

立法會
Legislative Council

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 41st meeting
held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 20 March 2015, at 5:10 pm

Members present:

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP

Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Claudia MO
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

Members absent:

Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP

Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon Dennis KWOK
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP

Public officers attending:

Ms Elizabeth TSE Man-yee, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Mr Alfred ZHI Jian-hong	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mrs Alice YU NG Ka-chun	Project Director (3), Architectural Services Department
Mr LO Kwok-kong	Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme), Housing Department
Ms Sonia YUNG Tak-ling	Chief Architect (4), Housing Department
Miss Charmaine WONG Hoi-wan, JP	Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2)
Mr Benjamin MOK Kwan-yu, JP	District Officer (Sham Shui Po), Home Affairs Department
Mr FONG Kai-leung	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services)
Ms Linda LAW Lai-tan	Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Recreation and Sport) 2
Mr LEUNG Koon-kee, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr Donald CHOY Chi-mun	Assistant Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services) 3
Miss Shirley CHUNG Yuk-fong	Chief Executive Officer (Planning) 2, Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Miss Amy YUEN Wai-Yin	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Water Policy)
Mr Daniel CHUNG Kum-wah, JP	Director of Drainage Services
Mr KAN Hon-shing	Acting Chief Engineer (Sewerage Projects), Drainage Services Department

Mr TANG Kin-fai, JP	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Environmental Assessment)
Mr Maurice YEUNG Kwok-leung	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Assessment and Noise), Environmental Protection Department
Mr Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming	Project Manager (Major Works), Highways Department
Mr Anthony LO Kam-yan	Chief Engineer 3 (Major Works), Highways Department
Mr TAI Wai-man	Chief Engineer (Project Management), Drainage Services Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Derek LO	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Daniel SIN	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Raymond SZETO	Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Michelle NIEN	Legislative Assistant (1)5
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)6

Action

Item No. 4 – FCR(2014-15)59

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 14, 30 JANUARY AND 28 FEBRUARY 2015

PWSC(2014-15)38

HEAD 711 – HOUSING

**Social Welfare and Community Building – Community centres and halls
197SC – Reprovisioning of Pak Tin Community Hall and special child care centre-cum-early education and training centre in Pak Tin Estate redevelopment site, and construction of footbridge link at Nam Cheong Street, Sham Shui Po**

The Committee continued with the deliberation on the item PWSC(2014-15)38 which was taken out from the recommendations of the

Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") made on 14 January 2015 for separate voting.

2. Noting that applicants had to wait for over two years for a place in the special child care centre-cum-early education and training centre ("SCCC-cum-EETC") in Pak Tin Estate, Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned that many applicants would have reached the age of six after waiting for two years and hence become ineligible for the service. Dr CHEUNG requested the Administration to raise the plot ratio of the site for the proposed new complex building, so that more storeys could be built to cater for an expansion of the services of the SCCC-cum-EETC upon its reprovisioning.

3. Chief Architect (4), Housing Department responded that the site for the proposed new complex building was originally a small leisure space within the Pak Tin Estate. Given the high headroom required for the Pak Tin Community Hall upon reprovisioning, the height of the proposed complex building would be equivalent to half of the height of the nearby residential blocks. The Administration had struck a balance between the request of PWSC members to raise the plot ratio of the site and the environmental concerns raised by the local community and the Sham Shui Po District Council ("SSPDC"), and had fine-tuned the layout and the elevation design of the proposed complex building accordingly.

Motion proposed by Ms Cyd HO

4. Ms Cyd HO held the view that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") should seize the reprovisioning opportunity to explain to residents of Pak Tin Estate and SSPDC the lack of SCCC-cum-EETC services in the territory, and to seek their support for enhancing the provision of such services at the proposed complex building. Ms HO said that she had just given the wording of a motion proposed to be moved under paragraph 37A of the Finance Committee ("FC") Procedure urging the Administration to expedite the identification of land for provision of such services in order to shorten the waiting time of the service targets.

5. The Chairman read out the wording of the motion proposed by Ms Cyd HO as follows –

"本人現按《財務委員會會議程序》第37A段提出動議：因應PWSC(2014-15)38地積比率未善用，本委員會促請當局盡速覓地興建特殊教育設施，以縮減有特殊教育需要幼童輪候服務時間。"

(Translation)

"I hereby move motion in accordance with paragraph 37A of the Finance Committee Procedure: In view that the plot ratio under PWSC(2014-15)38 is under-utilized, the Finance Committee urges the Administration to expeditiously identify land for constructing special education facilities, so as to shorten the waiting time of young children who are in need of special education."

