

**立法會**  
*Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)385/11-12(06)

Ref : CB2/PS/2/08

**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 29 November 2011**

**Proposed Development Plan  
for the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the proposed Development Plan ("DP") for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") project and summarizes the major concerns of members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee").

**Background**

2. On 4 March 2011, the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("the WKCDA Board") announced the selection of City Park designed by Foster+Partners as the preferred Conceptual Plan Option ("CPO") on which the DP for WKCD was to be based. By virtue of section 21(1) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) ("WKCDAO"), WKCDA is responsible for preparing the DP, the main purpose of which is to lay out the WKCD area and set apart the land for various arts and cultural facilities; for other land uses such as commercial, hotel, retail and public open spaces; and for internal infrastructural projects.

3. Under sections 21(3) and (4) of WKCDAO, in preparing the DP, WKCDA had to consult the public and the Secretary for Home Affairs who may impose such requirements or conditions as he thinks necessary or expedient for the development of WKCD. WKCDA unveiled the proposed DP for Stage 3 Public Engagement ("PE") exercise conducted from 30 September to 30 October 2011. According to WKCDA, while the proposed DP had been

developed on the basis of the preferred CPO, WKCDA had taken note of public preferences on individual features of the other two CPOs (i.e. Key to Sustained Vitality designed by Rocco Design Architects Limited and Project for a New Dimension designed by the Office for Metropolitan Architecture) as reflected in Stage 2 PE exercise conducted from August to November 2010, and had incorporated those technically feasible and financially viable features in **Appendix I** into the proposed DP with due regard to the integrity of the preferred CPO.

4. Under section 21(5)(b) of WKCDAO, WKCDA had to ensure compliance of the DP with the development parameters and other requirements or conditions specified in the South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan ("SWKOZP"), which was approved by the Chief Executive in Council in March 2009. According to SWKOZP, the development parameters for WKCD include -

- (a) a maximum plot ratio limit at 1.81;
- (b) not more than 20% of the total plot ratio for residential use;
- (c) provision of not less than 23 hectares of public open space (including three hectares of piazza areas and a waterfront promenade of not less than 20 metres in width); and
- (d) maximum building heights ranging from 50 to 100 metres above Principal Datum.

#### Proposed DP

5. According to WKCDA, the proposed DP comprises the following key features –

- (a) 17 core arts and cultural facilities in **Appendix II**;
- (b) a Great Park with open-air performance venues;
- (c) the Avenue connecting the entrances to the core arts and cultural venues in WKCD; and
- (d) three civic squares serving as hives of activity and central meeting points.

6. According to WKCDA, the proposed DP is expected to be finalized for submission to the Town Planning Board ("TPB") around the end of 2011. The

proposed implementation plan for WKCD is in **Appendix III**. In selecting facilities for the initial phase, WKCDA stated that it had taken into consideration the public's wish for organic growth, aspirations of arts and cultural stakeholders after the previous stages of PE exercises, sites availability and financial implications. The first batch of facilities expected to be commissioned around 2015 will be part of the Great Park with its outdoor performance facilities, followed by the phased completion of other arts and cultural facilities starting from 2015.

### **Members' concerns**

7. Matters relating to the DP and implementation of the WKCD project were discussed at the Joint Subcommittee meetings in the past three years. Members' concerns are highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Expectation on the DP

8. Members raised concern about the extent to which the desirable features of the three CPOs could be merged into the DP as they each had distinct characteristics. There was a view that the DP should combine the best desirables of the three CPOs, so as to open up a new horizon for Hong Kong's cultural development. According to the Administration, instead of combining the three CPOs, WKCDA might incorporate the desirable features of the other two CPOs without compromising the integrity of the preferred CPO.

9. Concern was raised about whether the core facilities to be developed in each phase of the WKCD development would be shown in DP. WKCDA was called on to consult the Joint Subcommittee on the DP before its submission to TPB. According to WKCDA, 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 1 of the WKCD project. It undertook to consult the Joint Subcommittee on the draft DP before its submission to TPB.

10. Some members expressed concern about the accessibility to the WKCD site. There was a view that to enhance the connectivity of pedestrian access to WKCD, the development of its park areas should be integrated with the waterfront planning of the Victoria Harbour. In WKCDA's view, it was very important to ensure WKCD to be a place for everyone. Putting the roads and vehicles underneath the WKCD site would facilitate easy accessibility to the site. WKCDA was discussing with relevant government departments, such as the Transport Department and Environmental Protection Department, and the Harbourfront Commission on how to improve the external connections with the

site. WKCDA would also strive to ensure an effective integration of the harbourfront planning (including transport) with WKCD, as this was crucial for realizing the preferred CPO and would bring long-term benefits to WKCD and improve the public life.

