

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)775/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 18 December 2007, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Members absent : Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP

Public officers attending : **Agenda item V**
Mr Enoch T S LAM
Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 2

Mr Raymond K S CHAN
Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office & Deputy
Commissioner of Mines
Civil Engineering & Development Department

Agenda item VI

Miss Janet WONG
Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 1

Mr M T WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 2

Agenda item VII

Miss Janet WONG
Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 1

Mr M T WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 2

Mrs Elizabeth CHENG
Assistant Director (Architectural)
Architectural Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Mr WONG Siu-yee
Senior Council Secretary (1)7

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

- I Confirmation of minutes**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)350/07-08 -- Minutes of meeting on
23 October 2007)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2007 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

- (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)346/07-08(01), (02), (03) and (04) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Heung Yee Kuk Councillors on 8 November 2007 on "Land development strategy of the frontier closed area" and "Planning for rural areas and review of land uses in the New Territories (agricultural land, green belt and recreational land)"
- LC Paper No. CB(1)411/07-08(01) -- Administration's response to the letter dated 5 November 2007 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki on temporary reclamation for the construction of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the Island Eastern Corridor Link
- LC Paper No. CB(1)437/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "711CL -- Kai Tak development -- advance infrastructure works for developments at the southern part of the former runway" provided by the Administration)

2. Members noted the information papers issued since the last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion
LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members noted that the Administration had not proposed any item for discussion at the next regular meeting in January 2008. The Chairman asked whether members had any suggestions of discussion items.

4. Mr LEE Wing-tat suggested that an item on "Enhancement of continuity of the pedestrian links along the northern shore of the Hong Kong Island and the accessibility and environment of the harbourfront areas of the Island", which had once been discussed by the Panel, should be further discussed. He heard that some developers wanted to implement developments on some of the land required for enhancing the continuity of the pedestrian links.

5. Mr James TO suggested that an item on measures to prevent new developments from creating a wall effect should be discussed. He was particularly concerned about the details of the control measures for sites included in the Application List and sites involving lease modification.

6. Mr Albert HO said that he had heard that the Administration had intention to grant to the developer concerned land adjoining the site for a development project in Kennedy Road. He also expressed concern that adding high intensity developments at the mid-levels would aggravate the wall effect.

7. The Chairman instructed the Clerk to liaise with the Administration on the above matters.

IV Arrangements for following up issues relating to the West Kowloon Cultural District Development

(LC Paper No. CB(1)405/07-08 -- Paper on "Arrangements for following up issues relating to the West Kowloon Cultural District Development" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

8. The Chairman sought members' views on the proposed arrangements for following up issues relating to the West Kowloon Cultural District Development as detailed in paragraph 10 of LC Paper No. CB(1)405/07-08. Members agreed to the proposed agreements.

V Post-2010 landslip prevention and mitigation programme

(File Ref: DEVB(CR)(W)1-150/72 -- Legislative Council Brief on "Post-2010 Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme"
LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(03) -- A brochure entitled "Slope Safety For All" provided by the Administration)

9. The Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 2 (DS/W2) highlighted the salient points of the Legislative Council Brief on "Post-2010 Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme" (File Ref: DEVB(CR)(W)1-150/72), and the Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office & Deputy Commissioner of Mines, Civil Engineering & Development Department (Hd/GEO) delivered a PowerPoint presentation to brief members on the details of the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme (LPMitP) and the brochure entitled "Slope Safety For All" (LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(03)).

(*Post-meeting note:* The soft copy of the presentation notes (LC Paper No. CB(1)484/07-08) was subsequently issued to members on 19 December 2007.)

Risk assessment

10. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that although the number of man-made slopes had increased from some 10 000 in 1977 to some 57 000 at present, serious landslides commonly found in the 1960s to 1970s were rare nowadays. As the geology of Hong Kong was very complicated, Hong Kong had accumulated a wealth of experience in ensuring slope safety over the years. This was an achievement to be proud of. However, various factors like changes in the weather and water pressure would affect slope stability; stability in the past would not necessarily imply stability in future. Preventive measures would be necessary and, therefore, he expressed support for the Administration's proposal. He also considered that the Administration should remain vigilant in monitoring the safety of natural hillside catchments. In this regard, he asked how the Administration would identify problematic ones.

