

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2309/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 27 May 2008, at 2:30 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
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
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 attending** : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
- Members absent** : Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

**Public officers
attending**

: Agenda item IV

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Mrs Susan MAK
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands) 1

Mr K K LING
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning
& Lands) 5

Mrs Ava NG
Director of Planning

Mr YIP Sai-chor
Head of Civil Engineering Office

Agenda item V

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Mr K K LING
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning
& Lands) 5

Mrs Ava NG
Director of Planning

Mr Raymond LEE
Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial (Acting)

Agenda item VI

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Mr Tommy YUEN
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands) 2

Mr Edward TO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning
& Lands) 3

Mr CHEUNG Hau-wai
Director of Buildings

Agenda item VII

Mr MAK Chai-kwong
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Mr CHAN Yun-cheung
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 3

Mr MA Lee-tak
Director of Water Supplies

Mr NG Mang-tung, Bobby
Assistant Director of Water Supplies/Development

Agenda item VIII

Mr MAK Chai-kwong
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Mr CHAN Yun-cheung
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 3

Mr MA Lee-tak
Director of Water Supplies

Mr KONG Kwok-ching
Chief Engineer/Consultants Management
Water Supplies Development

Agenda item IX

Mr MAK Chai-kwong
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Mr WONG Ming-to
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 2

Mr CHAN Chi-chiu
Project Manager /New Territories North & West
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr SIU Sau-ching
Chief Engineer/New Territories West
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr YIP Hung-wai
Senior Engineer/Tai Po & North 2
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

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)1603/07-08 -- Minutes of meeting on 25 March 2008)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2008 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1448/07-08(01) and (02) -- Issues raised by Tsuen Wan District Council members at the meeting with Legislative Council Members on 6 March 2008 relating to "Urging the Government to amend the legislation to solve water seepage problems in buildings"

LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1546/07-08(01) and (02) -- Issues raised by Wong Tai Sin District Council members at the meeting with Legislative Council Members on 10 April 2008 relating to "Handling of water seepage cases by the Joint Office of the Buildings Department and the

- LC Paper No. CB(1)1577/07-08(01) -- Food and Environmental Hygiene Department"
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1577/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "PWP Item No. 721CL -- Kau Hui Development -- Engineering Works in Area 16, Yuen Long, Phase 2 -- Extension of Road L3" provided by the Administration
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1586/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "144CD -- Drainage improvement in Southern Hong Kong Island" provided by the Administration
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1588/07-08(01) -- Submission dated 6 May 2008 from Alliance of Kwun Tong's Urban Renewal regarding Urban Renewal Authority's Kwun Tong Town Centre urban renewal project
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1612/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "13WS -- Salt water supply system for Pok Fu Lam area" provided by the Administration
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1639/07-08(01) -- Referral from the Complaints Division on issues relating to "Compensation and rehousing issues relating to resumption of land in Tuen Mun Area 54 for development"
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1645/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "PWP Item No. 55RE -- A Permanent Planning and Infrastructure Exhibition Gallery at the City Hall Annex" 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)1602/07-08(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1602/07-08(02) -- List of follow-up actions
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1371/07-08(01) -- Letter dated 22 April 2008 from Hon LEE Wing-tat on "Planning and land lease arrangements

- LC Paper No. CB(1)1668/07-08(01) -- regarding the private residential development and the provision of a theme park on Ma Wan"
- Administration's response to the letter dated 22 April 2008 from Hon LEE Wing-tat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1371/07-08(01)) on "Planning and land lease arrangements regarding the private residential development and the provision of a theme park on Ma Wan"
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1650/07-08(01) Letter dated 23 May 2008 from Hon Albert HO Chun-yan, Hon LEE Wing-tat and Dr Hon YEUNG Sum in relation to the Mega Tower Hotel project)

3. Members agreed that the following items proposed by the Administration would be discussed at the next regular meeting scheduled for 24 June 2008 --

- (a) Work of the Urban Renewal Authority; and
- (b) Mandatory building inspection scheme and mandatory window inspection scheme.

4. Mr Alan LEONG suggested that the Panel should discuss the item "PWP Item No. 55RE - A Permanent Planning and Infrastructure Exhibition Gallery at the City Hall Annex" before the Administration submitted the funding proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee. After some discussion, members agreed that the item would be discussed at the special meeting scheduled for 31 May 2008 after the item "Provision of public facilities in private developments".

5. Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr Albert HO referred to two cases involving private developments and suggested that the Panel should discuss the relevant issues. After some discussion, members agreed that it was inappropriate for the Panel to discuss specific cases but a special meeting could be held in early or mid-July 2008 to discuss the relevant policy issues involved. Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr Albert HO would inform the Secretariat of the specific policy issues to be discussed.

IV The Work of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Joint Task Force on Boundary District Development

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1273/07-08(06) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

6. The Secretary for Development (SDEV) said that the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Joint Task Force on Boundary District Development was a high level coordinating mechanism. The aim of the Task Force was to explore the feasibility of development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) to the mutual benefits of both sides, and to steer further research and planning work on other cross-boundary issues.

7. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked whether the comprehensive study on the land use planning, detailed environmental impact assessment and engineering feasibility for the Loop would focus on conservation or development aspects. She considered it important for Hong Kong and Shenzhen to complement each other in developing the Loop. She suggested that consideration be given to establishing a pharmaceutical product testing and certification centre at the Loop.

8. In response, SDEV said that the ecological value of the Loop was not high because part of the soil in the Loop had been contaminated. However, the Loop had high development potential. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands)5 (PAS(P&L)5) added that the study would explore the feasibility of developing the Loop and land uses on the basis of mutual benefits between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. There had been many suggestions on the types of industries or uses that could be located in the Loop from both the Hong Kong and Shenzhen communities. The preliminary thinking was to accommodate those uses involving high technologies and low pollution.

9. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming sought information on the alignment of the road connecting to the new boundary control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai (LT/HYW) and asked whether there would be co-location of boundary control facilities. There should be coordination between the planning for the Loop and that for the Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling New Development Areas (the Three-in-One NDA Scheme). On land uses, he asked whether the area near Liantang would be used for the logistics industry.

10. In response, SDEV said that new road infrastructure would be required for the new boundary control point and the relevant study to identify the best alignment was near completion. As the exact alignment involved sensitive information on land resumption, she could not release the details at present. Due to geographical constraints and space limitations, co-location of boundary control facilities would not be feasible. The Administration's initial thinking was to adopt the model of separate location of cross-boundary facilities. By minimizing the distance of immigration and customs clearance between the two sides, passengers would be provided with maximum convenience. PAS(P&L)5 added that although the planning for the Three-in-one NDA Scheme would be carried out under a separate study, there would be good coordination between the planning of this NDA and that of the Loop. The alignment of the connection road to the proposed LT/HYW control point would ensure smooth traffic flow in the area. The designation of suitable areas for uses in support of the logistics industry would be examined in the comprehensive study.

11. Ms Miriam LAU asked which academic institution would be appointed to conduct the opinion survey in Hong Kong on the future development of the Loop. As there might be many different views on the future land uses, she also asked how the Administration would evaluate and process those divergent views and how the public could express their views to the Administration.

12. PAS(P&L)5 responded that the opinion survey would start in June 2008 and there would be open forum and focus group meetings in Hong Kong for the public and stakeholders to express their views. Views collected in the exercise would be collated, announced and assessed based on technical and environmental considerations so as to obtain the public's intention on how to develop the Loop. As regards the academic institution to conduct the opinion survey, the Director of Planning (D of Plan) said that the Public Policy Research Institute of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University had been commissioned to undertake the survey.

V Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area - Draft Concept Plan

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1602/07-08(03) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(2)1749/07-08 -- Minutes of meeting of the Panel on Security on 19 February 2008)

13. SDEV said that the first stage of community engagement for the consultancy study entitled "Land Use Planning for the Closed Area" (the Study) had just been launched. The Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial (Acting) (AD of Plan/T(Atg)) then briefed members on the Study, including its objective, the community engagement programme, and conceptual proposals put forward in the Draft Concept Plan under the three themes of "Strengthen Nature Conservation", "Conserve Cultural Heritage Resources" and "Promote Sustainable Uses".

14. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming suggested that for the land to be released from the Closed Area, there should be sufficient public consultation before defining the boundaries of various zones, especially conservation zones.

