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**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 16 May 2011**

**Preferred Conceptual Plan Option
for the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major concerns of members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") about the preferred Conceptual Plan Option ("CPO") for the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

Background

2. On 4 March 2011, the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("the WKCDA Board") announced its endorsement of the Selection Panel¹ ("SP")'s recommendation of City Park designed by Foster+Partners ("F+P") as the preferred Conceptual Plan Option ("CPO").² Its selection process and justifications have been provided in LC Paper No. CB(2)1330/10-11(04).

3. In its Report on the Analysis of Views for the Stage 2 Public Engagement Exercise for the West Kowloon Cultural District (LC Paper No. CB(2)1180/10-11(01) released by WKCDA on 25 February 2011, the WKCDA-commissioned Public Policy Research Institute ("PPRI") of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University concluded that City Park was the most preferred

¹ SP, led by Mr Ronald Arculli, Chairman of WKCDA's Development Committee, was appointed by the WKCDA Board in November 2010 to assess the three CPOs with the objective to recommend a preferred CPO to the Board.

² The other two CPOs are Cultural Connect: Key to Sustained Vitality designed by Rocco Design Architects Limited, and Project for a New Dimension designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture.

CPO under both categories of "Addressing the main concerns from Stage One PE exercise" and "Degree of liking for the essential features", as shown in Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(2)1330/10-11(03).

4. According to WKCDA, while public opinion played a key role in the selection process, SP also took into consideration the following six selection criteria approved by the WKCDA Board -

Criteria	Weight
(a) Meeting planning design principles	30%
(b) Meeting community and stakeholders aspirations	20%
(c) Design and phasing flexibility	20%
(d) Technical strengths and weaknesses	15%
(e) Financial implications	10%
(f) Fulfilling the key planning and development requirements	5%

5. According to WKCDA, based on the preferred CPO, WKCDA will prepare a detailed Development Plan ("DP") for WKCD and unveil it to the public in summer 2011 before submitting it to the Town Planning Board ("TPB") for consideration by 2012. In preparing DP, WKCDA will take note of public preferences on individual features of the other two CPOs and incorporate them if they are technically feasible and financially viable with due regard to the integrity of the preferred CPO.

Members' concerns

6. The main concerns raised by members of the Joint Subcommittee about matters relating to the preferred CPO at the meeting on 29 March 2011 are set out below.

Selection criteria

7. Members noted that SP's six selection criteria and their weightings had neither been mentioned in the Administration's brief provided to the three CPO Consultants nor publicly announced until after the conclusion of Stage 2 PE exercise. Questions relating to such criteria (e.g. "design and phasing flexibility") had also been absent in PPRI's questionnaire survey. In addition,

among the six selection criteria, only the criterion on "meeting community and stakeholders aspirations" was related to Stage 2 PE exercise, while all other criteria were related to the technical aspects of WKCD. Members questioned how SP members who did not have the relevant expertise had been able to assess the technical aspects of CPOs and make an informed and objective judgment.

8. Some members raised concerns about when the three Consultants had been informed of the six selection criteria and their weightings, and how and by whom they had been formulated. WKCDA advised that it commissioned the three Consultants in July 2009, and the six selection criteria were formulated by SP and endorsed by the WKCDA Board in August 2010.

Selection process

9. Members noted that the WKCDA Board decided to accept SP's recommendation to select City Park as the preferred CPO at its meeting on 4 March 2011. A concern was raised on whether and when the Board members who were non-members of SP had been notified of SP's recommendation. There was also a concern about how the WKCDA Board, particularly its Chairman and members who were not SP members, could come to an important decision on the preferred CPO at that meeting which lasted about two hours only.

