

**Extract from the draft minutes of meeting
of the Panel on Home Affairs on 14 December 2007**

- Members present** : Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Heung-man
- Member attending** : Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
- Members absent** : Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
- Public Offices attending** : Item IV
Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG Yuet-yin
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

Ms Winnie SO Chui-ying
Principal Assistant Secretary (Home Affairs) (Culture)1

Mr Vincent FUNG Hao-yin
Principal Assistant Secretary (West
Kowloon Cultural District)1

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Miss Agnes TANG In-kwan
Acting Deputy Director of Leisure and
Cultural Services (Culture)

Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Mr Louis YU
Executive Director

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Professor Kevin THOMPSON
Director

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

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

Ms Anna CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2)2

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IV. Strengthening the software and humanware in culture and the arts

Internal discussion on the arrangements for following up issues relating to the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Development

7. The Chairman informed members that the Chairman of the Panel on Development, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development (the Subcommittee) and herself had held an informal meeting to consider how the outstanding issues pertinent to the WKCD projects should be followed up having regard to the terms of reference of these three

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committees. Pursuant to the informal discussion, the appropriate approaches had been proposed as set out in paragraph 10(a) to (e) of the paper prepared by the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat entitled "Arrangements for following up issues relating to the WKCD Development" [LC Paper No. CB(2)405/07-08]. She invited members to note that it was proposed that the Panel should follow up on issues on cultural policy, cultural software development and general management of cultural facilities which might or might not be related to the WKCD project but needed to be tackled from a broader perspective. When such issues were discussed, members of other committees, where appropriate, should be invited to join the discussion. Members agreed to the proposed arrangements.

Briefing on measures to strengthen the development of cultural software and humanware in Hong Kong

8. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (3) (DSHA(3)) briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper setting out the existing and new measures to strengthen the software and humanware for culture and the arts [LC Paper No. CB(2)245/07-08]. Acting Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Culture) (DDLCS(C)(Ag)) introduced the work of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to promote and strengthen the development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong.

9. The Executive Director of Hong Kong Arts Development Council (ED/HKADC) said that HKADC received an annual recurrent subvention of around \$70 million in 2007-2008, but it had to provide funding for about 30 medium and over 200 small arts groups. HKADC was also planning to strengthen support for medium and small arts groups and to enhance links between the local arts community with the Mainland and neighbouring regions. ED/HKADC considered that resources support for HKADC should be strengthened.

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10. The Director of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) considered that, in building cultural software, it was important for the Administration to formulate its policy objective and a clear vision for cultural development in Hong Kong. In this connection, reference could be made to the experience of overseas places where a clear cultural vision had been formulated and policy initiatives were integrated with the vision. He added that there was an increasing demand for theatre and technical arts talents arising from the development of cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong and neighbouring regions, and it was necessary for the Academy to review and strengthen the training of manpower in theatre and entertainment arts.

11. Members noted that the LegCo Secretariat prepared a background brief entitled "Development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong" [LC Paper No. CB(2)245/07-08(04)].

Issues raised by members

Community involvement and resource deployment

12. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Ms Emily LAU expressed concern that the bulk of resources, i.e. 80% of the Government's annual recurrent expenditure on culture and the arts, was monopolized by LCSD. HKADC, which was tasked to provide funding support for medium and small arts groups, only received less than 3% of the Government resources. They considered that it was not conducive to encouraging diversified and balanced development of culture and the arts. They stressed that the Administration should decentralize its control over resources in order to encourage diversified development of culture and the arts. Dr CHEUNG also queried how the Administration's initiatives could achieve the four major elements of the cultural policy set out paragraph 2 of its paper.

13. DSHA(3) responded that the Government's annual recurrent expenditure

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on culture and the arts amounted to \$2.5 billion, of which around \$1.9 billion was allocated to LCSD. The reason for LCSD taking up a large share was that most of the major cultural facilities including performing arts venues, museums and public libraries were directly managed by LCSD, for which the associated staffing, programming and management expenses were the major cost items.

14. DSHA(3) further pointed out that the policy on culture and the arts was moving towards the direction of enhancing community participation. Several schemes for this purpose were introduced. For example, the Venue Partnership Scheme sought to allow performing arts groups to participate as venue partners and encourage community involvement in arts development. The proposal to set up a statutory Museums Board, as recommended by the Committee on Museums, to take on the operation and management responsibility of public museums would also enhance community participation in this respect.

