

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1278/08-09
(The minutes have been seen by
the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 9 March 2009, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Chairman)
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
- Members absent** : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Yuk-man
- Public Officers attending** : Agenda item IV

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mrs Betty IP
Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Agenda item V

Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Ms Amy WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Higher Education)

Mrs Dorothy MA CHOW Pui-fun
Deputy Secretary-General (1), University Grants
Committee

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item V

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Professor CHING Pak-chung
Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Professor FUNG Tung
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Mr David LIM See-wai
Director of Campus Development

Mr MA Wai-kong
Senior Architect, Campus Development Office

The Hong Kong University of Science and
Technology

Mr Mike Hudson
Director of Facilities Management

Mr Andrew Nowak-Solinski
Associate Director of Facilities Management

Dr Grace AU
Director of Student Affairs

Mr Patrick CHUI
Consultant (Director, Ronald Lu & Partners (HK) Ltd)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Odelia LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2)6

Staff in attendance : Mr Stanley MA
Senior Council Secretary (2)8

Ms Judy TING
Council Secretary (2)3

Miss Jenny LEE
Legislative Assistant (2)6 (Acting)

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1003/08-09]

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2009 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted the letter from four police staff associations dated 9 February 2009 and the reply of the Secretary for Education dated 19 February 2009 concerning English Schools Foundation school fees and the Advance Fee Payment Scheme [LC Paper No. CB(2)938/08-09(01)]. Members agreed that the matter should more appropriately be handled by the Complaints Division of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat and the associations should be advised accordingly.

[Post-meeting note: A letter dated 12 March 2009 was issued to the associations and the matter referred to the Complaints Division on 16 March 2009.]

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting
[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1005/08-09]

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 16 April 2009 at 4:30 pm -

- (a) capital works project of the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions - Innovation Tower, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University; and
- (b) provision of international school places and boarding facilities for non-local students in international schools and local schools.

Action

Drug abuse in schools

4. Ms Audrey EU noted with concern the recent media reports on drug abuse in schools. She said that although the Panel on Security had agreed to discuss the matter of youth drug abuse in May 2009, she was aware that the Education Bureau (EDB) was discussing with principal associations the feasibility of voluntary drug testing in schools pursuant to the release of the Report of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse. In her view, the Panel should consider the matter from the education perspective, and might hold a special meeting as soon as practicable to receive views from deputations on ways to resolve the problem.

5. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that at the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services held this morning, he had proposed a joint meeting of the Panel on Security and the Panel on Welfare Services to discuss the problem of youth drug abuse. He considered that the joint meeting should also include the Panel on Education in order to receive views from the school sector. He also considered that the joint meeting should be held as early as practicable.

6. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that he did not object to convening a joint meeting of the Panel on Education, the Panel on Security and the Panel on Welfare Services to discuss the problem of drug abuse in schools. However, he was concerned that it would take a long time to organize such a joint meeting as the Panel on Security could only discuss the subject matter in May 2009. Given its concern about the enactment of the legislation on compulsory drug testing, it would take years to complete the legislative process. In the circumstances, he supported Ms Audrey EU's suggestion of the Panel on Education holding a special meeting to discuss with the relevant parties including the Police, the school sector and the social welfare service sector the availability of immediate measures to curb drug abuse in schools. He added that according to the surveys conducted at drug rehabilitation centres, the problem of drug abuse and trafficking in schools was serious, and the number of schools involved extensive. The severity of the problem warranted expeditious actions.

7. Ms Starry LEE agreed that drug abuse in schools was a serious social problem with widespread concern in the community. She considered it appropriate for the three Panels including the Panel on Security, the Panel on Welfare Services and the Panel on Education to hold a joint meeting to discuss the subject matter as soon as practicable.

8. The Chairman said that the problem of drug abuse and trafficking were tackled by the relevant authorities at three levels, namely, prevention and education, detection and identification, and penalty and rehabilitation. In her view, the Panel on Education had a role to play at the first two levels. She suggested that the Panel should hold a joint meeting with the Panel on Welfare

Action

Services to discuss and receive views from deputations on the subject matter. To facilitate examination of the matter in-depth, she considered that the Panel should first receive views from social workers and school management bodies who were actively engaged in the provision of preventive and education services for drug abusers. Where necessary, parent associations would be invited to give views at a later stage. She invited members' views on the deputations to be invited to attend the special meeting.