6. The Chairman suspended the meeting at 5:20 pm to seek legal advice on whether the motion proposed by Ms Cyd HO was directly related to the funding proposal in question.

7. The meeting resumed at 5:39 pm.

8. The Chairman said that upon seeking legal advice, he was of the view that identifying land for constructing special education facilities was a broad policy issue that should be pursued at the Panel on Welfare Services instead. As such, he ruled that Ms Cyd HO's motion was not directly related to the funding proposal under discussion.

9. Ms Cyd HO commented that the Chairman appeared to have tightened his ruling in respect of the admissibility of members' motions proposed to be moved under paragraph 37A of FC Procedure but said that she did not want to dwell on the issue. The Chairman expressed disagreement with Ms HO's view, saying that all along he had been lenient in ruling members' motions. Pointing out that provision of facilities for the underprivileged often met with strong objection of the local community, Ms HO called on SWD to get hold of every opportunity to explain to the public the needs for such services given their shortage in the territory.

10. The meeting resumed deliberation on the item.

11. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that according to the officials responsible for the project proposal, completion of the project would be delayed by one year if the plot ratio of the site for the proposed complex building was to increase from 3 to 4.5. Mr LEUNG considered the extension in project time worthy as the increase in plot ratio would bring about an increase in the internal floor area of the site from 15 000 to 22 500 square feet.

12. Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme), Housing Department ("CCE(PWP)/HD") responded that the proposed complex building, if built taller, would inevitably affect the ventilation and views of the residential

blocks nearby. It would take at least a year to repeat the required consultation and funding approval process if the usage of the site was to increase. In response to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's further enquiry, CCE(PWP)/HD advised that providing facilities underground would raise the cost of the project and post further technical challenges in addressing end users' potential concerns, such as ventilation and natural lighting.

Motion to adjourn discussion on the item

13. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung then moved, without notice, a motion pursuant to paragraph 39 of the FC Procedure that discussion on PWSC(2014-15)38 be then adjourned.

14. The Chairman thereupon put the question on Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's motion and directed that members, when speaking on the question, should only speak once for not more than three minutes each.

15. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung introduced his motion and explained that the adjournment of the item could give the Administration time to study members' suggestion of raising the plot ratio of the site for the proposed complex building.

16. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen spoke in favour of the motion, saying that it represented members' dissatisfaction with the Administration's failure in giving thoughts on enhancing its service delivery in reprovisioning public facilities.

17. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr WU Chi-wai spoke on the motion. While they shared the view of Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung to raise the plot ratio of the site, they did not think that the Administration could improve the design of the proposal in just a week's time. Adjourning discussion of the item would only delay the reprovision of the SCCC-cum-EETC and affect its services. Mr WU also requested to put on record his view that SWD should be reprimanded for failing to fight for the provision of welfare facilities for the disadvantaged and the disabled at new public facilities and premises.

18. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services) ("ADSW(R&MSS)") responded to the motion. ADSW(R&MSS) advised that the Administration had undertaken to increase the number of SCCC-cum-EETC places by 1 471 during this term of Government. To address the needs of some 6 000 applicants currently on the waiting list for such places, the Administration had put in place various measures. For example, the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses, which aimed at encouraging social welfare

organizations to put their land to better use, had received 63 applications. It was expected that 3 842 places of pre-school services for disabled children would be provided under the Scheme. SWD will also launch a pilot scheme this year to provide pre-school rehabilitation services at kindergartens to try out a new service delivery mode. SWD had also been working closely with other Government departments and grasping every opportunity in providing welfare services in various districts. Of the 30 welfare projects in Sham Shui Po currently being planned, 17 were rehabilitation services of which five projects were to provide pre-school services at a number of 420 places.

19. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung gave concluding remarks on his motion. The Chairman put to vote the motion to adjourn discussion on item PWSC(2014-15)38. At the requests of members, the Chairman ordered a division and the division bell was rung for five minutes. Three members voted in favour of and 39 members voted against the motion. The votes of individual members were as follows –

For:

Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung
Mr CHAN Chi-chuen
(3 members)

Mr Gary FAN

Against:

Mr Albert HO
Mr CHAN Kam-lam
Mr TAM Yiu-chung
Mr Jeffrey LAM
Mr WONG Ting-kwong
Dr LAM Tai-fai
Mr CHAN Kin-por
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che
Mrs Regina IP
Mr Alan LEONG
Mr Steven HO
Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr Charles Peter MOK
Dr Kenneth CHAN
Miss Alice MAK
Dr Fernando CHEUNG
Mr IP Kin-yuen
Mr POON Siu-ping
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok
Mr Tony TSE