11. In response, DS/W2 said that identification of problematic slopes would be based on the probability of slope failure and the potential consequence of such a failure. Slopes with a high probability of slope failure and a high potential consequence of failure, such as those with known hazards to existing buildings and important transport corridors, would be prioritized for mitigation works. As it would be impractical to carry out extensive slope stabilization works on all natural hillside catchments, past records of failure would serve as a starting point in identifying problematic ones.

12. Hd/GEO added that identification of problematic slopes required sophisticated knowledge and the Administration would be very cautious in this regard. The Administration used a risk-based priority classification system utilizing the results of quantitative risk assessment for the systematic selection of slopes. For natural hillside catchments, the Administration would use aerial photographs taken over the past years and adopt remote sensing using 3-D laser scanning and image processing to help detect potential landslides and select slopes with high risks. About 2 700 such natural hillside catchments had been identified.

13. Mr Albert CHAN commented that Hong Kong's slope safety management system was among the best in the world and that was an achievement to be proud of. He urged the Administration to remain vigilant although incidents of landslides had shown a substantial decrease when compared with the past. He had confidence that the Administration could manage man-made slopes well. As for natural hillside catchments, he considered that the Administration should develop a comprehensive plan to monitor and strengthen their stability because of their higher unpredictability and instability. He suggested that planting trees could help stabilize natural hillside catchments and provide signals to indicate potential landslides.

14. In response, DS/W2 said that the Administration would continue to pay attention to the safety of natural hillside catchments and would not take the matter lightly. A risk-based priority ranking system would be used under the LPMitP to select the most deserving natural hillside catchments with known hazards for action. The Slope Safety Technical Review Board, comprising three members of high international standing in the geotechnical field, would provide advice to the Administration on how to further enhance slope safety.

15. As regards the effects of planting trees to help stabilize natural hillside catchments, Hd/GEO said that the Administration had conducted research on the subject matter but the results were inconclusive. For debris flow on natural hillside catchments, debris traps and barriers were effective mitigation measures. For other types of landslides, the Administration would continue to identify the best solutions. In general, the risk of natural hillside catchments was lower than that of man-made slopes at present. Nevertheless, by 2010, the expenditure for dealing with natural hillside catchments and man-made slopes would each be \$300 million to tie in with their respective risks by then.

16. Mr James TO commented that Members' support for the Administration's present proposal for the LPMitP would imply their agreement to entrusting the Administration to decide which slopes to upgrade and how they would be upgraded, and to the deployment of \$600 million annually for implementation of the LPMitP from 2010 onwards. As regards natural hillside catchments, he noted that about 2 700 natural hillside catchments with known hazards to existing buildings and important transport corridors had recently been identified, but risk mitigation works would be implemented for only 30 natural hillside catchments each year under the LPMitP. He sought explanation in this regard.

17. In response, Hd/GEO said that about 2 700 natural hillside catchments with previous failure had been identified from interpretation of aerial photographs. About 300 of them had been assessed to pose a higher risk because their failure would affect multi-storey buildings and important transport corridors. The Administration was capable of implementing risk mitigation works for the 30 most deserving ones each year.

18. Mr LEE Wing-tat asked whether there were any objective criteria in determining the risk of natural hillside catchments. As there would not be 100% certainty in risk assessment in engineering works, he enquired whether there were any new technologies to raise the certainty of the risk assessment substantially. A higher accuracy in risk assessment would mean a higher cost-effectiveness in prioritization of slopes and deployment of resources to ensure slope safety.

19. In response, DS/W2 said that although there would not be 100% certainty in risk assessment for engineering works, safety factors were in place in assessing the risk of slopes. Hd/GEO added that when faced with uncertainty, professional assessment was very important in geotechnical engineering works.