9. Ms Audrey EU suggested that the Administration should be requested to provide a discussion paper on drug abuse and trafficking in schools and measures to curb the problem. As regards deputations to be invited, she considered that the Panel should also receive views from parent groups and associations should they wish to. She added that should it take a long time to organize a joint meeting of the various relevant panels, she would prefer the Panel on Education holding a special meeting by itself.

10. Miss Tanya CHAN said that front-line social workers providing rehabilitation service to young drug abusers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing counselling services for psychotropic substance abusers should be invited to present views at the special meeting. She added that social workers and NGOs had expressed concern about the inadequacy of resources to help the very young drug abusers.

11. Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that apart from social workers, other stakeholders including parents and students should also be invited. In her view, parents who had experience in handling and assisting their drug-addicted children, and students who had successful experience in drug rehabilitation were in the best position to give views on the subject matter.

12. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong suggested that to facilitate members' examination of the matter, the Panel should first be briefed on the extent and severity of drug abuse in schools and the effective measures to curb the problem by organizations engaged in drug abuse identification and rehabilitation. After assessing the extent of the problem, the Panel, if necessary, could conduct a further meeting to receive views from other organizations. Such an approach would allow the organizations directly involved in tackling drug abuse sufficient time to give views at the Panel meeting. Members should propose the suggested organizations to be invited to the special meeting.

13. The Chairman invited members to inform the Clerk of their proposed organizations directly involved in tackling drug abuse to be invited to present views at the first special meeting to discuss the matter. Where necessary, the Panel would conduct another special meeting to receive views from other organizations.

14. Ms Starry LEE agreed with the approach of having in-depth discussion

Action

of the matter at the first special meeting. Nevertheless, she considered that the Panel should not turn down the requests of charitable organizations which were not proposed by members to attend the special meeting to give views.

15. Dr Priscilla LEUNG said that it had been the practice of LegCo to receive views from stakeholders and members of the public on a matter of public concern. Any members of the public or organization should be welcome to give view to LegCo. If the first special meeting was intended for in-depth discussion with social workers and NGOs, the Panel should make it clear that other organizations would be welcome to give views on the matter at another meeting.

16. Mrs Regina IP agreed that the Panel should receive public views at two rounds. In her view, the Panel should receive views from any deputations which indicated an interest to attend the first special meeting. Although the time for oral presentation was limited, deputations normally would highlight their main points and provide written submissions. The Panel could then identify and invite some organizations attending the first special meeting to the second special meeting for further in-depth discussion. Such an approach could address the concern that some relevant organizations/individuals might be turned away for giving valuable views to the Panel.

17. The Chairman suggested that given the widespread public concern about the subject of drug abuse in schools, the Panel would likely hold two special meetings to receive views from deputations. Deputations/individuals interested to give views would be divided into two groups, the first being social workers and NGOs, and the second school bodies, parent associations and student organizations. Members agreed.

Issues in the higher education sector

18. The Chairman suggested that the Panel should hold a special meeting to discuss the future development of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the development of the higher education sector including private universities, and the various financial assistance schemes for post-secondary students. Members agreed.

19. Summing up, the Chairman said that she would fix with the Clerk the schedule of the special meetings, and members would be informed accordingly.

IV. Extension of Early Retirement Scheme for Aided Secondary School Teachers

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1005/08-09(01) and (02)]

20. Members noted the background brief entitled "Early Retirement Scheme for aided secondary school teachers" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Action

Briefing by the Administration

21. Under Secretary for Education (USED) introduced the Administration's proposal to extend the Early Retirement Scheme for Aided Secondary School Teachers (the Scheme) for four more school years from 2009-2010 to 2012-2013. He highlighted that the remaining balance of \$361 million of the Early Retirement Ex-gratia Payment Fund for Aided Secondary School Teachers (the Fund) would be sufficient to implement the Scheme for the extended school years. He explained that the introduction of various measures in the past few years to ease the problem of surplus teachers had accounted for the substantial remaining balance of the Fund. These included the provision of additional teachers to schools with a large enrolment of low academic achievers, the reduction in the number of students allocated to each Secondary One class, the reduction in the number of students per class for the criteria of packing of classes, the provision of development options for schools with insufficient enrolment to continue operation, and the provision of professional development programmes for serving teachers to cope with the curriculum reform.