15. The Chairman asked about the amount of Government funding expected to be saved by implementing the Venue Partnership Scheme and how the funding saved would be used. DDLCS(C)(Ag) responded that the Administration was not in a position to provide the information as proposals had yet to be received from arts groups.

16. In response to Dr CHEUNG's question as to whether the Administration would strengthen funding support for HKADC to enhance arts development, DSHA(3) informed members that the Administration would increase funding support for HKADC to enhance its role in supporting young and budding artists, in developing small and medium sized arts groups, in building a cultural network for the Hong Kong artists and arts groups on the Mainland, and in conducting baseline researches to support arts development.

Funding allocation for HKAPA

17. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong was of the view that, while HKAPA was an

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important training ground for nurturing performing arts talents, there would be a great demand for training arts educators for primary and secondary schools arising from the implementation of the new academic structure for senior secondary education. However, the funding support for the Academy was not commensurate with its important role. Compared with LCSD which received \$1.9 billion of recurrent subvention, HKAPA only received around \$150 million of Government's recurrent subvention. Referring to paragraph 26(d) of the Administration's paper, Mr CHEUNG asked about the amount of increase in funding for HKAPA. He also asked whether it was the Administration's policy that the courses run by HKAPA had to operate on a self-funding basis which, in his view, was not conducive to facilitating arts development.

18. DSHA(3) clarified that the courses of HKAPA which were offered on a self-financed basis were those provided by the self-funding extra-mural studies unit of HKAPA, i.e. Extension and Continuing Education for Life Ltd (EXCEL). The mainstream courses of HKAPA were financed mainly by Government's recurrent subvention. She further said that, while the Administration had yet to decide on the amount of increase in funding to HKAPA, the amount would be adequate for the Academy to implement the programmes and courses set out in paragraph 26(d) of the Administration's paper.

19. The Chairman expressed support for enhancing funding allocation to HKAPA. She pointed out that the fact that EXCEL had enrolled some 7 400 participants in self-financed courses on the arts spectrum in 2006 showed that there was a large demand for places of HKAPA arts courses. She considered that if the course fees could be reduced by increasing government subsidies to HKAPA, there might be more enrollments for the courses. DSHA(3) said that the Administration would consider the subject.

20. As regards the training of arts educators, DSHA(3) explained that the main task of HKAPA was to train up professional talents in the performing arts.

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Whether HKAPA should take on the role of training up arts educators for primary and secondary schools would be subject to the results of a review on its role. DSHA(3) informed members that the Administration would work in conjunction with HKAPA to conduct an institutional review in 2008-2009, with a view to re-affirming the Academy's role and development directions, taking into account the vision of WKCD. She added that if it was concluded after the review that HKAPA should play a role in assisting Hong Kong's schools in the promotion of arts education, the Administration would further work out the details in collaboration with HKAPA and the education sector.

21. The Director of HKAPA said that he agreed that the responsibility of HKAPA should be widened in the 21st century and no longer confined to the training of arts professionals. The Academy might also have to engage in more socially inclusive activities to promote arts to the community. He considered that the matter should be further studied in the review of HKAPA.

A clear vision for cultural development

22. Mr Alan LEONG said that he shared the view of the Director of HKAPA that it was important for the Administration to have a clear cultural vision for Hong Kong. The Administration should consider Hong Kong's cultural positioning, e.g. whether greater emphasis should be put on mainstream culture, popular culture or any particular arts forms. Mr LEONG asked about the Administration's work plan for formulating a cultural vision.

23. DSHA(3) responded that the Administration's policy objective was to create an environment which was conducive to the freedom of artistic expression and creation, and the wider participation in cultural activities. She explained that the Government only played the role of a facilitator, and would not influence the specific operation of artistic creation or contents of creativity. Instead, it was committed to upholding the freedom of cultural and artistic creation and expression, as well as providing an environment that supported the

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development of culture and the arts.