Well-experienced professional staff and new technologies, such as remote sensing using 3-D laser scanning which could penetrate the trees and obtain information about the slopes, would enhance the accuracy of risk assessment. Aerial photographs taken over the years since 1923 also helped in detecting changes in natural slope catchments. The Administration would make the best assessment as far as practicable.

20. While agreeing that adopting a cost-effective approach after 2010 in ensuring slope safety through the LPMitP was reasonable, Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked whether there were any scoring systems to determine the risk of man-made slopes and natural hillside catchments so as to accord priority to those with higher risk for upgrading. He was concerned whether the investigation of the 15 000 man-made slopes with moderate risk could be completed within a reasonable time and asked whether those slopes had been analyzed and ranked. In relation to high-risk slopes, he enquired about the length of time between two successive inspections.

21. In response, Hd/GEO said that ongoing enhancement was being made to the risk-based priority ranking system for selection of slopes for upgrading. The rank order of a slope depended on the probability of slope failure and the potential consequence of such a failure, each of which had its own parameters. There were also separate lists for different types of slopes. The rank order of a particular slope would be updated based on the information provided by various slope maintenance departments when they carried out slope maintenance works. The 15 000 Government man-made slopes had already been analyzed and ranked. Under the LPMitP, upgrading works would be carried out at the worst 1% each year, i.e. 150 such slopes found to be at a more advanced state of degradation with signs of distress or past instabilities. Total strengthening works would be carried out for these slopes. The LPMitP would only be a ring in the Government's efforts in ensuring slope safety. There was also regular maintenance in which all slopes, irrespective of their risk and condition, would be inspected by professionally qualified geotechnical engineers at least once every five years. The information obtained from such inspections would again be used to update the slope database.

Greening and beautification works

22. While having confidence that the Administration would continue to enhance greening and beautification works for slopes, Mr Albert CHAN was somewhat dissatisfied that the Administration had introduced *Wedelia*, which was an exotic and aggressive species, and urged the Administration not to plant *Wedelia* for greening. He also considered that greening works could be carried out even on rock slopes by choosing appropriate species.

23. Ir Dr Raymond HO considered that the Administration should enhance the appearance of old man-made slopes by implementing greening measures. Expressing a similar concern, Ms Miriam LAU commented that some spraying materials used on old man-made slopes affected the appearance of the slopes and

the health of the trees on those slopes. She enquired about the Administration's plan for enhancing the appearance of those old man-made slopes.

24. In response, DS/W2 and Hd/GEO said that apart from ensuring slope safety, the Administration would also undertake greening and beautification works for slopes under the LPMitP to enhance their appearance.

Publicity

25. Taking note that risk mitigation works would only be implemented for 30 natural hillside catchments each year under the LPMitP, Mr James TO considered that proactive warning measures, such as erecting signs, posting notices or distributing leaflets, should be implemented to raise the awareness and alert the public of the risk of landslide at appropriate places.

26. In response, Hd/GEO said that the Administration would continue to place heavy emphasis on publicity, education and warning measures to bring out to the public the risk of landslide and the importance of ensuring slope safety. Information about the 2 700 natural hillside catchments with previous failure would be uploaded on the slope safety websites. Warning signs had been and would continue to be erected at appropriate places, which included squatter areas, slopes already included in the list for implementation of risk mitigation works and slopes in respect of which Dangerous Hillside Orders had been issued to the private owners concerned. When compared with other advanced places, the risk of landslide in Hong Kong was comparatively low after 30 years' of slope safety work.

Reporting mechanism

27. In relation to the selection of 100 private man-made slopes for safety-screening and 150 Government man-made slopes for upgrading each year, Ms Miriam LAU considered that the Administration's own risk assessment alone was inadequate because there were incidents of debris falling from slopes from time to time. In this regard, she enquired about the mechanism for reporting signs of landslides or actual landslides and the actions that the Administration would take in response to those reports.