15. In response, D of Plan said that some areas, such as Robin's Nest, would be proposed for conservation. Whether other areas would be proposed for conservation would be subject to scientific assessment on their conservation value. Before defining the boundaries of various zones, the public's views would be gauged. The Administration would adopt the principle of conserving what should be conserved.

16. Mr Alan LEONG said that the Administration should use effective visual aids to facilitate the public in visualizing the proposals in the Draft Concept Plan. Citing the public engagement conducted on the planning for the Olympic Park in

London, which he considered was exemplary of public engagement, he opined that public engagement should be a continuous and interactive process, and the Internet could be a useful tool to facilitate the process. It was most important that the public's views had been properly handled and responded to in the process. He urged the Administration to move in this direction.

17. In response, D of Plan said that the Administration had prepared videos on the existing characteristic of the area to facilitate the public in providing comments on the Draft Concept Plan. During the second stage of the community engagement, materials such as three-dimensional visual montages could be used. Information relevant to the community engagement would be made available on the Internet.

18. Prof Patrick LAU noted that 57% of the land in the study area belonged to hilly terrain/natural landscape area and only 20% was agricultural and flat land, the latter of which was more suitable for development. Despite this, he suggested that developments could also be carried out in areas with hilly terrain.

19. D of Plan responded that rural type development or eco-tourism development could be considered for areas with hilly terrain.

20. Mr Daniel LAM asked how the Administration would strike a balance in developing the land to be released from the Closed Area. He said that Heung Yee Kuk hoped that resources available from the land to be released could be utilized appropriately.

21. In response, D of Plan said that development would not necessarily mean high density development. Development could be in the form of utilizing the land to be released for sustainable uses so as to strike a proper balance.

22. On this point, Dr KWOK Ka-ki considered that development and conservation were not always at odds and the Administration could consider developing eco-tourism, cultural-tourism and social enterprises to enliven the area. He asked whether the tourism industry and non-governmental organizations involved in social enterprises had been consulted in this regard. On land uses, he expressed concern on how to safeguard the appropriate use of the land to be released.

23. SDEV responded that the three themes proposed by the consultants were in line with Dr KWOK's ideas on sustainable development. Some commercial activities could be introduced to enliven the areas but they should not cause undue impact on the environment. She added that some villagers had also expressed concern that development of the Closed Area would bring about too huge an impact on their existing village environment and lifestyle. AD/T(Atg) said that an expert panel had been formed to provide expert advice on the formulation of proposals for the Draft Concept Plan and the expert panel included a representative from the tourism industry. Organizations from different sectors would be

consulted at forums and on other occasions during the first stage community engagement, and the Administration would undertake in-depth discussions with stakeholders. Before releasing the land, outline zoning plans covering the areas concerned would be prepared and this would provide sufficient safeguard on appropriate future land uses.

24. Mr Albert HO expressed support for the two themes on "Strengthen Nature Conservation" and "Conserve Cultural Heritage Resources". For the theme on "Promote Sustainable Uses", he opined that there should be careful planning with the relevant planning intentions and development controls clearly defined, otherwise discordance between different uses, such as logistics and tourism, might occur. He also enquired about the size of the future Closed Area.

25. SDEV responded that the Closed Area would be reduced from 2 800 hectares to 400 hectares and in future, no Frontier Closed Area Permits would be required for entering the 2 400 hectares of land to be released. Outline zoning plans would be prepared to specify appropriate land uses for the land to be released. As the area of the land to be released was substantial, there should not be conflicts between different land uses.

26. Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the Administration's intention to designate some of the land at the NDAs at Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling as reception area for displaced open storage uses and special industries. She suggested that for the land to be released from the Closed Area, the Administration should also give consideration to designating some land for open storage and other uses of the logistics industry to alleviate the existing acute shortage of land for the support services of the logistics industry. In this connection, she suggested that instead of specifying the use of such land for "open storage", the relevant future land use zoning should allow a broader range of uses relating to the logistics industry.

27. In response, SDEV said that the development of NDAs and the land to be released from the Closed Area would takes years to materialize, and she appreciated that at present there was an acute shortage of land to accommodate the support services of the logistics industry. As such, the Development Bureau would discuss with Ms LAU and the logistics industry shortly to address the issue.

