

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. PWSC93/07-08
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/F/2/2

**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 10th meeting
held in Conference Room A of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 23 April 2008, at 8:30 am**

Members present:

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP (Chairman)
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, GBS, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man

Members absent:

Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP

Public officers attending:

Mr Joe C C WONG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr MAK Chai-kwong, JP	Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)
Ms Anissa WONG, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment
Mr Raymond YOUNG, JP	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
Mr Davey CHUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mr Philip YUNG Wai-hung, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) ¹ , Transport and Housing Bureau
Mr David LAU Kam-kuen	Principal Assistant Secretary (Treasury)(I), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau
Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP	Director of Highways
Mr WAN Man-lung, JP	Principal Government Engineer (Railway Development), Highways Department
Mr Malcolm GIBSON	Head of Project Engineering, MTR Corporation Limited
Ms Maggie SO	Senior Manager (Projects and Property Communications), MTR Corporation Limited
Mr LING Kar-kan	Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands) ⁵ , Development Bureau
Mr John CHAI Sung-veng, JP	Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Mr Raymond WONG Wai-man	Assistant Director (Territorial), Planning Department
Mr LIU Chun-san	Chief Engineer (Tai Po and North) (Acting), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr WONG Ming-to	Principal Assistant Secretary (Works) ² , Development Bureau
Mr YEUNG Kwok-kuen	Deputy Head of Civil Engineering Office (Port and Land), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr YAU Kwok Yin, Eddy, JP	Assistant Director (Leisure Services) ³ , Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Rosalind MA Senior Council Secretary (1)8

Staff in attendance:

Mrs Constance LI Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Noel SUNG Senior Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Angel SHEK Council Secretary (1)2
Ms Alice CHEUNG Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

Head 706 – Highways

PWSC(2008-09)1 51TR Shatin to Central Link – design and site investigation

The Chairman advised members that the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (the Railway Subcommittee) was consulted on this proposal on 27 March 2008. Ms Miriam LAU, Chairman of the Railway Subcommittee, apprised the meeting that while members generally supported the construction of Shatin to Central Link (SCL), they queried the need for the Government to fund the project as the former Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) had undertaken to build the railway line without Government funding support. Members were of the view that the Government's policy in funding railway projects was inconsistent. As the Government paid for the construction of SCL, it should have a say in determining the fare level of SCL and in future fare adjustments. Members were concerned about the bases for determination of the sharing ratio of the revenue from SCL between the Government and MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), and the environmental and heritage impact of the SCL depot at Diamond Hill. Members also expressed concern about the impact of the court ruling on the temporary reclamation works for the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) on the SCL. The Administration was requested to reconsider the provision of the Causeway Bay North Station. Members requested that the SCL project be expedited so that the railway line could commence operation before 2019.

Stations at Tsz Wan Shan and Hin Keng

2. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the deletion of the Tsz Wan Shan Station from the previous SCL scheme submitted by the KCRC. In this connection, Mr LAU enquired about the progress of the plan to enhance the pedestrian walkways for connection between Tsz Wan Shan and the Diamond Hill Station. Mr Alan LEONG also enquired about the details of the Administration's plan for the walkway system enhancements at Tsz Wan Shan.

Mr LAU was concerned that the Administration had not responded positively to local views about providing a station for Hin Keng in the current SCL scheme and only indicated that a site would be reserved for development of the station based on future needs. Mr LAU opined that the SCL scheme would be incomplete without the Hin Keng Station given the anticipated population growth in the area. It would be more cost-effective and less disruptive to residents in the vicinity if the construction on Hin Keng Station would be part of the current SCL proposal. He pointed out that there were strong requests from the relevant District Councils (DCs) for construction of the Tsz Wan Shan Station and Hin Keng Station. Mr Andrew CHENG expressed similar concern about the provision of the two stations. The Chairman shared the view that it would be more cost-effective if the proposed stations at Hin Keng and Tsz Wan Shan would be built in one go as part of the SCL project.