### Financial strategy

11. Members noted that given the construction cost escalation in recent years, the one-off \$21.6 billion upfront endowment granted to WKCDA in 2008 might not be sufficient for the whole WKCD project. Some members considered that as the implementation of the project had yet to commence, members of the public would not support the provision of any additional funding to it. It was suggested that while the construction cost escalation was hardly controllable, WKCDA might consider scaling down the project or developing the arts and cultural facilities in phases to keep its cash flow healthy. WKCDA should also liaise with the Administration on what communal and government facilities and related engineering works, which were designed to support the WKCD development, would be undertaken by the Government instead of WKCDA.

12. According to WKCDA, it had not asked for additional funding for the WKCD project but had tried to outline that a lot of things had changed since the approval of the upfront endowment. WKCDA was in detailed discussion with the Government on the demarcation and phasing of public infrastructure works to be funded and undertaken by the Government. WKCDA would strive to take forward the discussion as quickly as possible with a view to facilitating the WKCD development. The Administration would provide detailed information on the communal and government facilities and related engineering works to be undertaken by the Government, when seeking funding approval from LegCo.

13. Members raised concern about how to establish long-term and stable revenue sources for WKCD. WKCDA advised that until the detailed designs and cost planning of individual arts and cultural venues in WKCD had taken place, it was almost impossible to ascertain the proportion of the retail, dining and entertainments ("RDE") facilities on the site and WKCDA would remain conservative about the likely returns from RDE.

14. Some members noted WKCDA's plan to explore revenue sources (such as naming right) other than public funding and were of the view that WKCDA should carefully consider the issue of naming right and exercise political sensitivity in considering whether to accept donations from certain sources. WKCDA should also consider the feasibility of expanding its fund-raising network, such as looking for donations from overseas philanthropists. In WKCDA's view, it was legitimate to pursue some other options for financing

the WKCD project. While naming right was a common fund-raising way in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, WKCDA would keep it open and give due regard to its sensitivity in Hong Kong. If Hong Kong people, the Government and LegCo did not support it, alternative options would be explored.

### Implementation of the WKCD project

15. Concern was raised about WKCDA's criteria for determining the priority of putting in place arts and cultural venues in various phases of the WKCD development. According to WKCDA, some venues (e.g. the Centre for Contemporary Performance, which was predicated on the need to get new or small arts groups into the WKCD site) were expected to be realized in a relatively short period of time. It was also hoped that the construction of some complicated venues, such as M+, would commence and conclude as soon as practicable. Some projects like music centres and bigger theatres would require longer construction time, as they would involve connections with train lines, other building projects and underground infrastructure. The mode of operation (such as public private partnerships) of some other projects was under consideration and their implementation timetable remained uncertain. WKCDA would endeavor to strike a balance in the priorities of various arts and cultural projects, which would be included in the DP to be submitted to TPB.

16. Some members expressed concern about the progress of M+ and hoped that the design competitions for it and other landmark facilities in WKCD would be launched as soon as possible. WKCDA was called on to organize activities to introduce the concept and vision of M+ to the public. According to WKCDA, after the submission of the DP to TPB, it would focus on developing M+ collections, building connections with the public and private museums in Hong Kong and organizing a range of activities on the WKCD site to enhance public understanding of what M+ would be in the next few years. Details of design competitions for a number of arts and cultural venues would be made public soon and such competitions would be open to local and overseas designers. The first competition was likely to be launched in late 2011 upon the formation of the organizing committee and jury.

17. Some members suggested that some cultural software programmes, such as literary and outdoor cultural activities, book fairs on the WKCD site and training for arts administration and arts critique, could be conducted as soon as possible before the commissioning of Phase I facilities in WKCD. According to WKCDA, in the next three years, it would undertake a number of cultural software activities for WKCD with some investment returns of the upfront endowment and without affecting the funding for capital projects in WKCD.

## **Relevant papers**

18. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at the Legislative Council's website is in **Appendix IV**.