VI Review of the measures to promote green features in building developments

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1602/07-08(04) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

28. SDEV highlighted that increased building height and bulk for developments could be attributed to three factors, namely non-accountable gross floor area (GFA) granted under regulation 23(3)(b) of the Building (Planning) Regulations for facilities such as parking area, loading and unloading area and lift lobby; bonus GFA granted for the provision of public passage in private

developments; and exemption from GFA and site coverage calculations for green features. As such, a review of measures to promote green features in building developments alone would not suffice. The Administration would engage the stakeholders and community in more active and in-depth discussion once the Interdepartmental Working Group (WG) had completed its studies and review of the matter.

(Post-meeting note: SDEV's speaking note (LC Paper No. CB(1)1721/07-08(01)) was subsequently issued to members on 30 May 2008.)

29. Mr Albert HO expressed support for the Administration's adoption of a comprehensive approach in reviewing the measures to promote green features in conjunction with the other two types of measures affecting the building bulk as mentioned by SDEV, and enquired about the timetable of the review. He considered that the Administration should have clear criteria for granting GFA exemption or bonus. He considered it too generous to exempt all the GFA of the specified green features because such features would directly enhance the value of those properties. He also expressed concern on exempting the GFA of clubhouses and asked whether the review would include this aspect.

30. In response, SDEV said that the survey conducted by the WG revealed that the provision of most of these green features would be an important factor in the respondents' consideration of purchasing a residential unit. While a cap for the cumulative exemption of GFA for green features was already present, the aggregate effect of the abovementioned three types of measures whereby GFA exemption/bonus might be granted was the crux. The review would also revisit the cap of exemption for various green features and re-examine GFA exemption of clubhouse, which was granted by the Building Authority under section 42 of the Buildings Ordinance as a general policy rather than on an individual basis. The Administration would consult the public in the second half of 2008 and take forward the matter as soon as possible, if there was community consensus. The Director of Buildings (DB) added that GFA exemption of clubhouse was a measure to enhance the living environment of the residents. There were clear criteria for granting exemption. For instance, the GFA of the clubhouse should not be more than 5% of that of the development, the clubhouse should be used by residents of the development concerned and its design requirements were clearly specified in the relevant Practice Note. The whole process was transparent.

31. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that although the intention of the policy was good, developers were the ones to benefit most because the saleable areas of properties were inflated by the presence of green features. The Administration should plug the loophole and should protect the rights of property purchasers by enhancing the measures governing the sale of uncompleted residential flats. He also considered that the policy had its social costs in that the increase in building bulk as a result of the GFA exemption would aggravate development intensity and might affect the

provision of public open space. He shared the view that it was inappropriate to exempt all the GFA of green features.

32. In response, SDEV said that the policy was implemented based on clear criteria and conditions set out in the relevant Joint Practice Notes. Developers were required to pay additional premium for certain green features according to standard rates, unless the land leases concerned were unrestricted leases or without restrictions on the maximum GFA. The process was transparent and there was no loophole. The Transport and Housing Bureau protected the rights of property purchasers by requiring developers to provide sufficient information in the sales brochures of residential properties. She concurred that the impact of the increase in building bulk needed to be addressed and in this respect, the policy on promotion of green features might go counter to other policies aiming to achieve quality living environment. As such, a comprehensive review was necessary.

33. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that the policy had enhanced the living environment of residents concerned. The provision of communal facilities for residents such as clubhouses and swimming pools in the developments concerned could supplement similar public facilities. In this regard, the policy had its social benefits. While developers would benefit from higher profits due to the increase in saleable area, they needed to pay higher construction costs and design costs for buildings with green features. In view of the concerns over the effects of the policy on development intensity, he expressed support for conducting the review. Nevertheless, he hoped that the room for development of green measures would not be stifled as a result of the review. He suggested that in conducting the review, the Administration should listen to the views of the real estates industry and the public, and other building designs which could help enhance the living environment should also be considered.

34. In response, SDEV thanked Mr CHAN Kam-lam for his comments and said that the Administration would strike a balance in taking the matter forward. As regards new building designs, the Buildings Department was conducting a study on sustainable building design and the findings could provide input for the review.