3. The Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1 (DS(T)1, THB), responded that the Administration had maintained close liaison with the relevant DCs in taking forward the SCL project. KCRC's previous proposal for including a station in Tsz Wan Shan was not pursued owing to technical difficulties revealed in further site investigations. DS(T)1, THB advised that the Administration was examining the provision of additional pedestrian facilities, which together with the existing footbridge and lift/escalator network in Tsz Wan Shan, would provide a better connection between the residential developments in Tsz Wan Shan and the Diamond Hill Station. The funding sought for the design and site investigation of SCL included provision for working out the design for such pedestrian facilities and the Administration would take into consideration the views of the Wong Tai Sin DC and concerned local communities on the provision of these facilities. As to the suggestion of constructing a station at Hin Keng, DS(T)1, THB advised that the Administration would keep in view the demand for rail service (including the growth in population arising from new residential developments and community facilities), the traffic conditions in Hin Keng and Tai Wai and the conditions in the Tai Wai Station, in order to ascertain the need of the Hin Keng Station.

4. Mr Andrew CHENG called on the Administration to further consider the views of local residents and the Shatin DC on the need of providing a station at Hin Keng, and consult Shatin DC further in this regard. Mr CHENG also asked the Administration to consult the Wong Tai Sin DC on the provision of pedestrian facilities for connection between Tsz Wan Shan and the Diamond Hill Station. To facilitate members' consideration of the funding proposal, Mr CHENG requested the Administration to provide a written response on the above issues before the item was considered at the Finance Committee (FC) meeting on 9 May 2008.

5. DS(T)1 assured members that the Administration would take into account views of the relevant DCs and the local communities in taking forward the design of the SCL proposal. While consultation with DCs and the local communities would take time, he agreed to provide the Administration's preliminary views on the provision of pedestrian facilities for Tsz Wan Shan and

Admin station at Hin Keng before the relevant FC meeting. The Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), (PS(W), DEVB) supplemented that the land use factor was one of the considerations in deciding on the number and location of stations for a railway line. The relevant policy bureaux would further consider the views of members and the local communities on the provision of stations and related pedestrian facilities for the SCL.

Admiralty Station and Central South Station

6. Ms Miriam LAU was concerned about the capacity of Admiralty Station to serve as the interchange station for SCL and the proposed South Island Line, in view of the existing and anticipated passenger flow, in particular the large number of passengers going to Central en-route Admiralty. The Chairman shared Ms LAU's concern and pointed out that the passenger flow at the Admiralty Station had increased rapidly and timely measures should be devised to cope with the significant growth in passenger flow arising from the SCL and South Island Line. If the provision of the Central South Station would be reviewed at a later stage, the Chairman urged that land should be reserved for the purpose.

7. Head of Project Engineering of MTRCL (H of PE, MTRCL) responded that it was anticipated that with some enhancement works, the Admiralty Station would be able to cope with the increased passenger flow from SCL and the proposed South Island Line interchanging for Central during the initial years. To divert passenger flow in the longer term, consideration would be given to measures such as the feasibility of providing the Central South Station at the Central Government Offices site after its removal to Tamar, and development of other MTR lines on Hong Kong Island.

Admin 8. Mr Andrew CHENG expressed grave concern about the deferral of the Central South Station. He stressed that the Administration should adopt a more forward-looking approach in the development of railway projects, aiming at coping with anticipated growth in passenger traffic and resolving congestions on existing roads through the provision of mass transportation in the long run. He opined that the SCL should be extended up to Central, instead of Admiralty, from the beginning. He requested the Administration to provide, before the relevant FC meeting, written response on the provision of Central South Station as part of the SCL project.

9. DS(T)1, THB replied that the site of the Central South Station between Upper Albert Road and Lower Albert Road originally proposed by KCRC was not well positioned to serve any major residential or employment centres other than the existing Central Government Offices, which would be relocated to Tamar. Geotechnical investigation carried out by the KCRC indicated that the ground conditions of the area to the West of Wyndham Street near Lan Kwai Fong were not suitable for construction of railway tunnel or station. Hence, the provision of the Central South Station would have to be reviewed when there was a decision on the future use of the existing Central Government Offices site.

DS(T)1, THB pointed out that in the interim, SCL passengers could make use of the interchange at Admiralty Station to access Central via the MTR Island Line, and to the West Island Line at a later stage.

10. Mr Abraham SHEK declared interest as the non-executive director of the MTRCL. Mr SHEK opined that the Admiralty Station would provide SCL passengers with a convenient interchange to access Central. The need of an additional station in Central should be examined carefully in view of the high capital costs which would be funded from the public purse.

