

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Finance Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 23rd meeting  
held at the Legislative Council Chamber  
on Tuesday, 8 July 2008, at 8:30 am**

**Members present:**

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, SBS, JP  
Hon Margaret NG  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP  
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP

Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP  
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Hon LEE Wing-tat  
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP  
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP  
Hon KWONG Chi-kin  
Hon Mrs Anson CHAN, GBM, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon Bernard CHAN, GBS, JP  
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP  
Hon CHIM Pui-chung  
Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG, JP  
Hon TAM Heung-man

**Public officers attending:**

Professor K C CHAN, SBS, JP	Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Mr Stanley YING, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Miss Amy TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1

Mr Alfred FOK	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr Francis HO, JP	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
Mr Philip YUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1
Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP	Director of Highways
Mr Peter WONG	Deputy Principal Government Counsel (Treaties and Law)1 Department of Justice
Mr Malcolm GIBSON	Head of Project Engineering MTR Corporation Limited
Mr Patrick NIP, JP	Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health)1
Mr YUE Chi-hang, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Dr CHEUNG Wai-lun, JP	Director (Cluster Services) Hospital Authority
Dr LUK Che-chung	Cluster Chief Executive (Kowloon East Cluster) Hospital Authority
Dr Raymond CHEN	Chief Manager (Strategy and Service Planning) Hospital Authority
Dr TOM Kam-tim	Hospital Chief Executive Tseung Kwan O Hospital Hospital Authority
Mrs Anita LAW	Senior Hospital Administrator Tseung Kwan O Hospital Hospital Authority

**Clerk in attendance:**

Mrs Constance LI	Assistant Secretary General 1
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**Staff in attendance:**

Mr Jimmy MA, JP	Legal Adviser
Miss Becky YU	Chief Council Secretary (1)1
Mrs Mary TANG	Senior Council Secretary (1)2
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

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**Item No. 2 - FCR(2008-09)35**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 4, 13, 18 and 20 JUNE 2008**

As there was request for separate voting on PWSC(2008-09)22, the Chairman invited members' questions on it.

**PWSC(2008-09)22    52TR    Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link – design and site investigation**

Design competition

2.        Prof Patrick LAU highlighted the Mainland practice of requiring the conduct of design competitions for large public projects, and stressed the need to hold an open competition for the design of the West Kowloon terminus of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL). Ms Emily LAU shared similar view, pointing out that the terminus would be one of the largest railway termini in the world and would be a landmark of Hong Kong. While agreeing that a design competition was a good idea, Ir Dr Raymond HO pointed out that the Mainland requirement highlighted by Prof LAU did not apply to Hong Kong.

3.        The Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) (PS(T)) responded that it would be for the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to decide whether to hold a design competition for the XRL terminus. The Administration would be more concerned about ensuring that the construction contract(s) of the XRL terminus would be awarded through open tender.

4.        Mr Malcolm GIBSON, Head of Project Engineering, MTRCL (H of PE, MTRCL) said that MTRCL had not yet taken a decision on whether to hold a design competition for the XRL terminus. While acknowledging that an open competition might attract creative designs, the complexity of the terminus project required a high standard of operating performance which could effectively mitigate the associated traffic impacts, meet the relevant customs and immigration requirements, and ensure operational reliability and safety at all times. Notwithstanding, MTRCL would definitely award both the design and construction of the terminus through open tender and would, in the tender selection process, give consideration to the best design that could make the terminus a landmark for Hong Kong. H of PE, MTRCL further advised that to ensure delivery of the XRL project with reliability and safety, there was also a need for MTRCL to undertake certain aspects of the terminus design which were directly related to the expertise of railway operation not generally available in the open market. Some of these examples were train performance requirements, signalling and control systems, tunnel ventilation, ticketing systems, platform screen doors, railway communication system, railway alignment, trackworks design, and specific issues related to safety and reliability. However, the contract values of these works were relatively low compared to the total value of the XRL project.

Direct entrustment of MTR Corporation Limited to undertake the design and site investigation

5. Ms Emily LAU referred to the Legal Adviser (LA)'s written advice (LC Paper No. LS103/07-08) regarding the direct entrustment of MTRCL to undertake the design and site investigation for the Hong Kong section of XRL without going through open tender. She asked LA whether he found the procurement of the relevant consultancy services from MTRCL in order, based on the additional information provided in the Administration's letter dated 2 July 2008.