24. DSHA(3) further said that the Administration would seize the opportunity of the WKCD development to implement a series of measures as set out in the Administration's paper with a view to building Hong Kong into an international cultural metropolis and fostering the development of cultural and creative industries. She added that the Administration adopted an open attitude and would consult the public on how best to facilitate the development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong.

25. In response to Mr LEONG, the Director of HKAPA said that it was important for the Administration to recognize the special aspect of Hong Kong's cultural value, and many people considered that Hong Kong was special for its fusion of cultures of the west and east. He also agreed with some members' views that the Administration should enhance opportunities of arts appreciation especially for young people in order to realize Hong Kong's cultural vision.

Cultivating cultural literary in the community

26. Ms Emily LAU considered it important to widen the audience base for the development of culture and the arts and implement more arts education programmes at school to raise young people's cultural literacy. She requested the Administration to give an account of measures to enhance cultural and arts studies under the new academic structure.

27. The Chairman also suggested that with the implementation of whole-day schooling, the Administration should fully implement the programme "One Sport and One Art for One Student" and require schools to allocate one learning session each day for arts/physical education courses. She urged the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) to follow up the matter with the Education Bureau (EDB).

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28. DSHA(3) responded that, as far as she knew, EDB had conducted briefings for various arts groups on the curriculum for the new senior secondary education under which 5% of the students' learning time would be earmarked to aesthetic education, i.e. culture and the arts. At present, schools were required to develop a balanced school curriculum so as to provide an all-round education for their students. Arts education was already made a Key Learning Area of primary and secondary school curricula.

29. DSHA(3) further informed members that HAB had also been discussing with EDB on how to build up close partnership between educational institutions and arts groups/artists in launching arts education programmes for schools. HAB had also proposed that schools should consider opening up their facilities to be used on weekends for performances for students and local residents.

30. Ms Emily LAU asked about any progress made by the Administration in exploring the provision of a television (TV) channel on culture and arts. DSHA(3) advised members that HAB was discussing with TV stations on the possibility of using a TV channel during specified time periods each day for broadcasting of arts programmes. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman both considered that such a TV channel, if available, should also be used to provide opportunities for budding artists to give performances. The Deputy Chairman suggested that the Administration should consider purchasing a TV channel and funding the necessary costs. However, he understood that the Administration had declined the offer of free TV channels by the Cable TV for broadcasting of cultural and arts programmes. He requested the Administration to provide reasons for the decision.

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31. Principal Assistant Secretary (West Kowloon Cultural District)1 (PAS(WKCD)1) recalled that such offer had been made, but with harsh conditions attached. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, the Administration agreed to check the records on details of the proposal put forward by Cable TV and the Administration's latest thinking regarding the matter.

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32. The Deputy Chairman considered that, in order to promote the appreciation of visual arts and design, the Administration should make full use of public space, including foyers and open spaces at MTR stations and the airport, for the display of the artistic creation. ED/HKADC said that HKADC had worked with public transport corporations in making use of open space at MTR stations and ferry piers for display of creative works, in order to enhance the public accessibility to arts. He added that the governments in some overseas places had enacted the "One Percent" law requiring 1% of the construction cost for certain public facilities to be earmarked for purchase of arts works for display at the facilities.

Provision of a support environment and conditions to facilitate development of culture and the arts

33. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed dissatisfaction that various polices of the Government had failed to provide a support environment for development of culture and the arts. For example, relevant government bureaux or departments had rigidly refused to address the need of young artists who were unable to acquire suitable venues for creative pursuits. She said that the shortage of performance venues in Hong Kong had hindered the development of culture and the arts, and more community-based performance venues were needed. She urged the Administration to exercise greater flexibility in its policies, e.g. land policy, and to devise a policy of offering rental concession to young artists who had limited capital funding but wished to engage in small-

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scale arts and creative retail business activities.

34. DSHA(3) responded that the conversion of the decommissioned Shek Kip Mei Flatted Factory Estate into a creative arts centre for adaptive re-use was to provide creative arts space for arts workers. She added that, if any more suitable sites could be identified for conversion for similar purpose, HAB would be most willing to explore collaboration with the relevant parties.

Clerk

35. After discussion, members agreed to further discuss the issue at the regular meeting scheduled for 15 February 2008 at 10:45 am with deputations and the Administration.

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