Other stations for the SCL

11. Mr Alan LEONG enquired whether there was any interface between the SCL Kai Tak Station and the Hong Kong section of the proposed Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. DS(T)1, THB clarified that SCL and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link were separate railway lines with different target passenger groups. They would be developed under two separate projects, and there would not be interchange or interface at Kai Tak.

12. Mr Howard YOUNG commented that local residents were keenly concerned about the locations of the SCL stations and the exit designs. He enquired whether the locations of stations and exits could still be changed during the design and site investigation stage. In this connection, Mr YOUNG highlighted the concern of the local community about the location of To Kwa Wan Station and its exits. He called on the Administration to pay attention to the convenience of local residents during project design.

13. Noting the views and concerns of the local communities about the SCL project, Mr CHAN Kam-lam urged the Administration to conduct further public consultation on the project, in particular the environmental impact of the depot at Diamond Hill and the walkway system enhancement for Tsz Wan Shan. He also asked the Administration to provide more details of the public consultation in the future funding proposal for the construction of the SCL. Ms Emily LAU remarked that the Administration should devise a public consultation plan to gauge the views of the public and the relevant parties on the project, and hold exhibitions with physical models and video films to facilitate public understanding of the proposed design.

14. DS(T)1 responded that the locations and design of the SCL stations would be examined during the design and site investigation stage of the project, and the views of local communities and the public would be taken into consideration. H of PE, MTRCL added that further consultation with the local communities and other relevant parties including affected public transport trades/operators would continue during the design and site investigation of the SCL, having regard to relevant factors such as technical feasibility, traffic impact, land ownership and construction costs. H of PE, MTRCL stressed that MTRCL would ensure that SCL stations and their exits were conveniently located for the

commuters.

Cross-harbour section of SCL

15. Mr Andrew CHENG and Ms Miriam LAU expressed concern about the impact of the court ruling on the reclamation works for CWB on the SCL project. Ms LAU opined that alternative alignment option(s) for the cross-harbour section of SCL should be identified, where feasible, to avoid using the temporary reclamation area of CWB.

16. The Director of Highways (DHy) responded that the Administration was assessing the impact of the court ruling regarding the temporary reclamation works for CWB on the SCL project, for example, the need for re-prioritizing the project schedules and/or commencement of preparatory works. DHy explained that if temporary reclamation was required for the section of SCL overlapping with CWB tunnels, then overriding public need test would have to be satisfied. The Administration would also examine whether alternative option(s) for building the cross-harbour section of SCL, which would not involve temporary reclamation, could be identified if the temporary reclamation works for CWB would not be used. To facilitate the delivery of the SCL project on schedule, the construction sequence for both SCL and CWB projects would also be reviewed. At the request of Mr Andrew CHENG, the Administration agreed to provide, before the relevant FC meeting, its views in writing on measures to minimize or cope with the impact of the court ruling on the SCL project.

Admin

Impact of the SCL project on property development, facilities and other modes of transport

17. Prof Patrick LAU enquired whether the Administration would retain the right for development on top of the Diamond Hill depot. DS(T)1, THB answered in the affirmative and advised that the development parameters of the site had yet to be decided in the context of the overall development plan of South-East Kowloon. The Administration would take into account views of the public in working out the development plan. As to the development on top of other SCL stations, DS(T)1, THB advised that there was unlikely scope for development above other SCL stations.

18. Referring to the list of reprovisioning, remedial and improvement works (RRIW) in Enclosure 2 of the Administration's paper, Prof Patrick LAU enquired about details of the proposed works for the facilities in the list. DS(T)1, THB pointed out that the International Mail Centre at Tsim Sha Tsui had to be reprovisioned to Kowloon Bay to make way for construction of SCL, but the Administration would ensure that the reprovisioning would not give rise to disruption in service. The Wan Chai Sports Ground and Wan Chai Swimming Pool would be affected temporarily during the construction period of SCL and would be reinstated in-situ after completion of the works.

19. Prof Patrick LAU was concerned about the heritage impact of the SCL project. He noted that filling up of the disused Air Raid precaution tunnels was included in the list of essential public infrastructure works (EPIW) in Enclosure 3 of the Administration's paper. Prof LAU expressed concern about the heritage value of these tunnels and called on the Administration to carry out necessary impact assessment for SCL on heritage sites. DS(T)1, THB responded that heritage impact assessment would be conducted as part of the design and site investigation study for SCL, and the related expenditure had been included in the current funding proposal.

