. She emphasized that the data in Annex 2 served only as a general reference in the planning of new open space projects, and the Administration would consider other factors specific to local situation when deciding the actual level of provision. By way of illustration, she said that despite the surplus of open space in the Eastern District as shown in Annex 2, the Administration had recommended to take forward the "Quarry Bay Park Phase II (Stages 2 and 3)" and "Proposed Park in Aldrich Bay" projects (items 2 and 3 of Annex 3.1), which would help to relieve the shortage of open space in the areas mentioned by Miss CHOY.

Action

26. Miss CHOY further said that the Town Planning Board (TPB) had earlier turned down an application for rezoning part of the site at Oil Street, North Point from “Comprehensive Development Area” to “Open Space”, in view of the high sale value of this harbour-front site. She reiterated that there was a serious lack of open space in North Point and asked the Administration to look into ways to increase the provision of open space in the area. The Chairman also urged LCSD to take a more pro-active role in planning open space projects and requested the Administration to further examine the proposal of rezoning the site at Oil Street. DDLCS(A) agreed to follow up with the relevant departments.

Admin

27. Mr Patrick LAU, who was former Vice-Chairman of TPB, explained that in considering a rezoning application, TPB would take account of the views of different Government bureaux/departments, including the LCSD, as well as other relevant parties/organisations and try to find a point of balance. Regarding the application for rezoning the site at Oil Street, he clarified that it was the view of the Lands Department, rather than that of TPB, that the sale of the harbour-front site could generate sizeable revenue for the Government. He added that although TPB had not approved the rezoning application, it had requested the Planning Department to review the planning parameters for the site and reduce its density to meet community aspirations.

28. Mr Patrick LAU further commented that the data in Annex 2, which only showed the amount of open space in each district, failed to reflect fully on whether there was adequate open space for the enjoyment of local communities. He pointed out that the accessibility of open space was also a very important consideration. He said that some open space was not frequented by local residents because they were inconveniently located, such as the Sun Yet Seen Memorial Park in the Central and Western District. He urged the Administration to step up its communication with DCs and take into account local needs and characteristics in the planning and design of recreational facilities. Mr Daniel LAM expressed similar views.

29. DDLCS(A) responded that the Administration would make every effort to ensure the accessibility of LCS facilities in future planning of projects. She also fully subscribed to Mr Patrick LAU’s view that the Administration should work closely with DCs on the design of LCS facilities. To illustrate this, she told members about the project on the renovation of libraries in Wanchai. She said that at the request of the Wanchai DC, the Administration had organised three forums to consult the views of local residents on the design of the libraries. She believed that with the Government’s plan to expand the role of DCs, the participation of DCs and local communities in the planning and design of district facilities would be further enhanced.

Action

Other issue

Urban greening initiatives

30. Referring to the remark made by the Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works during the resumption of the Second Reading debate of the Appropriation Bill 2006 at the Council meeting on 29 March 2006, Mr Patrick LAU expressed dissatisfaction that Legislative Council (LegCo) Members had been blamed for hindering the Administration in implementing greening work. The Chairman stressed that LegCo Members were generally supportive of early implementation of urban greening initiatives to satisfy the public's aspirations for a greener environment, although members of the Public Works Subcommittee had raised queries about the Administration's proposals for implementing greening work in selected urban areas at the meeting on 21 December 2005 and the public works proposals were consequently withdrawn by the Administration. The Chairman requested the Administration to relay members' views to the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau. DDLCS(A) agreed.

II. Any other business

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Clerk

31. The Chairman reminded members that at the meeting on 19 July 2005 the Subcommittee had agreed to consult DCs on the outcome of the Administration's review on the 74 outstanding projects. She suggested that the Subcommittee should proceed with this consultation and convene a meeting in September 2006 to consider the information which the Administration had undertaken to provide at this meeting. Members agreed.

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:22 am.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 May 2006