The Scheme

22. Miss Tanya CHAN noted that only 444 secondary school teachers had been approved for joining the Scheme in the past three years. She sought information on the estimated number of teachers who would join the Scheme, and whether the Scheme together with the above-mentioned measures to reduce surplus teachers could make available teaching posts to absorb 2 000 to 3 000 fresh graduates each year.

23. USED responded that while the above measures to address the impact on the decline of student enrolment in secondary schools would help alleviate teacher redundancy, EDB projected that a slight surplus of some 100 teachers might exist in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years respectively. The need for teachers would increase in the 2011-2012 school year, i.e., the double cohort year when the two cohorts of students under the existing system and the new senior secondary (NSS) academic structure co-existed. In estimating the supply and demand of teachers, the Administration had taken account of the number of fresh graduates who had received teacher training. At the present stage, it was difficult to estimate the number of surplus teachers after the double cohort year. USED pointed out that the natural wastage of teachers amounted to a few hundred per year. Together with the extension of the Scheme, the Administration believed that the problem of surplus teachers could be adequately addressed.

24. Dr Priscilla LEUNG expressed support for the extension of the Scheme without further injection to the Fund. She stressed that the Scheme should be

Action

open to all teachers on a voluntary basis. She enquired about the targeted teachers to join the Scheme and the average ex-gratia payment for a successful applicant. She added that the Administration should plan for the supply of teachers strategically in the light of possible increase of student population in the coming years.

25. USED explained that the Scheme was open to aided secondary school teachers meeting the eligibility criteria. All teachers with 10 years of services or more were eligible to apply, and the Scheme was not targeted at a particular age group of teachers. In the past three years, 444 teachers had been approved to receive ex-gratia payment under the Scheme, amounting to a total of \$219 million. The ex-gratia payment was calculated on the basis of one month of the last substantive salary of the applicant, subject to a cap of 12 months' salary. The amount of ex-gratia payment for successful applicants varied, depending on their rank and years of service. On average each successful applicant received an ex-gratia payment of some \$500,000 in 2008. The Administration proposed to extend the Scheme for four school years in anticipation of some 100 surplus teachers in each of the next two school years and further surplus after the double cohort year. The Administration would review the class size for secondary schools in the double cohort year.

26. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed support for the extension of the Scheme to the 2012-2013 school year. Noting that only 444 teachers had joined the Scheme in the past three years, and the substantial remaining balance of \$361 million of the Fund, he was concerned whether the Administration had genuinely wished teachers to join the Scheme. He noted that many applications had been turned down. He considered it contradictory that while more teachers were required for implementing the NSS academic structure on the one hand, the Scheme was extended to beyond the double cohort year on the other.

27. USED explained that the objectives of the Scheme were to resolve the subject mismatch of teachers arising from the implementation of the NSS curriculum and to alleviate teacher redundancy in schools with reduction of classes. These had been the factors considered by EDB in considering the applications. As the Administration had implemented a series of measures to alleviate the problem of surplus teachers in the past three years, the number of teachers joining the Scheme was lower than the expected number of some 800. The demand for teachers would increase in the double cohort year but decrease afterwards. The Administration proposed to extend the Scheme to the 2012-2013 school year to provide schools with greater flexibility in re-adjusting the manpower mix to facilitate the implementation of the NSS academic structure. However, it was difficult to estimate the number of teachers involved at this stage.

28. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that the eligibility criteria should be relaxed to enable more teachers to join the Scheme to resolve teacher

Action

redundancy. He also called on the Administration to plan carefully the supply and demand of teachers for the implementation of the NSS academic structure.

29. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for the Scheme. He suggested that the eligibility criteria for the Scheme should be flexibly applied such that big school sponsoring bodies should be allowed to process their applications under the Scheme collectively. This could address the concern that teachers in schools without surplus teachers might wish to join the Scheme, whereas teachers in schools with surplus teachers had no interest to join the Scheme.

30. USED responded that EDB had maintained close liaison with school sponsoring bodies and encouraged them to deploy their resources flexibly. The Administration would consider Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's suggestion.

Conclusion

31. Responding to the Chairman, members expressed support for the submission of the proposal for extending the Scheme to the Finance Committee for consideration on 24 April 2009.

V. Capital works projects of the University Grants Committee-funded institutions

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1005/08-09(03)-(06), CB(2)771/08-09(02), CB(2)1033/08-09(01) and (02)]

32. Members noted the updated background briefs entitled "Provision of hostels for tertiary students" and "Capital works projects for the implementation of four-year undergraduate programmes in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Powerpoint presentation by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

33. Professor CHING Pak-chung, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of CUHK made a powerpoint presentation to explain the two capital works projects to develop a centralized general research laboratory complex (block 1) in Area 39 (the Complex) and two integrated teaching buildings (the Buildings) within the campus of CUHK as detailed in the Administration's papers. Members noted the powerpoint presentation materials which had been provided by CUHK to the Panel before the meeting.

The Complex

34. Ms Audrey EU noted that the existing research laboratories of the Faculties of Science and Medicine at the central campus would be relocated to

Action

the Complex in Area 39 upon its completion. She enquired when the existing laboratories were constructed and whether they had been used for only a short period.

35. Professor CHING Pak-chung said that the existing research laboratories of the Faculties of Science and Medicine were accommodated in buildings at the central campus which were constructed some 30 years ago. The facilities in these buildings were not designed to support the conduct of sophisticated research activities of the present day. Given the lack of suitable sites at the central campus, CUHK, after discussion with UGC and the Lands Department, had identified a site in Area 39, Pak Shek Kok which was situated at the north of the existing campus for the construction of the Complex. The site was adjacent to the University's campus boundary and ideal for the development of research facilities in view of its proximity to the Science Park. He added that the vacated space would be converted into other teaching facilities to meet the space requirements arising from the implementation of the new academic structure.

36. Professor Patrick LAU considered that the Administration should make use of the land sites available in Area 39 to accommodate the development needs of CUHK as far as possible. He expressed concern about the traffic noise from the Tolo Highway and the availability of transport facilities linking up the Complex with the Science Park. He requested the Administration to provide a detailed zoning plan for Area 39 in its submission to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration.

37. Professor CHING Pak-chung responded that CUHK had submitted the overall development plan for Area 39 to the Administration. Apart from the Complex, CUHK would submit further development proposals in Area 39 for approval by the Administration and LegCo. CUHK had conducted a number of environmental impact studies including noise in the Area. There would be central air-conditioning for the Complex, hence reducing the need for opening windows. The Complex would also be oriented in such a way to reduce noise nuisance. Moreover, noise barriers had been installed along the Tolo Highway. As regards the Buildings, they would be less affected by noise. Indeed, CUHK had received no complaints from staff working in existing teaching buildings in this regard. He added that according to the approved zoning plan, there would be new roads linking up Area 39 with the Science Park.

38. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide a detailed zoning plan which indicated the road network along the Tolo Highway and the transport facilities linking up Area 39 with the Science Park. USED replied that Area 39 was reserved for the development of higher education. He undertook to provide information in this regard in the Administration's submission to PWSC for consideration.

Admin

39. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared interest as an alumnus of CUHK and a

Action

teaching staff member of the City University of Hong Kong. She sought information on the capacity of the Complex. Professor CHING Pak-chung replied that the Complex would be a 10-storey building providing approximately 9 860 square metres in net operational floor area to house mainly research laboratories. It was estimated that around 1,000 teaching and research staff, postgraduates and senior year students would conduct scientific research activities mainly on life science in the Complex.

40. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong enquired about the management of the research waste generated by research activities in the Complex.