20. Referring to the estimated passenger number per day and the annual transport benefits generated in terms of time saving to travellers in 2021, Ms Emily LAU asked whether the one million railway passengers per day were all new passengers or included passengers diverted from other railway lines. She was concerned about the possible adverse impact of SCL on other modes of public transport.

21. DS(T)1 replied that the estimated number of SCL passengers included both passengers diverted from other railway lines and from other modes of public transport. He added that an assessment of the impact of SCL on other modes of public transport would be carried out to provide information on measures to rationalize the routing of different modes of public transport in the areas concerned, with a view to improving the transport services and enhancing the viability of the public transport services.

Financial implications and funding approach

22. Ms Emily LAU expressed grave concern about the limited information on the financial implications of the SCL project as provided in paragraph 15 of the Administration's paper. Noting that a substantial provision amounting to \$1,470.7 million was sought under paragraph 15(a) for consultants' fees for design of the railway works, RRIW and EPIW and impact assessment, Ms LAU was dissatisfied that no breakdown on the cost components had been provided for members' information. She pointed out that the Administration should provide adequate and necessary information on the cost components and the basis of cost estimation, to enable members to consider the project. Ms LAU requested that supplementary information on the cost components at items (a) to (d) in paragraph 15 of the Administration's paper be provided to members before the relevant FC meeting. Moreover, she requested the Administration to ensure that detailed breakdown on the different cost components of public works projects be provided in the future submissions to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee to facilitate members' scrutiny of the proposals. Ms LAU also sought information on the payment for the independent consultant to be employed during the detailed design stage. She asked whether this payment had been included in the estimated consultants' fees in paragraph 15(a) of the Administration's paper.

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23. DHy advised that the payment for the independent project management consultant was estimated to be in the range of a few million dollars but the actual cost could only be ascertained upon completion of the tendering process, and was not included in the consultants' fees in paragraph 15(a) of the Administration's paper. As regards the details of costs for the SCL project, DHy said that the descriptions of the expenditure items had been provided in paragraph 15(a) to (d) of the Administration's paper. While he did not have the detailed breakdown/calculation of the estimated cost at hand, DHy agreed to provide, before the relevant FC meeting, supplementary information on the estimated project cost as requested by Ms Emily LAU.

24. Mr Albert CHAN expressed grave concern about the legal basis for the Administration's decision to provide funding for the SCL project under the Capital Works Reserve Fund. Mr CHAN opined that SCL was in fact a MTRCL project as MTRCL would be responsible for the planning and design. He therefore questioned the propriety for the Administration to submit the funding proposal to PWSC for consideration as a public works project. Mr CHAN expressed strong disagreement with the current funding arrangements for the SCL project and criticized the Administration for departing from the established principles and practices for the management of public finance. He requested the Chairman of PWSC to seek legal advice on the propriety of providing funding for SCL under the Capital Works Reserve Fund, and whether this was consistent with the established principles and practices for public finance management. Mr CHAN said that he would not support the funding proposal.

25. DS(T)1 explained that the SCL project would be built based on the "concession approach" under which the Government would pay for the construction of the railway line while the MTRCL would pay to the Government for the operation right of the railway line. The current proposal was to seek funding for the design and site investigation of the SCL project. Approval would later be sought from the Legislative Council (LegCo) for the funding proposal for construction of SCL based on the finalized design.

Clerk

26. The Chairman noted Mr CHAN's concern and directed the Clerk to seek the advice of the legal adviser in this regard. He advised that issues relating to policy and principles of the SCL project should be discussed at the relevant LegCo committees.

27. The item was voted on and endorsed. Ms Emily LAU requested that this item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

Head 707 – New Towns and Urban Area Development**PWSC(2008-09)2 726CL Review studies on North East New Territories new development areas – consultants' fees and site investigation**

28. The Chairman advised members that the Panel on Development (Development Panel) had been consulted on the proposal on 26 February 2008. Mr LAU Wong-fat, Chairman of the Development Panel, advised that Panel members supported the proposal in general. Panel members considered that the Administration should have comprehensive planning for the New Development Areas (NDAs) in respect of the mix of different types of housing developments, medical and community facilities, transport network as well as employment opportunities in the area. Some members also put forth suggestions on the planning of NDAs for the Administration's consideration.

29. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming expressed support for the Administration's proposal because it would help alleviate the congested environment of the existing developed areas. He asked whether the Administration, in planning the NDAs, would take into account the opening up of the Frontier Closed Area and possible population growth in the areas as a result. Referring to the proposed tentative alignment of the Fanling Bypass in Enclosure 1 to the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG expressed concern about the adequacy of the transport infrastructure to cope with the anticipated increase in traffic flow arising from the proposed control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai. Prof Patrick LAU shared Mr CHEUNG's concern. While supporting the proposed study, Prof LAU suggested that planning of the NDAs should not be constrained by the existing area boundaries.

30. The Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)5, Development Bureau (PAS(P&L)5, DEVB) responded that there was a separate consultancy study underway on land use planning of the Frontier Closed Area. The consultant responsible for undertaking the planning and engineering study (P&E Study) for the NDAs would make reference to that consultancy study. As to the transport infrastructure, PAS(P&L)5, DEVB advised that the Fanling Bypass would be designed to serve the transport needs of future residents in the NDAs. Separate transport infrastructure would also be provided for cross-boundary traffic from the proposed control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai.

31. Prof Patrick LAU was concerned about the incorporation of environmental protection features in the design and planning of the NDAs. He also called on the Administration to take into consideration the various heritage sites in the NDAs in the P&E Study.

32. The Assistant Director (Territorial), Planning Department (AD(T),PlanD) explained that in formulating the sustainable and feasible planning and development framework for the implementation of the NDAs in the North East New Territories (NENT), the P&E Study would take into

consideration various aspects such as environmental, traffic, engineering and urban design. While the boundary of the NDAs would be set out in the consultancy agreement for the conduct of the P&E Study, the consultant would be advised of the need to allow flexibility in determination of the actual development area having regard to the latest planning circumstances which might affect the areas. As to Prof LAU's concern about heritage implications, PAS(P&L)5,DEVB clarified that carrying out of the P&E Study would not affect any heritage site. He advised that as part of the P&E Study, a Heritage Impact Assessment would be conducted to assess the impact of the proposed developments of the NDAs on heritage sites, if any.

33. While expressing support for the Administration's proposal, Ms Emily LAU sought clarification on the justifications for reviving the studies on the planning and development of the NDAs, which had been shelved since 2003 due to slower growth of population and housing demand in NENT. In reply, PAS(P&L)5,DEVB advised that in light of changes in circumstances in the proposed NDAs in NENT (such as population profile, public aspiration for living environment, land demand and public housing policy) compared with those in 2003, the Administration considered it necessary to carry out the P&E Study for the NDAs.

34. Ms Emily LAU enquired about details of the public engagement exercise. In reply, AD(T),PlanD explained that to facilitate the formulation of the Recommended Outline Development Plans and Recommended Layout Plans, a public engagement exercise would be carried out under the P&E Study. Apart from video films and display materials, physical models would be produced for the exercise to facilitate the public, notably people of different sectors of the community, in understanding the proposals for planning and development of the NDAs. The exercise would be carried out in three stages, collecting initial views through informal discussion with the relevant DCs and other stakeholders at the first stage, seeking further views on the planning concepts through public forums, exhibitions and briefings to the DCs, the LegCo and other relevant bodies at the second stage, and consulting the public on the land use planning after completion of the planning and technical assessments at the final stage. Ms Emily LAU welcomed the idea of conducting consultation with physical models. She called on the Administration to adopt such an approach for consulting LegCo and the public on future public works projects.

35. Mr Albert CHAN opined that to avoid repeating the mistakes in the planning of Tin Shui Wai, the Administration should set out clear, appropriate conceptual guidelines for the planning and development of the NDAs at the early stage of the P&E Study. Mr CHAN pointed out that such guidelines should include the provision of diversified housing developments and adequate community facilities. Considerations should also be given to conserving the local and rural characteristics of the NDAs.

36. The Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) (PS(PL),DEVB) said that the Administration would learn from past experience

in the planning and development of the NDAs. He advised that the Administration had engaged a non-Government organization to research into the problems associated with the planning and development of Tin Shui Wai as a new town. The findings of the research would shed light on the experience to be learnt. He pointed out that public housing developments of high density was planned in Tin Shui Wai for meeting the target of public housing flats set years ago. With the change in housing policy, such an approach of high density housing development would no longer be applied to the planning of the NDAs, and consideration would be given to providing more open space in the planning of new towns. PS(PL),DEVB noted Mr Albert CHAN's suggestion on providing facilities in demand such as columbarium in the NDAs, and pointed out that the Administration had encountered difficulties in identifying suitable locations for such facilities.