35. Prof Patrick LAU shared the view that the Administration should do more to promote good building designs. He said that the policy on promotion of green features in buildings had come into being only after careful consideration by the authorities involved in planning, buildings and lands. The general public also accepted the policy. The Administration should not terminate the policy. The relevant authorities had been very vigilant in granting GFA exemptions and in assessing the required land premium. He did not observe that the policy had been abused or was biased towards developers. He supported the review but the review should be as comprehensive as possible, covering also the inappropriate site coverage restrictions under the Buildings Ordinance.

36. Mr James TIEN declared interest as a developer. He said that land premium alone already accounted for two-thirds of the costs of a development project. He

supported measures to promote new and sustainable buildings designs, but he found that the present regulatory regime was not conducive to promoting new building designs. He considered it important to strike a proper balance among the interests of different parties in conducting the review. On concerns about protection for property purchasers, he considered that the Administration should focus on the sale of uncompleted residential flats because potential property purchasers could not inspect uncompleted flats to obtain an idea of the efficiency ratio and had to rely solely on the information in the sales brochures.

37. Miss CHOY So-yuk said that the GFA of some green features should not be exempted because they were merely features to enhance the value of the properties. She considered that the GFA of facilities for recycling purpose should be exempted. She also sought clarification on whether access to communal sky gardens was open to the public or limited to residents only, and whether double-glazed windows and thicker walls to reduce the noise level would be exempted.

38. In response, SDEV said that the 12 green features in the relevant Joint Practice Notes were drawn up after extensive public consultation. As regards facilities to encourage material recycling, the GFA of refuse storage and material recovery rooms would be granted exemption under the Building (Refuse Storage and Material Recovery Chambers and Refuse Chutes) Regulations. DB clarified that the communal sky gardens referred to in the Joint Practice Notes were not public facilities and thus access was limited to the tenants of the buildings concerned. Under the relevant Joint Practice Note, the GFA of non-structural prefabricated external walls would be exempted. As double-glazed windows would unlikely exceed the thickness of the walls, they would be exempted in most cases.

39. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that as the current trend was for building developments to include green features, she wondered whether it was still necessary to grant GFA exemption for green features as an incentive measure. She asked whether the Administration would terminate the existing policy. On consultation, she asked whether there would be consultation forums for the public and the real estates industry and urged the Administration to ensure transparency and maintain dialogue with the stakeholders.

40. In response, SDEV said that to ensure continuity in its policy, the Administration would not terminate or change the existing policy at this stage before completing the review. The Administration would continue with its consultation work with stakeholders. As regards whether it was still necessary to provide developers with economic incentives for providing green features given that building developments with green features were well received, she said she could not anticipate developers' decisions on whether to provide certain facilities. By way of illustration, material recovery rooms on each floor were also exempted from GFA calculation, but few developers provided such facilities in their developments.

VII A strategy for total water management in Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1602/07-08(08) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

41. The Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) (PS(W)) said that fresh water was a precious resource and in the 2003 Policy Address, the Government pledged to implement a Total Water Management (TWM) programme. The Water Supplies Department had formulated a TWM strategy for Hong Kong based on comprehensive studies and experiments. The Director of Water Supplies (DWS) then delivered a PowerPoint presentation to brief members on the TWM Strategy, water demand, water demand management, water supply, water supply management, the replacement and rehabilitation of water mains programme, and the proposals to upgrade PWP Item 186WC and part of PWP Item 189WC.

(Post-meeting note: The soft copy of the presentation notes (LC Paper No. CB(1)1708/07-08(01)) was subsequently issued to members on 29 May 2008.)

42. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed support for the Administration's proposal. As there were bursts of water mains in different areas from time to time, he asked whether ad hoc replacement of water mains under such circumstances could be integrated with the water mains replacement and rehabilitation programme. He further asked whether the Administration would extensively replace the water mains in a particular area if bursts of water mains were frequent in that district.

43. In response, DWS said that water mains replacement and rehabilitation works were being extensively carried out. The Administration would also review cases of frequent and localized water mains bursts to check on priorities for replacement and rehabilitation. Such reviews were undertaken on a monthly basis. Besides, the Administration had been attempting to use pressure management technique to lower supply pressure in water mains to prolong the service life of aged water mains.

44. Mr Albert HO asked whether the supply of Dongjiang water was still higher than the demand at present. He also enquired about the quantity of water wasted due to water mains leakage. As regards the Administration's pilot seawater desalination study using reverse osmosis technology, he asked why the marine ecology might be affected by seawater desalination. He further asked how long it would take for the Administration to implement the technology if the pilot study was found to be successful.

