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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 26th meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Wednesday, 1 June 2016, at 8:30 am**

Members present:

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP (Chairman)
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, 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 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
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
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, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS
Hon Alvin YEUNG Ngok-kiu

Members absent:

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Public officers attending:

Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr HON Chi-keung, JP	Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)
Mr Michael WONG Wai-lun, JP	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)
Ms Anissa WONG, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment

Ms Jasmine CHOI Suet-yung	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mr Daniel CHUNG Kum-wah, JP	Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Mr LAM Chi-keung	Chief Engineer (Hong Kong) ² Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr SIU Kang-chuen	Chief Traffic Engineer (New Territories East) Transport Department
Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP	Under Secretary for Food and Health
Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han	Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) ²
Mr CHIU Yu-chow	Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr LEUNG Koon-kee, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mrs Alice YU NG Ka-chun	Project Director (3) Architectural Services Department
Mr LAU Chun-tat	Chief Engineer (Land Works) Civil Engineering and Development Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Sharon CHUNG	Chief Council Secretary (1) ²
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Raymond CHOW	Senior Council Secretary (1) ⁶
Ms Maggie LAU	Council Secretary (1) ²
Ms Christina SHIU	Legislative Assistant (1) ²
Ms Clara LO	Legislative Assistant (1) ⁸
Ms Haley CHEUNG	Legislative Assistant (1) ⁹

Action

The Deputy Chairman advised that there were 11 funding proposals on the agenda for the meeting. He reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP") of the Legislative Council, they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to the funding proposals under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the proposals. He also drew members' attention to Rule 84 of RoP on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

Head 707 – New Towns and Urban Area Development
PWSC(2016-17)12 414RO Improvement works at Mui Wo

2. The Deputy Chairman said that the proposal, i.e. PWSC(2016-17)12, was to upgrade part of 414RO, entitled "Improvement works at Mui Wo, phase 2 stage 1", to Category A at an estimated cost of \$72.3 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices for the extension of an existing carpark at Mui Wo, including improvement works to the access to the carpark and associated landscaping and ancillary works. The Panel on Development had been consulted on the proposed project on 22 December 2015. Panel members supported the submission of the relevant funding proposal to the Subcommittee for consideration. A report on the gist of the Panel's discussion had been tabled at the meeting.

[At 8:48 am, the Deputy Chairman informed members that he had to attend another meeting. Given that due to traffic congestion, the Chairman had not yet arrived to chair the meeting, the Deputy Chairman invited nominations of members to act in the place of the Subcommittee Chairman. Members agreed that the meeting should be chaired by Mr CHAN Kam-lam. At 8:50 am, the Chairman arrived at the conference room and took the chair.]

Supply of and demand for parking spaces at Mui Wo

3. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung considered that vehicles illegally parked at Mui Wo currently far outnumbered the additional parking spaces to be provided under the proposed project (i.e. 118 spaces), and parking spaces at Mui Wo would still be insufficient after the implementation of the proposed project. Mr WU Chi-wai asked how the Administration assessed the demand of residents and visitors for parking spaces at Mui Wo. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked how the Administration projected the shortfall of parking spaces at Mui Wo.

4. Chief Traffic Engineer (New Territories East), Transport Department ("CTE(NTE)/TD"), said that currently there were 220 private car parking spaces for public use in Mui Wo. About 195 of them were frequently occupied. According to a survey conducted by the Transport Department ("TD"), the number of illegally parked vehicles at Mui Wo was on average around 200. Excluding the 40 to 50 "dead cars" or vehicles not issued with a Lantau Closed Road Permit ("LCRP"), the demand for parking spaces at Mui Wo was about 350. The current parking space shortfall in the district was estimated to be around 130.

5. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen requested the Administration to provide the following supplementary information on handling of illegal parking problem at Mui Wo in the last six months:

- (a) the number of "dead cars" removed by the Police; and
- (b) the number of prosecutions instituted by the Police against vehicles without LCRP in Mui Wo.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC264/15-16\(01\)](#) on 17 June 2016.)

6. Ms Alice MAK expressed doubt about the accuracy of the survey findings quoted by CTE(NTE)/TD. She considered that in assessing the demand of residents and visitors for parking spaces at Mui Wo, TD should take into account the future growth in the number of vehicles eligible for temporary LCRPs as well as the demand brought about by new developments.

7. In response, CTE(NTE)/TD said that TD had projected the demand of residents and visitors for parking spaces at Mui Wo based on the number of vehicles parked in the existing carparks and the number of illegally parked vehicles in the district. It was the established policy of the Transport and Housing Bureau to encourage members of the public to use public means of transport. The Administration would not significantly increase the supply of public parking spaces to incentivize the purchase of private vehicles by those residents of Mui Wo who were currently using public transport. Ms Alice MAK opined that the level of provision of parking spaces as stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines should be reviewed in order to address the acute shortage of parking spaces in various districts.

8. Pointing out that the village areas of Mui Wo were also faced with the serious problem of illegal parking, Ms Alice MAK asked whether this

problem could be solved by the additional parking spaces that would be provided after the extension of the carpark. CTE(NTE)/TD replied that the Administration was exploring the feasibility of providing a carpark with 50 to 60 parking spaces near Mui Wo old town to meet the villagers' demand.

9. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen commented that while the Administration had proposed the improvement works for Mui Wo early in the Revised Concept Plan for Lantau issued in 2007, the proposed works were expected to be completed as late as in 2019, by which time the capacity of the extended carpark might not be adequate to meet the parking demand then. He was dissatisfied that the Administration did not have any long-term planning on the supply of and demand for parking spaces at Mui Wo and in South Lantau in the next five years.