37. Dr KWOK Ka-ki supported the Administration's proposal. However, he was concerned whether the Administration could ensure that past mistakes would not be repeated in the development of the NDAs. He urged the Administration to give consideration to providing employment opportunities for residents of the new towns, and also suitable transportation network to enable residents to travel to other districts to work.

38. AD(T),PlanD advised that the issues raised by Dr KWOK would be examined during the P&E Study. The planning objectives and study approach would be specified in the consultancy agreement and the Administration would have a mechanism to provide sufficient steer to the consultant throughout the P&E Study process to ensure that the objectives and guidelines were observed. On the transport infrastructures for the NDAs, AD(T),PlanD said that connectivity with urban areas, unlike some of the previous new towns at their early stage of development, should not be a problem given the availability of existing railway network at Kwu Tung North. The Administration would work out plans for additional transport facilities for the NDAs. As to the provision of local employment opportunities, experience in some new towns had revealed that many industrial premises had now become vacant as a result of economic transformation in the recent years, making it difficult for the lower-skilled labour to find jobs in the new towns. Notwithstanding, the Administration would give due consideration to providing more employment opportunities in the planning of new towns.

39. Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked whether any hospitals/clinics would be provided and be in operation to provide the needed services when residents moved into the new towns. In response, AD(T),PlanD advised that community facilities were provided in accordance with the current planning standards. Having regard to the availability of existing facilities in the vicinity, the Administration would consider allowing flexibility in the timing for provision of community facilities in the planning of new towns.

40. Mr Andrew CHENG expressed support for the Administration's proposal. He was concerned how the purpose of developing the NDAs for better

protection of resources of high conservation value could be achieved. In this connection, Mr CHENG looked forward to proper planning and development of the NDAs to minimize environmental problems associated with undesirable land use in NT areas, such as the increasing use of land for open storage and illegal land-filling.

41. PAS(P&L)5,DEVB appreciated that some incongruity existed in the land use in rural areas, which was a historical issue relating to the old land leases. In taking forward the planning and development of the NDAs, the Administration attached importance to the provision of necessary road networks and utilities for the development of logistics industry and other economic activities. The Administration would tap on the development of the NDAs to tackle incongruities in land use, with due regard to preservation of heritage and rural environment, in the light of the Heritage Impact Assessments.

42. Miss CHAN Yuen-han urged the Administration to adopt a people-oriented approach in the planning and development of the NDAs, and strike a balance between preserving the rural and cultural characteristics of the areas and urbanization. She cautioned that the development of new towns should not be at the expense of the existing natural environment such as nature trails. Attention should be given to designing new towns with their own unique characteristics, which could be reflected in the design of housing developments and pedestrian walkway. The Chairman shared Miss CHAN's concerns.

43. AD(T),PlanD noted members' views. He said that environmental issues including greening works and design of the pedestrian walkways were the key design criteria which would be given due consideration in the planning and development of the NDAs.

44. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 705 – Civil Engineering

**PWSC(2008-09)3 35CG & Greening masters plan for Kowloon West
36CG and Hong Kong Island**

45. The Chairman advised members that the Development Panel was consulted on the proposal on 25 March 2008. Mr LAU Wong-fat, Chairman of the Development Panel, apprised the meeting that while Panel members raised no objection to the proposal, they expressed concern about the high consultancy fees and the costs for greening works. At the request of Panel members, the Administration had provided supplementary information on the breakdown of consultancy fees, details of the proposed greening works and vertical greening for existing footbridges.

46. Mr Jasper TSANG expressed concern that the proposed greening works might restrict public activities. Referring to the photomontage of the proposed

greening works in Yau Ma Tei near Tin Hau Temple, Mr TSANG asked whether the vegetation to be planted along the pavement would occupy the whole footpath and hence reduce public space and some existing activities, such as traditional and religious activities, could no longer be carried out near the temple. The Director of Civil Engineering and Development (DCED) advised that the greening works would only take up a small strip of footpath. There would still be sufficient footpath width and public space in the vicinity of the Tin Hau Temple.

47. Mr Bernard CHAN supported the proposal and opined that more lawns instead of trees should be provided in the proposed greening works, as lawns could be used by the public, particularly families with young children. Mr Albert CHAN expressed similar concern.