6. In response, LA advised that MTRCL was an entity listed in Annex 3 of the Hong Kong Schedule of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement (WTO GPA) and, in accordance with Annex 5 of the HK Schedule, the provisions of WTO GPA would apply to the construction works tendered out by MTRCL. LA further advised that the Financial Secretary/Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury had also made administrative regulations in the form of the Stores and Procurement Regulations to regulate matters relating to the management and procurement of Government stores and services. The Treasury Branch of the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau (FSTB) had also published a Guide to Procurement. It would be for the Administration to explain whether the Direct Entrustment was consistent with its policy and the relevant Regulations or Guide.

7. The Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (PS(Tsy)) confirmed that the Direct Entrustment was in compliance with the WTO GPA and the Stores and Procurement Regulations. As explained in the Administration's letter of 2 July 2008, approval-in-principle had been obtained from FSTB for waiving the tender procedures under the Regulations for the project.

8. In response to Dr Fernando CHEUNG, PS(T) explained that the Direct Entrustment had not contravened WTO GPA because design and site investigation works were not subject to these provisions. However, Dr CHEUNG considered that it was undesirable that important works such as design and site investigation were not regulated under WTO GPA. He maintained the view that the Direct Entrustment was unacceptable because it was against the free market principle.

9. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that entrustment agreements in the past were usually awarded through open tender. He referred to LA's paper (LC Paper No. LS103/07-08) which stated that although WTO GPA was not applicable to consultancy arrangements entered into between the Government and MTRCL as part of the Direct Entrustment, the Government's procurement of these consultancy services should still be subject to the Stores and Procurement Regulations. He also noted that according to the Guide, government procurement of goods and services should be based on the principles of public accountability, value for money, transparency, and open and fair competition.

10. PS(Tsy) responded that there were examples of consultancy contracts awarded without going through open tender. The Stores and Procurement Regulations also provided for requests for waiver of the relevant tender procedures to

entrust a project, and such requests required the approval of FSTB. PS(T) supplemented that the procurement principles highlighted by LA in his advice could still be satisfied under the Direct Entrustment as follows –

- (a) The provisions of WTO GPA would apply to the construction works for XRL which would be tendered out by MTRCL, thereby satisfying the principle of transparency and open and fair competition. Moreover, the Administration had requested MTRCL to select the design consultant through open tender, notwithstanding that design works were exempted from WTO GPA;
- (b) It would provide the best value for money by entrusting the works to MTRCL, the entity which would ultimately operate the railway; and
- (c) The funding proposals were scrutinized by the Finance Committee, and this was in compliance with the principle of public accountability.

11. Highlighting the need to exercise flexibility when awarding contracts in view of the complexity and scale of the project, Ir Dr Raymond HO indicated support for the Direct Entrustment on grounds that MTRCL had unique experience and expertise in railway construction and operation not available elsewhere. Mr Albert CHAN expressed disagreement with him, pointing out that construction of the Tsing Ma Bridge, which carried both motorway and railway, was awarded through open tender. Ir Dr HO responded that railway tracks only made up a small part of the Tsing Ma Bridge.

12. Mr Albert CHAN remained unconvinced of the legality of the Direct Entrustment arrangement, and indicated that he might seek judicial review. PS(T) and PS(Tsy) reiterated the exemption arrangement was provided for in the Stores and Procurement Regulations, and emphasized that the Financial Secretary/Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury/PS(Tsy) were authorized to apply, interpret and make exceptions (including waiving of tender procedures) to these Regulations.

13. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that although MTRCL would tender out the construction works for XRL according to WTO GPA, it would nonetheless be paid \$330 million as on-cost for the XRL project without going through competitive tendering. The above consultancy arrangement would, in his view, contravene the procurement principles. In response to Mr Albert CHAN, LA advised that the Stores and Procurement Regulations had provided for exemptions but did not specify the criteria for granting exemptions. However, the Administration had not given details on the on-costs to be paid to MTRCL, and members could seek further information on this from the Administration.

14. PS(T) responded that the waiver of the tender procedures was granted through a proper procedure after taking all relevant factors into consideration. As regards the on-cost, PS(T) explained that it was part and parcel of the project and could not be taken out for competitive tendering. Nevertheless, the Administration would seek independent consultancy advice in assessing the reasonableness of the on-cost rate. Ms Emily LAU suggested that the Administration should follow up this issue.