45. Mr James TIEN pointed out that as the demand for water was on the rise on the Mainland, he was worried that the supply of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong might be reduced in future.

46. DWS responded that the Administration had been liaising with the Mainland Authority on a monthly basis on the quantity of Dongjiang water to be supplied to Hong Kong, taking note of local reservoirs storage. The ultimate supply quantity was secured through purchase agreement with the Mainland Authority. In 2007, the quantity of water wasted due to water mains leakage was 23% of the total water demand of about 900 million cubic metres. As about 50% of the existing water mains were nearly 30 years old, the Administration would replace and rehabilitate them to reduce leakage rate to a target of 15%. The newly laid water mains were of more durable materials. In relation to seawater desalination, as the effluent generated from the process was concentrated salt water with a density higher than seawater, it had to be discharged at an appropriate location with adequate current and near the sea surface for dilution of the effluent so as to minimize the impact on the marine ecology. Desalination technology was feasible and strategically desirable, but issues like high capital costs, high level of electricity consumption, and impact on the marine ecology would need to be addressed. The Administration would closely follow technological advancement on the enhancement of the viability of desalination system.

47. Mr James TIEN said that while the Administration was educating the public to save water, the public would find it difficult to accept a leakage rate of 23%. He asked whether water mains leakage occurred more frequently at the joints of water mains. If that was the case, the Administration could submit a funding proposal for testing the joints of water mains for leakage and corresponding repairs.

48. In response, DWS said that the problems of the aged water mains were not limited to the joints. He added that certain degree of leakage was unavoidable as the water supply system was pressurized but pressure management technique should help to reduce leakage. Moreover, rehabilitation works could also be expedited when only joints were to be repaired.

49. Mr James TIEN asked whether leakage was due to the quality of the materials of the aged water mains. He requested that the water mains leakage rates of other places be provided for comparison.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's letter providing the required information (LC Paper No. CB(1)1949/07-08(01)) was issued to members on 18 June 2008.)

50. DWS responded that water mains leakage was a common phenomenon and many cities had a double-digit leakage rate. As the water mains network in Hong Kong was aged, the Administration needed time to replace and rehabilitate those aged water mains. In the past, water mains such as cast iron mains were susceptible to corrosion due to soil humidity and prone to burst and leakage under high supply pressure. New water mains of better materials would improve the situation.

VIII 327WF -- Laying of western cross harbour main and associated land mains from West Kowloon to Sai Ying Pun

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1612/07-08(02) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

51. The Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) (PS(W)) solicited members' views on the Administration's funding proposal and invited questions from members.

52. Mr CHAN Kam-lam asked whether the supply of water would be affected if one group of cross-harbour mains ran into problems and whether the existing cross-harbour mains would cease to function if inspections showed that they had problems.

53. In response, DWS explained that the existing four groups of cross-harbour mains were in good condition and adequate supply of water could be maintained in the case of minor emergency repairs. Noting that the Silver Mine Bay submarine mains and North Point cross-harbour mains would reach their design life of 50 years by 2012 and 2013 respectively, the Administration planned to carry out in-depth structural appraisal of the concerned cross-harbour mains. To allow them to be turned off for a longer duration for detailed inspection and strengthening, if necessary, the proposed Western cross-harbour main was required. If structural problems were indeed identified, the Administration would carry out necessary replacement works.

54. While expressing support for the Administration's proposal, Mr James TO wondered whether there had been an opportunity at some point of time in the past when the Administration could close one of the four groups of cross-harbour mains for inspection. Alternatively, the Administration should have built the fifth cross-harbour main earlier for timely inspection of the concerned water mains. The Administration should plan and provide for adequate facilities in the water supply system to cater for inspection and repair works without having to resort to laying a new cross-harbour main at such a late stage.

55. In response, DWS said that with water demand on the rise, a new cross-harbour main would be needed to augment the system. Moreover, the timing was appropriate as the Silver Mine Bay submarine mains and North Point cross-harbour mains were still in good functional condition, whilst it was opportune to conduct comprehensive structural appraisal on such water mains approaching the end of their design life.

56. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration had any new technology, such as devices installed at the joints of the water mains, to detect water leakage apart from monitoring the water pressure.