48. DCED responded that apart from planting trees, shrubs and other suitable plant species would be included in the proposed greening works. Where practicable, consideration would be given to the provision of lawns. The Assistant Director (Leisure Services)³, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (AD(LS)³, LCSD supplemented that it was normally more cost-effective to have lawns at large sites given the maintenance requirements. As there were site constraints for greening works in most developed areas, it was more appropriate to provide trees or other vegetation in these areas.

49. Mr Howard YOUNG expressed support for the proposed greening works. He enquired about the areas to be covered in the greening master plans for Kowloon West and Hong Kong Island. Mr YOUNG opined that to minimize recurrent cost for replacement and maintenance, consideration should be given to planting trees and vegetation rather than using potted plants. As to vertical greening for footbridges/flyovers, Mr YOUNG suggested that climber species with larger leaves should be selected to achieve a better greening effect. Miss CHOY So-yuk also requested that more vertical greening should be undertaken for existing footbridges/flyovers.

50. DCED responded that the sites shown in the photomontages at Enclosure 3 of the Administration's paper were typical examples only, and the Administration would try to cover more sites in West Kowloon and Hong Kong Island as far as practicable. Suitable plant/tree species would be selected for different sites depending on the technical and site feasibility, for example, the presence of underground utilities would render it not feasible for planting. DCED advised that new climber species would be selected to improve the visual effect of the greening works, and vertical greening would be provided for footbridges/flyovers where possible. Nevertheless, the climber plants would need some time to grow before achieving the desired visual effect.

51. While supporting the proposed works, Ms Emily LAU opined that more resources should be allocated for carrying out greening works in a wider area of the territory. She doubted whether it was appropriate for the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), being a department with engineering professionals, to take the lead in the development of greening master plans and

implementation of greening works in the territory, as expert knowledge in plants would be required for such works.

52. DCED replied that it was hardly possible to achieve satisfactory greening effect for an area within a short time, and greening plans should best be incorporated in the initial stage of town planning. For the implementation of greening works in developed areas, engineering considerations would be involved, e.g. underground utilities and other facilities would need to be relocated, and the professional input of CEDD staff would be required. In taking forward the greening works, CEDD would engage consultants to provide specialist advice on planting. CEDD would also work closely with the relevant Government departments including Leisure and Cultural Services Department in implementing the greening works. PS(W), DEVB supplemented that a Steering Committee on Greening (the Steering Committee) chaired by him and comprising representatives (including landscape architects) from relevant Government bureaux/departments would oversee the planning and implementation of the greening works. He stressed that the Administration had strived to enhance the greening effect in various developed areas where technically feasible.

53. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern about the percentage of greening in the territory. Dr KWOK suggested that non-Government organizations and members of the public should be encouraged to participate in greening works through tree-planting campaigns.

54. Miss CHOY So-yuk suggested that consideration should be given to planting more native tree species, e.g. banyan trees. She stressed that maintenance work was imperative in ensuring success of the works.

55. Mr Albert CHAN was of the view that landscape architects, instead of engineers, should be responsible for developing and implementing the greening master plans. He considered that consultants should be given clear policy directions, and the greening works should meet public needs and expectation. For example, lawns should be provided for public enjoyment, instead of purchasing potted plants at high recurrent cost. In this connection, Mr CHAN queried the cost-effectiveness of the greening works as the unit cost for the greening works appeared to be on the high side. He also questioned the high consultancy fees for the proposed works which amounted to over \$10 million.

56. Miss CHAN Yuen-han called on the Administration to exercise care in the selection of tree/plant species, so that the public could enjoy a variety of greening effects at different districts during different seasons.

57. DCED responded that the Administration was formulating plans for tree-planting campaigns to encourage public participation in greening works. He took note of members' suggestion about the selection of tree species and implementation of vertical greening. He said that the Administration would endeavour to plant more native species. In addition to engaging consultants for

the greening works, landscape experts in other departments participated in the project through the Steering Committee. The consultants' fee for the construction stage of the greening works was estimated to be \$1.9 million, while \$10.6 million was provided for the engagement of resident site staff to supervise the planting works.

58. The item was voted on and endorsed. Mr Albert CHAN requested to put on record his abstention as he was dissatisfied with the Administration's response to his concerns.

59. The meeting ended at 10:55 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 May 2008