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan
Ms Emily LAU
Mr WONG Kwok-hing
Mr Andrew LEUNG
Ms Starry LEE
Mr CHAN Hak-kan
Dr Priscilla LEUNG
Mr IP Kwok-him
Mr Paul TSE
Mr NG Leung-sing
Mr WU Chi-wai
Mr MA Fung-kwok
Mr CHAN Han-pan
Miss CHAN Yuen-han
Mr Christopher CHEUNG
Dr Helena WONG
Dr Elizabeth QUAT
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan
Mr Christopher CHUNG

(39 members)

20. The Chairman declared that the motion was negated.

21. Pointing out that members were caught in the dilemma as they were dissatisfied with the proposal but had to endorse it given its importance, Mr IP Kin-yuen requested the Administration to conduct consultation in a more comprehensive manner and to strengthen inter-departmental co-ordination for its future project proposals.

22. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung reiterated his request for the Administration to raise the plot ratio of the site for the proposed complex building.

Voting on PWSC(2014-15)38

23. There being no further question or comment from members, the Chairman put the item PWSC(2014-15)38 to vote. At the request of Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, the Chairman ordered a division. The Chairman said that 42 members voted for and one member voted against the proposal. One member abstained from voting. The votes of individual members were as follows –

For:

Mr Albert HO
Ms Emily LAU
Mr WONG Kwok-hing
Mr Jeffrey LAM
Mr WONG Ting-kwong
Ms Starry LEE
Mr CHAN Hak-kan
Dr Priscilla LEUNG
Mr IP Kwok-him
Mr Paul TSE
Ms Claudia MO
Mr Steven HO
Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr MA Fung-kwok
Mr CHAN Han-pan
Miss CHAN Yuen-han
Mr Christopher CHEUNG
Dr Helena WONG
Dr Elizabeth QUAT
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan
Mr TAM Yiu-chung
Prof Joseph LEE
Mr Andrew LEUNG
Ms Cyd HO
Dr LAM Tai-fai
Mr CHAN Kin-por
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che
Mrs Regina IP
Mr Alan LEONG
Mr NG Leung-sing
Mr WU Chi-wai
Mr Gary FAN
Mr Charles Peter MOK
Dr Kenneth CHAN
Miss Alice MAK
Dr Fernando CHEUNG
Mr IP Kin-yuen
Mr POON Siu-ping
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok

Mr Christopher CHUNG
(42 members)

Mr Tony TSE

Against:

Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung
(1 member)

Abstained:

Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung
(1 member)

24. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

PWSC(2014-15)42

HEAD 703 – BUILDINGS

Recreation, Culture and Amenities – Sports facilities

273RS – Sports centre in Area 24D, Sha Tin

25. The Chairman advised that the item PWSC(2014-15)42 sought the Committee's approval for upgrading 273RS to Category A at an estimated cost of \$639.7 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices for the construction of a sports centre in Area 24D, Sha Tin.

26. There being no question from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

PWSC(2014-15)43

HEAD 704 – DRAINAGE

Environmental Protection – Sewerage and sewage treatment

388DS – Shek Wu Hui sewage treatment works – further expansion phase 1A

27. The Chairman said that the item PWSC(2014-15)43 sought the Committee's approval for upgrading part of 388DS to Category A at an estimated cost of \$502.7 million in MOD prices for the construction of advance works of phase 1A of the further expansion of the Shek Wu Hui sewage treatment works ("SWHSTW") and for carrying out the detailed design and associated site investigation works for the main works of phase 1A of the further expansion of SWHSTW.

28. There being no question from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

PWSC(2014-15)51

HEAD 706 – HIGHWAYS

Transport – Roads

810TH – Retrofitting of noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section)

29. The Chairman advised that the item PWSC(2014-15)51 sought the Committee's approval for upgrading 810TH to Category A at an estimated cost of \$826.5 million in MOD prices for the retrofitting of noise barriers on Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section) between Rose Dale Garden and Lakeshore Building.

Suggestion of retrofitting a full noise enclosure fronting the Church of Christ in China Tam Lee Lai Fun Memorial Secondary School

30. Dr Helena WONG said that Members belonging to the Democratic Party supported the proposal. Referring to members' concern raised at the relevant meeting of PWSC that the proposed provision of a noise semi-enclosure on the section of Tuen Mun Road fronting the Church of Christ in China Tam Lee Lai Fun Memorial School ("the School") might aggravate the noise and air pollution impacts on the School, Dr WONG asked about the Administration's decision in respect of members' request for retrofitting a full noise enclosure instead.

31. Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Assessment and Noise) ("PEPO(A&N")) responded that the Administration had provided a supplementary information paper on the proposal after the relevant PWSC meeting in response to members' concerns (LC Paper No. PWSC132/14-15(01)). In gist, the Administration had completed the noise abatement programme in the School by providing double-glazed windows with air-conditioners and mechanical air ventilation for all classrooms in 1999. Also, according to an assessment made by the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") after the relevant PWSC meeting, the proposed provision of a noise semi-enclosure would not bring any negative impact to the School on air quality. With the proposed noise semi-enclosure retrofitted, the noise level in the classrooms was expected to be reduced by one to two dB(A).

32. Dr Helena WONG did not subscribe to the Administration's explanation. She doubted that the noise semi-enclosure proposed might even

lead to an accumulation of vehicle emissions around the School, thus undermining students' health when they had activities outside the classrooms. She sought details on the above assessment made by EPD.

33. PEPO(A&N) replied that according to EPD's assessment, the proposed noise semi-enclosure would bring slight improvement to the air quality of the School's playground. Also, as the School was located next to the northbound carriageway of the Tuen Mun Road, the prevailing winds blowing from south to north of the district would take away the air pollutants around the School. Some accumulation of air pollutants was expected only around the entry and exit of the proposed noise semi-enclosure.

34. Noting from the Administration's supplementary information paper that the existing busy slow lane of Tuen Mun Road outside the School would have to be closed with project completion time delayed for two years if a full noise enclosure was to provide on the section of Tuen Mun Road fronting the School, Dr Helena WONG queried if the proposed provision of a full noise enclosure on the section of Tuen Mun Road abutting Eldo Court would give rise to the same technical issues.

35. Project Manager (Major Works), Highways Department ("PM(MW), HyD") explained that the need to close the section of Tuen Mun Road outside the Eldo Court during the construction period had been taken into account in drawing up the project schedule. Provision of a full noise enclosure on the section of Tuen Mun Road fronting the School would pose technical implications as additional foundations had to be built at the roadside section near the School. Given the proximity of the Eldo Court and the School which made it impossible to close both sections of Tuen Mun Road at the same time to avoid aggravating the traffic conditions, completion date of the project would be delayed for two years if a full noise enclosure was provided on the road section fronting the School. In reply to Dr Helena WONG and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, PM(MW), HyD affirmed that the building a full noise enclosure was technically feasible, but would require a longer construction time and a higher cost than the present proposal.

36. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung asked if the School had accepted the provision of the noise semi-enclosure than the full enclosure. PM(MW), HyD replied that the Administration had received objections against the non-provision of noise mitigation measures on Tuen Mun Road fronting the School after gazettal of the proposed works. Although part of the objections remained unresolved, the road scheme was authorized given its benefits to residents of about 1 800 dwellings along the Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section) who were currently exposed to excessive noise.

37. PM(MW), HyD further advised that the School was close to and was thus affected by the traffic noise from the Tsing Tin Interchange. Even a full noise enclosure was provided on Tuen Mun Road, most of the School's classroom windows fronting the road would still have to be kept shut in order to maintain an acceptable teaching environment. As the noise abatement programme had been completed for the School, the Administration did not see the need to retrofit a full noise enclosure on Tuen Mun Road for the School.

38. Noting the Administration's reasons above for the non-provision of a full noise enclosure for the School, Mr IP Kin-yuen asked if it would be more effective to provide double-glazed windows with air-conditioners for the some 1 800 dwellings who were the intended targets of the present proposal instead of a full noise enclosure. PEPO(A&N) pointed out that it was the Government's policy to implement direct engineering solutions, where practicable, by way of retrofitting of noise barriers and enclosures to mitigate the traffic noise impact of existing roads.

Request for reviewing the policy on controlling traffic noise at schools

39. Mr IP Kin-yuen expressed concern on the difference in noise control policies for residential buildings and schools. He held the view that such a difference in policy was neither fair nor effective to schools affected by traffic noise. Mr Albert HO echoed Mr IP's views. While expressing support for the proposal which residents in the neighbourhood of Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre Section) had long called for, Mr HO urged the Administration to review its policy on the different measures adopted for abating traffic noise for residential buildings and schools.

40. PEPO(A&N) responded that the Administration had accorded priority to providing mitigation measures to schools which were affected by traffic noise. The Administration had in fact completed the noise abatement programme for all of the some 600 schools currently in existence to ensure an acceptable environment for students. The measures were generally supported by the schools. For new schools, the Administration would assess the impact of the surrounding environment based on the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and consider the requisite planning and engineering mitigation measures, such that an acceptable environment could be maintained.