57. In response, DWS said that the Administration had been using water leakage detection technology on a par with world standards.

IX Cycle track network in the New Territories

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1602/07-08(07) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

58. PS(W) said that in response to public aspiration, the Development Bureau pledged in the 2007-2008 Policy Agenda to develop a comprehensive cycle track network in the New Territories to enhance the recreational value of the cycle tracks. The Project Manager/New Territories North & West, Civil Engineering and Development Department (PM/NTN&W) then delivered a PowerPoint presentation to brief members on the proposed cycle track network in the New Territories, including the feasibility studies to connect the existing cycle tracks in individual areas, the supporting facilities to be provided, the existing and proposed backbone sections and proposed branching off sections of the cycle tracks, and the proposed implementation schedule.

(Post-meeting note: The soft copy of the presentation notes (LC Paper No. CB(1)1766/07-08(01)) was subsequently issued to members on 3 June 2008.)

59. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed strong support for the Administration's proposal and urged the Administration to implement the project as soon as possible. He considered that a comprehensive cycle track network would be beneficial for eco-tourism. In implementing the project, the Administration should provide sufficient greening along the cycle track network. As the difficulty for implementing different sections of the cycle track network would vary, he suggested that the Administration could implement those less difficult sections first. He wondered whether it would be feasible to connect Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin with a cycle track in the long run.

60. In response, PM/NTN&W said that provided that there was sufficient space, there would be greening along the cycle track network. The cycle track network would also pass through some country parks. The Administration would implement less difficult sections first, such as those which would not require land resumption. As regards the idea of constructing a cycle track between Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin, there were practical difficulties and the Administration did not have such a plan at present. Tsuen Wan was a built-up area with busy roads and high density buildings. There were also geographical constraints due to the steep topography between the two places. The Administration had consulted cyclist groups and noted that for a cycle track to be suitable for all, a gradient of 4% or less would be required. The Administration would focus its resources on the existing plans.

61. Ms Miriam LAU also expressed support for the Administration's proposal. As some residents in the New Territories used bicycles as a means of transportation, accidents had occurred in the past. Expressing concern about the

safety of the cycle track network, she asked whether there would be any intersections between the proposed cycle tracks and existing roads and urged the Administration to adopt adequate safety measures. To encourage the use of bicycles for connecting public transport, she asked whether there would be sufficient bicycle parking spaces.

62. In response, PM/NTN&W said that there would be signs and warnings at the intersections of cycle tracks and existing roads to ensure safety. If the cycle tracks were aligned with no intersections with existing roads, the construction costs would increase substantially because many bridges and subways had to be constructed. As for bicycle parking spaces, he said that there would be parking spaces provided along the proposed cycle track network which was mainly for leisure/recreational purposes.

63. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also welcomed the Administration's proposal. She however considered that supporting facilities such as refreshment kiosks were insufficient and urged the Administration to strengthen the provisions of various supporting facilities. The Administration could draw reference from overseas places, such as Japan, in implementing cycle track networks. Apart from the New Territories, she urged the Administration to consider providing cycle track networks in urban areas such as Tsz Wan Shan, Kowloon City and Kai Tak. On safety, she asked whether the Administration had any new measures to regulate cyclists.

64. On overseas experience, Prof Patrick LAU said that the Administration could draw reference from Amsterdam in implementing cycle track networks. Amsterdam had measures to encourage the use of cycles and there were multi-storey buildings for providing sufficient cycle parking spaces. Meadows were often used to separate vehicle lanes from cycle tracks.

65. Mr James TO said that on behalf of a citizen, he would like to ask whether there was room for allowing cyclists to use tram lanes.

66. In response, PS(W) said that the present proposal involved a cycle track network for leisure/recreational purposes and providing cycle track networks in urban areas would be a separate matter. The proposed cycle track network would separate vehicles from bicycles as far as possible. Discussion with the Transport Department on safety measures such as adding fences could be considered. The Administration would draw reference from overseas places in implementing cycle track networks. On the suggestion of allowing cyclists to use tram lanes, he said that the road system in urban areas and the proposed cycle track network in the New Territories were two separate systems of a different nature. The former was a transport system and the latter a system for leisure/recreational purposes. He would relay the citizen's suggestion to the Transport Department for consideration.

X Any other business

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:20 pm.

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