41. Professor CHING Pak-chung explained that the laboratories in the Complex would be used mainly to conduct scientific and medical research activities that would generate chemical and biological wastes. CUHK had established stringent safety standards, guidelines and procedures on the operation of research activities and disposal of wastes. The ventilation system and support facilities including the central store rooms of chemical materials and waste treatment rooms in the Complex would be installed and operated in accordance with international standards to ensure staff safety. As there would be no bio-chemical research activities in the Complex, health hazard would not arise.

42. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong considered that as Area 39 was reserved for the development of higher education and geographically located in the vicinity of CUHK, it would very likely be wholly used to support the development of CUHK in the long term. In his view, should the Administration intend to reserve Area 39 for CUHK, it should plan with CUHK the green features and infrastructural works for the Area, instead of allocating the land in the Area on a project-by-project basis to CUHK. The latter approach would render it difficult for CUHK to make comprehensive planning. He noted a new building in seven different colours which was not in harmony with other buildings in the CUHK campuses.

43. In reply, USED said that Area 39 had been reserved for tertiary education use. CUHK had submitted an overall development plan for the Area to the Administration for consideration. The Administration would examine the plan and the funding required in accordance with the established procedures.

44. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong requested the Administration to provide detailed information on the management of research waste to address the concern of the local communities and a comprehensive development plan for Area 39 including land use, height of the developments, green features, transport facilities, student accommodation, etc. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed support for Mr CHEUNG's request for the provision of information on the development plan for Area 39 to facilitate members' deliberation of the proposals.

Admin

Action

45. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed support for the capital works projects. He sought clarification about the role of UGC in the allocation of land sites to the UGC-funded institutions. USED replied that UGC communicated with the UGC-funded institutions on a regular basis while the Lands Department was responsible for the allocation of land sites to the UGC-funded institutions.

46. Noting that the research activities to be conducted in the centralized general research laboratories would be related to the disciplines of science, biology and medicine and that CUHK was in the vicinity of Science Park which had a biotech centre, Mrs Regina IP enquired whether CUHK considered its excellence in the field of biotechnology and biological science in future development.

47. Professor CHING Pak-chung confirmed that the research activities would mainly be related to the disciplines of science, biology and medicine. Instead of designating laboratories for each of these disciplines, the research laboratories to be provided in the Complex would be centralized and general ones to match with modern day scientific research development which was multi-disciplinary in nature. Such design would allow more flexibility in use. CUHK was one of the two local universities operating a medical faculty. In the past, CUHK focused its research activities on the scientific and medical field. It had embarked several projects with the Science Park, and was examining the feasibility of using its research facilities in the Complex to support certain activities of private enterprises. CUHK would continue to work with the Science Park to promote the development of high technology in Hong Kong.

48. Mrs Regina IP hoped that there would be commercialization for certain projects undertaken by CUHK in future.

The Buildings

49. Ms Audrey EU noted from the powerpoint presentation that the library (resources and information centre), to be provided under the Project, was designed to facilitate recreational and interactive activities rather than to serve as a library per se. She said that she had received complaints from staff of CUHK about the need to go to four different libraries of CUHK to borrow books.

50. Professor CHING Pak-chung responded that modern education emphasized the importance of participation, as well as interaction and discussion among students and teaching staff in an interactive environment. The design layout of the library with support facilities to facilitate access to the Internet would provide a venue for students to learn and discuss with peers and teachers in an interactive environment. Mr David LIM, Director of Campus Development of CUHK added that the design of the library was intended to provide a learning commons for students.

Action

Green design and features

51. Dr Priscilla LEUNG expressed concern about the environmental impact of the Buildings including the wall effects on existing buildings in CUHK's campuses. As an alumnus, she considered that the overall green environment of CUHK had been significantly changed by an increasing number of multi-storey buildings in the campuses. She hoped that CUHK would plan the design and construction of future developments with regard to their environmental impact on the university campuses.

52. Professor CHING Pak-chung responded that as the site was located mainly on flat land and partly on cut slope, the Buildings would take advantage of the level of difference and act as a conduit to improve circulation between the Chung Chi and central campuses. The impact on existing buildings in the vicinity had been taken into account in designing the Building which would have a plot ratio of 3.5. For instance, the height of the Buildings would not affect the sea view of the students residing in the nearby hostels. In line with the expectation of the university community, CUHK would endeavour to preserve the greenery of the campus and its unique environment in planning for its future developments.