15. Ms Emily LAU asked whether MTRCL would decide for itself which part of the design of the XRL project would be undertaken in-house without tendering. PS(T) said that H of PE, MTRCL had explained in paragraph 4 above the reasons for MTRCL to undertake certain parts of the design works which were related to the safety, reliability and efficient operation of the railway. H of PE, MTRCL assured members that the civil, architectural and building services works that would be tendered out would make up about 80% to 90% of the XRL project. He further clarified that while MTRCL would design and co-ordinate the safety and performance requirements of certain operational systems in recognition of MTRCL's operational knowledge, the systems and equipment would be procured from suppliers as semi-proprietary products through open tender. Having regard to the complexity of railway operation, MTRCL would work very closely with the industry on an international basis when carrying out MTRCL's part of the design work, so as to benefit from the latest systems available in the market while ensuring value for money.

16. In response to Prof Patrick LAU, PS(T) advised that apart from monitoring MTRCL's performance in the XRL project in terms of project progress, quality and cost, the Administration would also ensure that XRL contracts would be awarded by open tender as far as practicable.

17. While indicating support for the XRL project, Miss CHAN Yuen-han sought clarification on why the design and site investigation of XRL was treated differently from other public works projects which were subject to WTO GPA requirements. PS(T) responded that individual governments were allowed to make exceptions under WTO GPA as necessary to suit local social and economic circumstances. The background was given in the Administration's letter dated 27 June 2008. In general, the provisions of WTO GPA mainly applied to civil engineering and construction works.

18. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked about the criteria for deciding which projects should comply with WTO GPA. She was concerned about the impact on local employment opportunities. PS(T) and the Director of Highways responded that the Government would do its best to ensure local workers could participate in the actual implementation of works carried out in Hong Kong, subject to WTO GPA requirements and the labour policy of the Government.

19. The Chairman put PWSC(2008-09)22 to the vote. 25 members voted for the proposal and two members voted against. The individual results were as follows:

*For :*

Ir Dr Raymond HO Chung-tai  
Miss CHAN Yuen-han  
Mr SIN Chung-kai  
Mr WONG Yung-kan  
Mr Howard YOUNG  
Mr LAU Kong-wah

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan  
Mr CHAN Kam-lam  
Dr Philip WONG Yu-hong  
Mr Jasper TSANG Yok-sing  
Dr YEUNG Sum  
Ms Miriam LAU Kin-yee

Action

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Ms Emily LAU Wai-hing  
Ms Audrey EU Yuet-mee  
Mr WONG Kwok-hing  
Dr Joseph LEE Kok-long  
Mr WONG Ting-kwong  
Prof Patrick LAU Sau-shing  
Mrs Anson CHAN  
(25 members)

Ms LI Fung-ying  
Mr Vincent FANG Kang  
Mr LI Kwok-ying  
Mr Daniel LAM Wai-keung  
Mr Ronny TONG Ka-wah  
Mr KWONG Chi-kin

*Against :*

Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung  
(2 members)

Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip

20. The Committee approved the proposal.

**PWSC(2008-09)23 3MR Expansion of Tseung Kwan O Hospital**

21. As there was request for separate voting on PWSC(2008-09)23, the Chairman invited members' questions on it.

Provision of obstetric services in Tseung Kwan O hospital

22. Ms Emily LAU said that while she supported the project, she noted the residents' demand for expediting the provision of obstetric services in Tseung Kwan O hospital (TKOH) as the proposed expansion works would only be completed by 2013-2014. She was disappointed that the wards originally intended for obstetric and paediatrics services in TKOH would be used as buffer wards during the works period, and would not be used to commence the intended services until completion of the works. Ms LAU sought clarification on whether the Administration could expedite the provision of obstetric services for residents in Tseung Kwan O (TKO).

23. The Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health)1 (DS(H)1) responded that the Administration was aware of members' view on the need to provide obstetric services in TKOH, and had provided further details in a letter issued on 4 July 2008 regarding the criteria for estimating the demand for obstetric services in public hospitals and the estimated timing for the provision of obstetric services in TKOH. The Director (Cluster Services), Hospital Authority (D(CS), HA) explained that the Administration had planned to provide obstetric services in TKOH in 2013-2014 because it was estimated that by then the growth in childbirths in TKO should have reached the service provision benchmark of 3 000 per year. Such benchmark was adopted by HA since 1998 as a standard practice across different clusters to ensure safety of expectant mothers and babies. He further advised that the above plan could also facilitate effective utilization of space to tie in with the expansion programme of constructing a new ambulatory block to accommodate certain non-in-patient services and supporting facilities decanted from the existing hospital main block, and converting/renovating the spaces in the hospital main block so vacated.



