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Panel on Financial Affairs

Meeting on 7 February 2014

**Background brief on the
construction of West Kowloon Government Offices**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the planned construction of West Kowloon Government Offices ("WKGO") and summarizes the concerns and views expressed by Members during relevant discussions at meetings of the Legislative Council and its committees in 2011 and 2013.

Background

2. The Financial Secretary ("FS") indicated in his 2012-13 Budget Speech that the Government was taking forward the development of a government office building in West Kowloon for relocation of some existing government offices situated in core business areas to release business sites for commercial use. In his 2013-14 Budget Speech, FS further mentioned that the Government was proceeding with the phased relocation of departments in the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront, which involved 29 departments and more than 10 000 staff, to the new government office buildings in West Kowloon, Kai Tak and Tseung Kwan O.

Views and concerns expressed by Members

3. At the Council meeting on 2 March 2011, Hon Starry LEE raised an oral question on "relocation of offices of the Government and public organizations in core districts". Ms LEE asked for information about the locations and floor areas of existing government offices situated in core districts and the relocation plans for these government offices. In their follow-up questions, Ms LEE and some other Members enquired about the progress and details of the relocation of the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront, and the use of revitalized industrial buildings for relocation of government offices.

4. At the Council meeting on 1 June 2011, a motion on "Promoting the Relocation of Departmental Headquarters to the Districts for Creating Employment" moved by Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan and as amended by Hon Tanya CHAN, Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah and Hon LEE Wing-tat was passed. The motion urged the Administration to, inter alia, proactively study relocating expeditiously the headquarters of its back offices which are situated in prime urban land lots to various non-core districts and new development areas, and immediately announce to the public a concrete relocation timetable with specific details in respect of the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront.

5. The Administration consulted the Panel on Financial Affairs at the meeting on 7 November 2011 on the proposal to construct the new Trade and Industry Tower at the Kai Tak Development Area. During the discussion, some members enquired about the progress of the relocation of Government departments accommodated in the existing government office towers at the Wan Chai waterfront and the future use of the vacated sites of the office towers. The Administration responded that two sites in the Kai Tak Development Area and a few sites in Tseung Kwan O and Cheung Sha Wan had been identified for construction of government office buildings for the relocation of the Government bureaux and departments currently located in the Wan Chai office buildings. Details of the removal plans had yet to be worked out, and plans for the future use of the sites of the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront were still being formulated.

6. During the special meetings of the Finance Committee ("FC") to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14, Members raised a number of written questions relating to the relocation of the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai waterfront. The Administration advised that it had planned to relocate some departments in the three government office buildings to WKGO under planning. The construction works were expected

to commence in 2014-15 for completion in 2018. The Administration had also earmarked sites in other districts such as Kai Tak and Tseung Kwan O to construct new government office buildings for the reprovisioning exercise. Construction works would commence from 2015-16 onwards, with the first office building expected to complete in 2019-20.

The proposed West Kowloon Government Offices project

7. The Administration consulted the Yau Tsim Mong District Council ("YTMDC") on the proposed construction of WKGO at meetings on 25 April and 12 December 2013. According to the paper provided by the Administration for YTMDC meeting on 25 April 2013, the proposed WKGO will situate at the junction of Hoi Ting Road and Lai Cheung Road, Yau Ma Tei. The site area will be about 9 500 square metres providing a net operational floor area of around 50 000 square metres. The planned WKGO will cater for the reprovisioning of some government offices currently accommodated in leased premises, departments in the Yau Ma Tei Multi-storey Carpark Building for construction of the Central Kowloon Route, and some departments in the three government office buildings at the Wan Chai Waterfront.

8. During YTMDC meeting on 25 April 2013, DC members raised concerns/views on a number of issues, including height of the proposed WKGO building, possible impact on the traffic and food premises in the vicinity upon commissioning of the building, suggestions to provide a post office in the building and a leisure complex on the adjacent government site. The Administration has addressed DC members' concerns in a paper provided for YTMDC meeting on 12 December 2013. The Administration further advised in the paper that the project will commence in the second half of 2015 and is scheduled for completion in 2018-19.

Latest Development

9. The Administration will consult the Panel on Financial Affairs on the proposal to construct WKGO at the meeting on 7 February 2014. The Administration intends to submit the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee in the first half of 2015.

Relevant papers

10. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 February 2014

Appendix

List of relevant papers

| Date | Event | Paper/Minutes of meeting |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 2 March 2011 | Hon Starry LEE raised an oral question on "relocation of offices of the Government and public organizations in core districts" | <u>Hansard</u> |
| 1 June 2011 | The Legislative Council passed the motion on "Promoting the Relocation of Departmental Headquarters to the Districts for Creating Employment" moved by Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan and amended by Hon Tanya CHAN, Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah and Hon LEE Wing-tat | <u>Wording of the motion passed</u> <u>Progress Report</u> |
| 7 November 2011 | The Panel on Financial Affairs discussed the proposed construction of Kai Tak Government Offices | <u>Discussion paper</u> (LC Paper No. CB(1)237/11-12(03)) <u>Minutes</u> (LC Paper No. CB(1)614/11-12) |
| 8 to 12 April 2013 | The Finance Committee held special meetings to examine the Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14 | <u>Administration's replies to Members initial written questions for the session on "Public Finance"</u> |
| 25 April 2013 | The Yau Tsim Mong District Council was consulted by the Administration on the construction of the West | <u>Discussion paper</u> (in Chinese only) |
| 12 December 2013 | Kowloon Government Offices | <u>Discussion paper</u> |