28. In response, Hd/GEO said that the Administration had a mechanism to inject slopes of special concern into its programme or accord a higher priority to certain slopes if necessary. Urgent repair works would be carried out for slopes with immediate danger. Depending on the severity of the situation, the public could report signs of landslides or actual landslides to the Geotechnical Engineering Office, the respective slope maintenance departments, the Hong Kong Police Force or the Fire Services Department. The Geotechnical Engineering Office would make an assessment based on the information received from the public and other departments, update its database accordingly and take appropriate actions according to the urgency of the situation. DS/W2 added that a

hotline was available for reporting possible landslides to the Geotechnical Engineering Office and it would make an assessment and conduct investigation based on the information received.

Maintenance responsibility

29. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming concurred that the Administration's work in ensuring slope safety was commendable. As regards slopes located near the 700-odd indigenous villages in the New Territories, he suggested that the Administration should devote more resources to conduct investigation on and manage those slopes because many of them might lack proper maintenance and pose danger to the residents. He pointed out that small house owners were often required, according to the relevant lease conditions, to shoulder the maintenance responsibility for slopes located on Government land near their small houses. While a small house only occupied 700 square feet, the nearby slope might have an area of several thousand square feet and the owner would have to bear a substantial maintenance cost. He considered that this was unfair to small house owners. He urged the Geotechnical Engineering Office to discuss with the Lands Department on how to resolve the matter.

30. In response, Hd/GEO said that the maintenance responsibility for slopes depended on the conditions in the land leases, and the Administration was responsible for the maintenance of some of those slopes. Small house owners were treated at par with other property owners in terms of the safety standards for slope maintenance. As enforcement actions would be taken according to the lease conditions and land administration was involved, discussion between the Geotechnical Engineering Office and the Lands Department would be required to address the concern on the matter. DS/W2 added that the Geotechnical Engineering Office had prepared guides, pamphlets and reference materials on slope safety to facilitate private property owners in carrying out slope maintenance works.

VI Greening -- review and way forward

(LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(04) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(05) -- Background brief on "Greening Master Plans" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

31. The Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 1 (DS/W1) said that the Administration had provided an overall report on the progress made on greening and the way forward in its paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(04)). She welcomed members' comments to help further improve greening work.

Choice of plant species

32. Mr Albert CHAN was disappointed that the Administration had not taken heed of many of his previous suggestions on improving greening. He emphasized that in planting trees, the Administration should formulate a policy of using native species as a general principle. Without such a policy, horticulture contractors would not be well prepared to cultivate seedlings of native species. The merit of fast growth of some exotic species or the views of the District Councils should not become an overriding consideration in the choice of species. Given the numerous number of native species available, there was no reason not to choose native species first. There should also be a comprehensive strategy to plant more varieties of plants in parks and each park should have its own distinctive species to create a special character and an artistic feel. The eighteen districts should also have their own characteristics in greening. For environmental protection reasons, he considered that more shrubs or plants with different flowering periods should be planted instead of frequently replacing seasonal flowers unnecessarily. Instead of watering plants manually, automatic sprinklers should be installed for all new planting areas.

33. Mrs Sophie LEUNG shared the view that there should be characteristics and innovative ideas in greening. As regards the choice of species, apart from commonly used native species, the Administration could also consider other less common native species. Survivability should be one of the considerations in choosing suitable native species. To facilitate greening, the Administration should collate and publish more reference materials on different species of plants. She also urged the Administration to take precautions in transplanting old and valuable trees to avoid such trees becoming dead shortly after transplantation.

34. In response, DS/W1 said that the Administration shared the view that native species should be chosen as far as possible. However, exotic species would be a more suitable choice under some circumstances because of their better adaptability to certain soil environments and higher survival rate. Under the Enhanced Partnering Approach, the Administration would solicit and respect the views of the relevant District Councils in choosing a theme for the greening work. Regarding the choice of species, the Administration would respect the wish of the District Councils concerned and would strike a balance among different considerations. As regards parks, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Architectural Services Department would continue to introduce new and quality designs to tie in with the needs of individual districts and strive to introduce a theme or special feature in every project to provide it with some uniqueness.

35. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 2 (PAS/W2) added that the Administration had provided nurseries and horticulture contractors with information on commonly used native species so that sufficient supply of those native species would be available in the market.

36. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming commented that greening in urban areas had shown a substantial improvement since 2003. However, the choice of species was not entirely satisfactory because some exotic species were unsuitable for Hong

Kong's climate. He urged the Administration to spend more efforts in identifying suitable native species for greening. He welcomed the early implementation of GMPs for the New Territories. To increase the extent and improve the effect of greening, the use of concrete in districts like Tsuen Wan and Tai Po should be reduced.

37. Taking note of members' views on the choice of plant species, DS/W1 said that the Administration would provide suggestions on native and exotic species for consideration by the relevant District Councils in future. It would also explain clearly the benefits of using local species. The Administration would avoid using concrete planters to reduce visual impact and provide sufficient space for better development of the root systems of the trees.

Quantitative indicators for greening

38. Mr Albert CHAN said that in order to assess achievements in greening, the Administration should set a plan and provide indicators such as the number of plants planted and the area greened. As the number of plants planted might be misleading because plants would be replaced from time to time, the Administration should also provide a target for the increase in greenery area over a certain period of time. Quantitative indicators such as annual increase in greened area or average greened area on a per capita basis would help determine whether the Administration's target was met.

39. In response, DS/W1 said that in the past five years, a total of about 35 million plants had been planted under capital works projects. The green coverage ratio of the New Territories was about 74% versus about 46% in the urban areas. The development of GMPs for the New Territories would proceed in mid-2009 following completion of the development of GMPs for urban areas. The Administration already had a strategy of implementing greening measures for new capital works projects, whereas existing areas requiring further greening would be enhanced through implementation of GMPs.

40. PAS/W2 added that the Administration had an annual greening programme to facilitate planning and monitoring. Over the past 10 years, some 100 million plants had been planted, including some 20 million trees, 66 million shrubs and 14 million seasonal flowers. Quantitative indicators for greening had been provided in the financial proposals submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee. In order to maximize greening opportunities, the number of trees and shrubs planted in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central had been increased to 1 200 and 290 000 respectively, as compared with the planned figures of 900 and 210 000.

41. In relation to the 74% and 46% green coverage ratios of the New Territories and the urban areas respectively, Mr LEE Wing-tat queried whether the figures could accurately reflect the actual level of greening and asked whether there was any definition for the green coverage ratio. Prof Patrick LAU also cast doubt on the high green coverage ratio reported by the Administration. Mr Albert

CHAN said that a green coverage ratio of 74% in the New Territories was an inappropriately calculated figure because country parks were included in the calculation.

42. In response, PAS/W2 said that the green coverage ratio was defined as the ratio of green coverage area to total area. Both natural greenery and cultivated greenery would be included in calculating the green coverage ratio. For instance, the area occupied by a row of plants would constitute a green coverage area, and the ratio of the total green coverage area to the total area of a district would be the green coverage ratio of that district.

Other comments

43. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that although the Administration had already spent considerable efforts in greening, it should further deepen its greening strategy and technologies. Vertical greening should be strengthened because roadside greening alone could no longer meet the aspirations of the public. Even shade areas under flyovers and footbridges could be greened by planting shade plants requiring little sunshine. There was still much room for developing innovative greening measures.

44. In response, DS/W1 said that greening measures had already been implemented in urban areas as far as possible. The Administration would continue to explore opportunities for the implementation of more complicated greening measures such as vertical greening for noise barriers, bridge piers, lift shafts and external walls of car park buildings.

45. Prof Patrick LAU said that as many developments were built on top of podiums and little space was left on the ground for greening, there should be greening on the podiums of such developments. The Administration should also encourage the private sector to participate more in implementing greening measures because the greening effects for some greening works involving the private sector were commendable. He urged the Administration to avoid implementing fragmented greening works. He also pointed out that the large number of manhole covers would pose difficulties in greening. There should be centralized utilities ducts because the lack of regularization and coordination in laying underground utilities ducts had imposed constraints when implementing greening measures. The Administration should formulate a policy in this regard, especially for urban areas where there were many existing utilities ducts.