10. According to WKCDA, the WKCDA Board had been notified of SP's recommendation only at the meeting on 4 March 2011. The scores marked by each SP member for each CPO had been kept confidential and calculated only one hour or so before that meeting. The procedures for the selection process had been formulated in consultation with the Independent Commission Against Corruption. The WKCDA Board had all along been fully informed about the features of CPOs. Prior to making the decision, its members had been given sufficient time to peruse the relevant documents and consider SP's recommendation. The WKCDA Board might reject SP's recommendation if necessary. SP included the chairmen of various committees under WKCDA, who should have relayed SP's views to their respective committees after each SP meeting. In addition, the chairman of SP had occasionally briefed members of such committees on SP's work and listen to their views on CPOs, with a view to ensuring that the selection of the preferred CPO would meet the expectations of various committees.

Preferred CPO

11. As the results of Stage 2 PE exercise had indicated that no single CPO stood out in all aspects, members questioned the appropriateness of the

WKCDA Chairman's remark made before the announcement of the preferred CPO that the choice had been obvious to him. There was a worry that the WKCDA Board had already chosen City Park, regardless of the various preferences expressed by the public during the PE exercise.

12. There was also a view that the main reason for selecting City Park was its high flexibility which would facilitate earlier development of commercial and residential blocks in WKCD and WKCDA could then generate incomes to finance the construction of the arts and cultural facilities there. WKCDA advised that according to the results of Stage 2 PE exercise, the public preferred City Park over the other two CPOs in a number of aspects. In view of the scale and complexity of the WKCD project, it was impossible for any preferred CPO to obtain the overwhelming support from the society. Different stakeholders might have different views or preferences on CPOs. WKCDA hoped that such differences could be minimized through the PE exercise.

13. Given the long time span and large scale of the WKCD project, there was a worry that the preferred CPO might subsequently be altered to the extent that it would substantially depart from its current design. WKCDA advised that the basic design of the preferred CPO would not be changed, and any such changes would need to be submitted to TPB for consideration.

Architectural design competitions

14. Concern had been expressed about whether WKCDA would fulfill its undertaking to hold architectural design competitions for individual landmark facilities in WKCD, and whether the core facilities to be developed in each area of WKCD would be shown in the draft DP. WKCDA advised that the design competitions would be held. The DP to be submitted to TPB would not contain the detailed architectural drawings for individual landmark facilities and their construction timetables, but would set apart the land for such facilities to be developed at least in Phase I of WKCD. WKCDA was studying with F+P the possible locations of such facilities. WKCDA would consult the Joint Subcommittee on the draft DP before its submission to TPB.

Financial implications

15. Some members expressed concerns about the financial implications of the preferred CPO, as the Chairman of WKCDA's Development Committee had told the media that the approved \$21.6 billion upfront endowment might be insufficient for the entire WKCD project.

16. According to WKCDA, with the surging construction costs in recent years, the \$21.6 billion would definitely be insufficient, if the construction of all arts and cultural facilities in WKCD commenced immediately. However, during Stage 1 PE exercise, the public had expressed support for such facilities to be developed in phases. Their development should also remain flexible to accommodate the possible changing needs and expectations of the stakeholders and society. As the WKCD project was still in the early stage and DP would need to be approved by TPB, it was hard to arrive at a specific cost estimate for the entire project at the current stage.

17. Notwithstanding the assurance given by the former Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs and the WKCDA Chairman that no additional funding would be sought from LegCo for the WKCD project, some members were concerned whether such assurance would still be valid and about the plan of WKCDA if the project was overspent. WKCDA was urged to enhance the transparency of the cost estimates of the project.

18. WKCDA advised that at present, it was difficult to judge whether the WKCD project would be overspent, as its phasing arrangements and DP had yet to be finalized. WKCDA had not started spending the approved \$21.6 billion. As the entire project would last over a decade, WKCDA would act prudently with the public resources in hand. A more specific cost estimate for the project was expected to be available after the approval of DP by TPB.

Relevant papers

19. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at the LegCo's website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on
Preferred Conceptual Plan Option
for the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	13.1.2009 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	27.2.2009 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	14.4.2009 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)1869/08-09(01)
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	4.12.2009 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	16.4.2010 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	20.9.2010 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	14.1.2011 (Item III)	Agenda
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.3.2011 (Item II)	Agenda