24. While indicating support for the funding proposal, Dr YEUNG Sum urged the Administration to provide obstetric services in TKOH without further delay in recognition of the urgent need for the services in the district. Mr Ronny TONG expressed regret that while the Administration had all along adopted the line that obstetric services in TKOH would be provided when the service provision benchmark of 3 000 to 3 500 newborns per year was reached, the Administration had recently added another factor, i.e. the utilization rate by local women. He opined that when assessing service demand, the Administration had ignored the important considerations that there was no private hospital in TKO, and that the number of new-borns at the United Christian Hospital (UCH) was approaching 6 000 which had necessitated the transfer of cases to other hospitals. He considered that there were already sufficient physical and manpower resources for providing obstetric services in TKOH without having to wait for the completion of the expansion project.

25. D(CS), HA emphasized that safety of expectant mothers and babies was the primary consideration in the provision of obstetric services. The benchmark of 3 000 to 3 500 newborns per year was set to ensure there was sufficient utilization of the services to enable healthcare personnel to gather adequate experience in handling births of various complexity, thereby reducing risks in the service delivery process. As such, when determining whether to provide the services, there was a need to take into consideration criteria such as the birth rate of a district and the respective numbers of newborns in public and private hospitals. The service need of non-local women was not taken into account because they were not Hong Kong residents, and the existing policy was to encourage them to use private services as far as possible. There was also great difficulty in estimating the service demand of non-local women because the number could fluctuate according to policy and economic changes. Moreover, administrative measures could be taken to discourage non-local women from using public obstetric services if there was great local demand already.

26. Ms LI Fung-ying opined that although the Administration did not encourage the use of public obstetric services by non-local women, they could not be turned away. As such, such demand should also be taken into consideration, or else local expectant mothers would be forced to use private services because public resources had been diverted to meet the demand of non-local women. The utilisation rate of local women was therefore distorted. Mr Andrew CHENG and Mr Ronny TONG shared similar view. D(CS), HA responded that in recognition of the factor mentioned by Ms LI, the usage rate of public services by TKO residents had already been adjusted from 65% to 80% when making service assessment.

27. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that while he was pleased to note the Administration now planned to provide obstetric services in TKOH earlier by 2013 or 2014, he hoped the Administration could undertake to provide such services even earlier if there was a significant growth in demand for obstetric services before 2013. He also asked how the Administration would strengthen the antenatal out-patient consultation services for TKOH.

28. D(CS), HA and DS(H)1 responded that the Administration would closely monitor changes in the number of newborns in TKO and Sai Kung, and also the respective usage rates of private and public services. When the relevant benchmark was reached, efforts would be made to provide obstetric services in TKOH in a timely manner. D(CS), HA further advised that antenatal out-patient consultation services at TKOH had already been progressively geared up, and expectant mothers could receive both antenatal and postnatal out-patient consultation services at TKOH instead of only at UCH as in the past. Such enhancement of service would commence in 2008-2009 with an annual attendance quota of 1200. The quota would be further increased in the coming years.

29. While welcoming the plan to provide obstetric services at TKOH in 2013-2014, Mr Andrew CHENG remained concerned that there was a change in the service provision benchmark from local birth rate to the usage rate of public services in the district. DS(H)1 clarified that the local birth rate was adopted since 1998 as the basis for service demand assessment, while the usage rate was taken into consideration to ensure safety and service quality. Mr CHENG said that the Administration should closely monitor the situation and provide the services as early as necessary. In his view, the benchmark of 3 000 had already been reached but the Administration had deliberately ignored the fact to defer provision of the services in TKOH.

30. In response to Mr James TIEN, DS(H)1 assured members that the Administration would closely monitor the service demand and where necessary, the service would be provided earlier.

#### Allocation of public health care resources across districts

31. Dr YEUNG Sum pointed out that the doctors and nurses of UCH in Kwun Tong were overloaded because of the uneven allocation of resources and the increasing demand in Kwun Tong given its aging population. D(CS), HA advised that the Administration was aware of the increasing service demand in Kowloon East and the resultant pressure on both UCH and TKOH. Additional resources had therefore been provided for hospitals in the Kowloon East Cluster in the past few years and such arrangement would continue.