46. In response, DS/W1 said that implementing greening measures in urban areas was often difficult because of space constraint, especially for locations where there were utilities ducts laid by the private sector. The development and implementation of GMPs for urban areas, which required much coordination work, had facilitated greening in urban areas. The greening measures implemented so far were only short-term measures, and the Administration would implement more complicated medium and long-term measures when such

opportunities arose in future. While the Administration had implemented podium and rooftop greening for Government buildings whenever possible, it could only encourage the private sector to follow suit for private developments.

VII Proposed creation of a Chief Landscape Architect post

(LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(06) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(07) -- Submission dated 7 December 2007 from The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

LC Paper No. CB(1)442/07-08(01) -- Submission dated 12 December 2007 from The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

LC Paper No. CB(1)442/07-08(02) -- Submission dated 13 December 2007 from The Hong Kong Institute of Planners)

47. The submissions from Hong Kong Urban Design Alliance; The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors; and The Association of Architectural Practices Ltd were tabled at the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The submissions (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)475/07-08(01) to (03)) respectively were subsequently issued to members on 19 December 2007.)

48. DS/W1 highlighted the justifications for the proposed creation of a Chief Landscape Architect (CLA) post, the details of which were given in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(06)). The creation of the post would further improve the quality of greening measures, enhance coordination among various parties concerned, including government bureaux and departments and the private sector, and allow the Administration to better cope with more complicated greening measures. Professional institutions had expressed support for the Administration's proposal. It was also on parity ground that the creation of the CLA post was proposed; unlike other professional grades, there was at present no rank at the directorate level in the Landscape Architect grade.

49. Mr Albert CHAN commented that the candidate for the post should have a mission and the necessary expertise. He would express support for the proposal if the creation of the post could really achieve its intended objectives and help materialize his suggestions on greening. In order to ensure fairness in the recruitment process, he asked whether open recruitment would be conducted in which serving Government staff and outside candidates would be considered simultaneously for the post. He said that the commendable greening achievements of Zhuhai were a result of identifying a capable candidate through open recruitment to steer greening work.

50. In response, DS/W1 shared the view that the candidate should have a mission, the necessary expertise and good coordination skills. Although the Administration's usual practice was to identify suitable candidates from within the Government first, she would relay and discuss with her colleagues Mr Albert CHAN's suggestion of conducting an open recruitment exercise under which internal and outside candidates would be considered simultaneously.

51. Mr LEE Wing-tat asked why the CLA post was proposed to be a post on the permanent establishment right from the start instead of a supernumerary post for one to two years in the first instance. The vetting of proposals for creating directorate posts, especially those on the permanent establishment, should be more stringent. According to his understanding, the usual and more desirable approach was to create a supernumerary post first to see if the workload justified the creation of the post on a permanent basis.

52. In response, DS/W1 explained that a supernumerary post would only cater for circumstances where the need for the post was time-limited or where the long-term need for the post was uncertain. Developing and implementing GMPs for urban areas and the New Territories and exploring new greening techniques would be important long-term and on-going tasks, and the proposed CLA post would head the Landscape Architect grade to discharge these tasks. As such, the Administration considered it justified to create the post on a permanent basis.

53. Prof Patrick LAU expressed support for the Administration's proposal and considered that the creation of the proposed permanent post was long overdue. A permanent post would provide more certainty. In order to create a quality city, good coordination in implementing greening measures would be indispensable. The creation of the post could enhance coordination and facilitate participation by the private sector in implementing greening measures. Vetting of landscape plans submitted by the private sector would also be enhanced.

54. Mrs Sophie LEUNG also considered that coordination among various relevant parties should be one of the duties of the CLA post.

55. In response, the Assistant Director (Architectural), Architectural Services Department said that as the Lands Department did not have landscape architects, it would send landscape plans to the Architectural Services Department for comments. The proposed post would serve as a focal point for the necessary coordination work.

56. As members did not have other enquiries, the Chairman concluded the discussion and said that members' views on the proposal would be relayed to the Establishment Subcommittee.

VIII Any other business

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:40 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 February 2008