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28 November 2011

### **Desirable features from the other two Conceptual Plan Options which have been incorporated into the proposed Development Plan**

1. Relocation of Xiqu Centre to Canton Road end of the West Kowloon Cultural District
2. Relocation of M+ to the entrance of the Great Park
3. Realignment of the Avenue to provide room for street performances
4. Inclusion of Arts Pavilions
5. Inclusion of a Premier Theatre
6. Incorporation of 'Banyan Farm' concept in Outdoor Theatre design
7. Provision of space for literary activities and programmes
8. Proposed provision of travellators
9. Proposed provision of green roofs on buildings
10. Inclusion of arts pontoons subject to technical and statutory feasibility
11. Inclusion of piers subject to technical and statutory feasibility

*Source: Website of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ([www.wkcda.hk/pe3](http://www.wkcda.hk/pe3))*

**Core arts and cultural facilities in the proposed Development Plan**

	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Mega Performance Venue	Hong Kong's biggest indoor seated facility, with over 15 000 seats designed for local and overseas concert and large-scale entertainment events.
2	Exhibition Centre Complex	A medium-sized convention facility sitting under the Mega Performance Venue and integrated with a hotel.
3-4	Freespace (with a music box)	It can accommodate 300 to 500 people and places no restriction on the performances it hosts. It also contains a 150-seat (or 300 standing) Music Box providing venue for alternative and independent music scenes.
5	M+	An international-calibre museum for visual culture, covering contemporary arts, design, architecture, moving image and popular culture. A floor area of 43 000 square metres will be developed in Phase 1.
6	Lyric Theatre	A 1 200-seat facility with an orchestra pit for dance, ballet, opera, musicals and theatrical performances.
7	Great Theatre	A grand theatre with 1 600 seats for opera, dance and other large-scale performances.
8	Musical Theatre	A 2000-seat receiving house for touring musicals, popular commercial productions and large-scale performances.

	<b>Facility</b>	<b>Description</b>
9-10	Music Centre (comprising a concert hall and a recital hall with arts education facility)	It comprises a 1 800-seat concert hall and a 300-seat recital hall for chamber music and recitals.
11-13	Centre for Contemporary Performance (comprising 3 blackboxes with arts education facility)	It comprises three flexible performing spaces with 400, 250 and 150 seats respectively for different scales of dance, theatrical and multimedia performances.
14	Medium Theatre I	A well-equipped 600-seat, proscenium-arch style theatre for medium-scale theatrical and dance performances.
15	Medium Theatre II	A 600-seat facility dedicated to medium-scale spoken-word drama and dance ensembles.
16-17	Xiqu Centre (comprising a main theatre and a teahouse with arts education facility)	It comprises a 1 100-seat main theatre, a commercially operated teahouse, and a 400-seat small theatre for traditional Chinese performances.

*Source: Website of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ([www.wkcda.hk/pe3](http://www.wkcda.hk/pe3))*

**Proposed implementation plan for  
the West Kowloon Cultural District**

**I. Between 2014 and 2017**

a. Between 2014 and 2015

- (i) Development of part of the Great Park; and
- (ii) Arts Pavilion

b. Between 2015 and 2017

- (i) Xiqu Centre (Main Theatre, Tea House and education facility); Free Space (with Music Box); Outdoor Theatre; and
- (ii) Centre for Contemporary Performance (with three Blackbox theatres and education facility), subject to construction programme of the Express Rail Link

**II. Between 2017 and 2020**

- a. M+ Phase I
- b. Lyric Theatre
- c. Medium Theatre I
- d. Music Centre (with a Concert Hall, a Recital Hall and education facility)
- e. Mega Performance Venue and Exhibition Centre (subject to alternative funding options)
- f. Musical Theatre (subject to alternative funding options)

**III. Beyond 2020**

- a. Great Theatre
- b. M+ Phase II
- c. Medium Theatre II
- d. Xiqu Small Theatre

*Source: Press release entitled "WKCDA Unveils Proposed Development Plan" issued by West Kowloon Cultural District Authority on 29 September 2011 ([http://www.wkcda.hk/pe3/en/newsroom/index\\_id\\_03.html](http://www.wkcda.hk/pe3/en/newsroom/index_id_03.html))*

**Relevant papers on  
Proposed Development Plan  
for the West Kowloon Cultural District project**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	13.1.2009 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	27.2.2009 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	14.4.2009 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1869/08-09(01)</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	4.12.2009 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	16.4.2010 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1283/09-10(02)</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	20.9.2010 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	14.1.2011 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.3.2011 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	16.5.2011 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	11.7.2011 (Item I)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	26.8.2011 (Item I & II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a>

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