41. Mr IP Kin-yuen remained unconvinced and said that the School and the parents concerned would not have remained unsatisfied if the noise abatement measures in place for the School were effective. He called on the Administration to critically review the policy on noise abatement measures for schools. Expressing similar concerns, Dr Helena WONG held the strong view

that schools should be no different from residential developments in considering the provision of road noise barriers. She requested the Administration to undertake to review its policy in this regard. The Chairman said that the concerns of Mr IP and Dr WONG involved policy considerations and should thus be pursued at the relevant Panel instead. Mr Albert HO said that he would follow up the matter with the relevant Panel.

42. There being no further question or comment from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

PWSC(2014-15)49

HEAD 704 – DRAINAGE

Environmental Protection – Sewerage and sewage treatment

160DS – Tuen Mun sewerage, stage 1

346DS – Upgrading of Tuen Mun sewerage, phase 1

43. The Chairman said that the item PWSC(2014-15)49 sought the Committee's approval for upgrading part of 160DS and part of 346DS, entitled "Tuen Mun sewerage – Castle Peak Road trunk sewer and Tuen Mun village sewerage" to Category A at an estimated cost of \$722.5 million in MOD prices.

44. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen followed up Mr Albert CHAN's questions raised at the relevant meetings of PWSC on measures to encourage connection to public sewers after they were provided. Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Water Policy) ("ADEP(WP)") responded that the Government's policy was to provide a public sewer with reception points up to or as near as practicable the lot boundaries of village houses to facilitate the house owners to connect their sewage to the public sewer. Such a policy measure had been effective. Village house owners having difficulties meeting the costs of sewer connection could apply for financial assistance provided by the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Buildings Department.

45. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the rate of village houses having connected to public sewers. The Chairman and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung sought explanation on the low connection rate for the Tuen Mun sewerage catchment which was only 38% as at the end of 2014.

46. ADEP(WP) replied that as indicated in the Administration's supplementary information paper on the proposal (LC Paper No. PWSC120/14-15(01)), connection rates varied across sewerage catchments. The connection rates were higher in catchments where sewerage projects had

been completed for a long time. For example, the connection rate in Sha Tin was 94%. The connection rates were lower in catchments where construction of public sewers had just been completed as sewer connections for most of the village houses were in progress. This largely explained the low connection rate for the Tuen Mun sewerage catchment. In reply to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, ADEP(WP) advised that about 72% of the village houses in the seven villages covered under the proposal could technically be connected to the public sewers to be provided under the project.

Encouraging connection to public sewers

47. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked if the Administration would consider changing its existing policy of requiring village house owners to make house connection at their own costs so as to maximize the connection rate. ADEP(WP) pointed out that the connection rate for all sewerage catchments were in fact close to or higher than 80% except for Tuen Mun. Sewer connections of village houses were on the rise upon the provision of a trunk sewer. ADEP(WP) further advised that for the sake of fairness, the Administration would not provide connection inside private properties under the village sewerage programme. Village house owners had the incentives to carry out connection works at their own costs as this would benefit their properties.

48. In response to Mr CHAN Chi-chuen's enquiry on enforcement matters, ADEP(WP) advised that when the public village sewers were ready for connection, the Administration would brief village house owners on the legal requirements and technical specifications for sewer connection and wrote to owners requesting them to complete the sewer connection works within six to 12 months. In the case of sewage pollution caused by unco-operative house owners, EPD might consider serving such owners statutory notices.

49. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was dissatisfied with the Administration's response and urged the Administration to take a more proactive approach to increase the number of village houses connected to public sewers in order to maximize the benefits of these projects. His view was shared by Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung.

50. ADEP(WP) explained that there were many reasons for non-connection to the public sewers. These included complicated house ownership (such as multiple owners), unsuccessful attempt to contact owners, owners having a plan to re-build the village house etc. In the light of the above, sewer connection points were reserved for land lots with village house development proposals to facilitate future connections. Also, to encourage

connection to public sewers, the village house owners concerned would be consulted on the project proposal in order to cater for their connection to the public sewers. To assist owners in carrying out the connection works, the Administration would also visit the households concerned to offer appropriate assistance.

51. The Chairman said that special meetings of FC would be convened between 27 March 2015 and 2 April 2015 to examine the Estimates of Expenditure.

52. The Chairman declared that the meeting be adjourned.

53. The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
17 August 2015