32. Ms LI Fung-ying was keen to ensure that resources could be allocated effectively and reasonably to improve public health care services and provide greater convenience to the public. She considered it undesirable that while some wards in TKOH were used for storage purposes, other hospitals in the same cluster were overcrowded. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the existence of some six to seven vacant wards in TKOH due to the suspension of certain services as a result of the Enhanced Productivity Programme. While agreeing to the need to expand TKOH to meet the great service demand of the some 400 000 population in TKO, he considered the allocation of additional resources for the expansion project unacceptable unless the under-used facilities were effectively utilized. He further expressed concern about the mismatch in service provision as exemplified by the absence of hospitals in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung which were densely populated.

He questioned if it would be more appropriate to use the funding for the TKOH expansion to provide hospitals for these two districts instead.

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33. D(CS), HA responded that 377 of the planned 458 beds in TKOH had already been opened. While HA would in the coming years examine how to redeploy the remaining reserved beds, there was a need to exercise care in converting these reserved beds for other medical services because of the cost and time considerations for restoring the facilities for obstetric and neo-natal services when circumstances warranted. Some of these reserved facilities were therefore temporarily used for clinical support services and administrative purposes only. At Dr Fernando CHEUNG's request, he agreed to provide an information paper on the plan to improve the utilization of the existing vacant wards.

34. Noting the Administration's plan to develop TKOH into a general hospital, Dr Joseph LEE enquired whether the aim was to enable TKOH to provide comprehensive services for TKO residents to obviate the need for them to seek services from other hospitals. He also asked whether the current policy was to ensure the provision of a general hospital in every hospital cluster to minimize cross-cluster referrals.

35. D(CS), HA responded that there was no change to the existing cluster policy under which different hospitals in a hospital cluster could provide different specialty services. For the Kowloon East Cluster, UCH would maintain its status as the leading hospital providing tertiary services, and TKOH would continue to provide secondary services mainly covering day care and ambulatory surgery services, and specialist out-patient consultation service to provide convenience to local residents.

36. Mr James TIEN opined that given TKO's remote location, the Administration should ensure that the proposed expansion of TKOH could adequately cater for the needs of local residents, so that they needed not travel a long distance to other districts for medical services. He noted that the reserved facilities for obstetric services in TKOH was largely a result of inaccurate forecast of the service demand at the planning stage. He commented that this had made it difficult for members to agree to the provision of additional resources for the TKOH expansion project.

37. DS(H)1 explained that there had been a substantial reduction in birth rate at the time TKOH was completed. However, the services to be strengthened under the expansion project were mainly ambulatory and community-based care services for which TKO had great demand. As regards the plan for providing obstetric services in TKOH in 2013-2014, the Administration's letter on 4 July 2008 had given detailed explanation.

#### Facilities and training

38. Dr Joseph LEE enquired whether it was the Administration's aim to establish TKOH as an orthopaedic hospital by providing it with a new x-ray controlled three-dimensional orthopaedic surgical navigation system to facilitate operation of image-guided navigation surgery. D(CS), HA pointed out that by the time TKOH

was expanded in 2014, the above system would have become a standard equipment in hospitals providing secondary services. He further advised that HA would regularly review the provision of equipment for its hospitals in the coming years, and suitably upgrade them as necessary.

39. Dr Joseph LEE questioned the need to convert one of the existing operating theatres in TKOH to be negative-pressured, pointing out that after the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), most operating theatres should have been made negative-pressured. D(CS), HA responded that TKOH was designed and built before the SARS outbreak and hence did not have any negative-pressured operating theatres. Patients requiring surgery but suffering from infectious diseases would need to be referred to other hospitals. The above conversion works would enhance the ability of TKOH and the territory as a whole in handling patients with infectious diseases.

40. In response to Ms Emily LAU, D(CS), HA confirmed that the number of parking spaces to be provided in the carpark of TKOH after the expansion would remain the same.

41. Noting that all nurse training courses should in the long run be upgraded to degree courses, Dr Joseph LEE questioned why HA should aim to ensure sufficient manpower supply by having additional intakes for the three-year Registered Nurse High Diploma Programme and two-year Enrolled Nurse Programme starting from 2008-2009. D(CS), HA responded that the additional intakes were only temporary measures to tackle manpower shortage in a timely manner. It remained to be the long-term policy objective to upgrade nurse training courses to degree courses.

42. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the proposal.

43. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.