53. Referring to the green features of the complex of the Open University of Hong Kong in Homantin, Ms Audrey EU sought information on the green design and features of the Complex and the Buildings. She also enquired about the disposal of the construction and demolition materials arising from the two capital works projects.

54. Professor CHING Pak-chung responded that the projects would generate about 120 000 tons of construction and demolition materials. Over 50% of these materials could be reused; around 30% to 40% would be delivered to public fill reception facilities for subsequent reuse; and only about 7% would be disposed of at landfills.

55. Mr David LIM supplemented that CUHK had appointed an expert in environment protection to design the green features and energy efficiency systems to be installed in the Complex. The Complex would be oriented in such a way to avoid direct sunlight to reduce the heat, and there would be green areas at the southern side of the Complex and solar panels at the roof. In addition, a central cooling system was being planned for the buildings to be constructed to reduce electricity consumption.

56. Dr Priscilla LEUNG stressed the importance that both local and overseas experts should be appointed in the design and implementation of capital works projects for the UGC-funded institutions. She pointed out that the carrying out of these capital works projects should be a means to boost local employment.

Action

57. In response, Professor CHING Pak-chung clarified that for the majority of the capital works projects for CUHK, local consultants and architects were appointed. Where specific expertise in certain design or construction was required, CUHK might appoint overseas experts as appropriate. In consideration of the requirements and location of the Complex on an unformed site, CUHK had appointed an overseas consultant with expertise in energy efficiency.

Consultation

58. Dr Priscilla LEUNG asked whether CUHK had consulted the stakeholders including students and the local residents on the two capital works projects.

59. Professor CHING Pak-chung advised that CUHK had consulted the Tai Po District Council, Tai Po Rural Committee and the village representatives of Cheung Shue Tan and Tai Po Mei villages on the Complex and received no objection to the project. As regards the Buildings, CUHK had also briefed and consulted staff and students on various occasions and received no major objection to the project. CUHK would take precautionary measures to mitigate nuisance to staff and students in the course of the construction works. The Buildings would accommodate around 3 000 students, and should preferably be located at a central and convenient location near the railway station.

Construction cost

60. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr David LIM said that the estimated costs of the two projects had included decoration cost. The Chairman noted that the average construction costs for the Complex and the Buildings of CUHK and the 701-place student residence proposed by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) were about \$47,700 and \$43,000 per square metre respectively. She considered that the institutions should narrow the gap between the construction costs for their projects, and requested that information in this regard including a breakdown of the costs be provided in their submission to PWSC for funding approval.

Admin

Conclusion

61. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members supported the submission of the proposals to PWSC for consideration on 8 April 2009.

Powerpoint presentation by HKUST

62. Mr Mike Hudson, Director of Facilities Management of HKUST, made a powerpoint presentation on the 701-place student residences (the Project) as

Action

detailed in the Administration's paper. Members noted the powerpoint presentation materials which had been provided by HKUST to the Panel before the meeting.

The Project

63. Ms Audrey EU sought information on the green features of the Project and the disposal of the construction waste generated by the Project.

64. Mr Mike Hudson said that the Project would be designed to meet the gold standard of the Hong Kong Building Environmental Assessment Method. The design would include natural ventilation across the student residences, and students would be given a smart card to pay their electricity consumption charges. The use of precast wall panels would reduce construction waste, and the installation of a solar heating system on the rooftop would reduce energy consumption.

65. As regards the disposal of construction waste, Mr Mike Hudson said that the Project would generate about 35 000 tonnes of construction waste. About 65% would be reused; 19% delivered to the public fill reception facilities; and the rest disposed of at landfills.

66. Ms Audrey EU enquired about the charges for the student residences. Dr Grace AU, Director of Student Affairs of HKUST, replied that as at 2009, the hostel fee for a place in a double bedroom was \$13,000 for an academic year of nine months.

67. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong noted with concern that the shortfall of publicly-funded hostel places for HKUST was 732, but the capacity of the two hostel blocks under the Project was only 701 places. He questioned why the Administration and HKUST did not make better use of the site to provide more places in the two hostel blocks to meet the shortfall. He asked whether the total capacity of the two hostel blocks could be increased to 732 places or more to support increasing student exchange activities to enhance internationalization of students.

68. Dr Grace AU replied that the two student hostel blocks with 350 places each were planned in accordance with the guidelines set by UGC. Their capacity could unlikely be changed at the present stage of development.

69. Deputy Secretary-General (1), University Grants Committee (DSG1(UGC)) advised that the Administration would provide funding support for the construction of student hostels for the UGC-funded institutions in accordance with the shortfall of the approved level of publicly-funded student hostel provision. It rested with the individual institutions to design the proposed hostels which would be considered by the Architectural Services Department.

Action

All along, UGC had encouraged institutions to identify suitable sites to construct more student hostels.

70. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong did not accept the explanation. He said that given the availability of space in the land site, UGC should make use of the opportunity to provide more hostel places to HKUST, instead of merely meeting the shortfall. This would facilitate HKUST's development and enable it to increase student exchange activities.

71. DSG1(UGC) explained that there were technical constraints limiting the number of hostel places provided by the project. UGC would provide more information in this regard in the submission to PWSC. She added that additional hostel places would be provided to HKUST under a joint hostel project.

72. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that given the remote location of HKUST, student hostels should preferably be located within its campus. The construction of a joint hostel in the urban area away from HKUST might not be welcome by students.

73. USED said that the Administration would explore with UGC and HKUST on the feasibility of increasing the capacity of the two hostel blocks. However, he pointed out that the capacity of the two hostel blocks was subject to certain site and construction constraints such as height limitation and plot ratio. He added that HKUST would propose the construction of additional hostels to meet with the requirements arising from the implementation of the new academic structure and its long-term development needs.

74. Mr Mike Hudson said that the two hostel blocks were designed to the maximum height permitted under the lease conditions and the outline zoning plan. Additional places could be provided by lengthening the building but significant geotechnical works and retaining structures would be required. He added that HKUST was discussing with the Administration on a joint hostel project in Tseung Kwan O which would alleviate the shortage in hostel provision.

75. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that HKUST should strive to meet its current shortfall as well as the additional demand arising from student exchange activities in considering the capacity of the two hostel blocks. He considered that HKUST should be more aggressive in negotiating with the Administration in this regard.

76. Mr Abraham SHEK declared interest as a member of the Council of HKUST. He expressed support for Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong's view which, in his view, should apply to other UGC-funded institutions as well. He considered that the Administration should review the policy for student hostel provision. He said that despite the site constraints, HKUST should examine with the

Action

Administration the feasible options to increase the capacity of the two hostel blocks. He sought information on the additional cost required should their capacity be increased and the authority for setting the height limit for the hostel blocks.

77. The Chairman invited the Administration and HKUST to explain the authority and regulations governing the height of the two hostel blocks and the construction cost of the Project, in particular whether the cost included decoration and fittings.

78. Mr Mike Hudson replied that the height limit of the buildings was governed by the outline zoning plan and the lease conditions of the land grant which were devised in 1988. Having considered the height of the adjacent buildings, HKUST did not prefer the two hostel blocks of more than eight storeys. As regards construction cost, he said that the estimated construction unit cost, represented by the building and building services costs, was \$12,434 per square metre of construction floor area, which was in line with that for residential projects.

79. Ms Audrey EU indicated that while she did not object to the identification of feasible means to increase the capacity of the two blocks, she had reservations about modifying or not complying with the zoning plan to increase the height or density of the buildings. She would agree to a change to a zoning plan if this could bring about positive impact on the environment.

80. The Chairman said that the Administration should explore with HKUST the feasible options to increase the capacity of the two hostel blocks and make appropriate recommendations in its submission to PWSC for consideration. She added that the relevant information should also be provided to the Panel.

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81. USED said that the Administration would consider members' views and explore the feasible options to increase the capacity of the two hostel blocks.

Conclusion

82. Members supported the submission of the proposal for the Project to PWSC for consideration on 22 April 2009.

VI. Any other business

83. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:35 pm.