10. In response, CTE(NTE)/TD said that if the Administration kept increasing the supply of parking spaces based on the estimated demand, there might be many vacant parking spaces, resulting in more purchases of private cars by Mui Wo residents currently using public means of transport. This would run counter to the policy of encouraging the use of public means of transport. Director of Civil Engineering and Development ("DCED") added that the current parking space shortfall at Mui Wo was around 130. Apart from the 90 additional private car parking spaces to be provided under the proposed project, the Administration was considering converting the open area of the ex-New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School into a short-term tenancy ("STT") public carpark consisting of about 40 to 50 car parking spaces, and using a site opposite to the drainage reserve at Mui Wo old town for providing an STT public carpark consisting of about 50 to 60 parking spaces. Upon implementation of the aforesaid measures, the number of public parking spaces available at Mui Wo would increase to about 200, which was adequate to meet the local demand.

Proposed measures to increase the supply of parking spaces at Mui Wo

11. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that as the Administration planned to resume the site used as an STT carpark next to the bus terminus on Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road, the supply of parking spaces would be reduced. Moreover, under the proposed project, the Administration intended to realign a carriageway adjacent to Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road and construct a new access road with footpath to Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road. These road works would reduce the land available for provision of parking spaces. He considered that, with an offsetting effect in play, the additional parking spaces to be provided under the proposed project would not necessarily mean an increase in the number of parking spaces at Mui Wo. Mr CHAN criticized the Administration for not providing the Subcommittee with comprehensive

information on the supply of parking spaces at Mui Wo. DCED said that as the Administration was gauging the views of various stakeholders on the remaining phase of Improvement Works at Mui Wo, a decision was pending on the future development of the STT carpark next to the bus terminus on Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road.

12. Mr Albert CHAN held the view that as the current number of vehicles issued with an LCRP exceeded 4 000, the additional 118 parking spaces to be provided under the proposed project would not be sufficient to solve the problem of parking space shortage at Mui Wo. The Administration should consider using the government land near village entrances to provide more parking spaces.

13. Mr WU Chi-wai noted that the Administration planned to identify other sites for contractors to operate public carparks on STTs. He considered that an STT public carpark could be provided on the site of the proposed project without the need for spending a large amount of public money on the extension of the carpark. DCED replied that the carpark, after the proposed extension, would provide more free parking spaces to meet the demand of local residents.

14. Mr WU Chi-wai suggested that the Administration should consider converting the existing open carpark to a multi-storey carpark for the best use of land resources. The Deputy Chairman shared Mr WU's view and pointed out that taxi operation was affected by quite a number of vehicles illegally parked within the taxi queuing area at Mui Wo.

15. DCED replied that the actual needs for constructing a multi-storey carpark warranted consideration. The proposed extension of the carpark and the proposed construction of carparks on another two sites would provide a total of about 200 additional parking spaces, which would be adequate to meet local demands. Construction of a three-storey carpark was not cost-effective, because the estimated average construction cost per parking space would be three times that of an open carpark.

Growth in the number of private cars at Mui Wo

16. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the measures recently implemented by the Administration to allow access of more non-resident vehicles to the area of South Lantau had aroused opposition from local residents. He asked whether the Administration's plan to increase the supply of parking spaces at Mui Wo was a preparation for further relaxing the restriction on vehicular access to the area of South Lantau.

17. Mr WU Chi-wai considered that it was uncommon for a carpark to be open for free public use. The Administration should not perceive the provision of free parking spaces as a solution to the problem of illegal parking at Mui Wo. He also considered that provision of free parking spaces at Mui Wo would lead to an excessive increase in the number of private cars in the district. CTE(NTE)/TD said that due to the rural environment of Mui Wo and the long-established usage pattern of such parking spaces, most of the on-street parking spaces were currently not fitted with parking meters for collection of parking fees.

18. Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether the Administration would reduce the traffic volume in South Lantau by controlling the number of LCRPs issued to vehicles; how many households at Mui Wo were currently eligible for LCRPs; and whether the Administration had assessed the possible increase in the number of vehicles entering South Lantau if free carparks were provided. CTE(NTE)/TD replied that the current population of Mui Wo was about 6 000. Each household in South Lantau might apply for one LCRP. The parking spaces in the carpark proposed for extension under the proposed project had all along been open for free public use. The Administration had projected the current demand of residents and visitors for parking spaces in Mui Wo based on the number of vehicles parked in the existing parking spaces and the number of vehicles illegally parked in the district. As responded earlier, the Administration would not significantly increase the number of parking spaces, lest this might result in an excessive number of vacant parking spaces which would incentivize the purchase of vehicles by the residents of Mui Wo who were currently using public transport.

19. Mr WU Chi-wai requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the background against which free parking spaces were provided in South Lantau, and how to avoid an excessive growth in the number of private vehicles in the district due to the provision of free carparks.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC264/15-16\(01\)](#) on 17 June 2016.)

Justifications for constructing the proposed new carriageway

20. Mr Albert CHAN noted that the cost of the proposed project was \$72.3 million and the number of additional parking spaces to be provided was 118. He considered the cost too high and suggested that the Administration should give up the construction of a new carriageway connecting Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road. Mr CHAN queried the necessity of constructing such a

carriageway, given that the existing carriageway adjacent to Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road could cope with the additional traffic volume arising from the extended carpark. He considered that as the extended carpark would provide only 188 parking spaces, it was not necessary to provide two access points to that carpark. Given the relatively heavy traffic on the roads connecting to that carpark, the location of the access point concerned was unsatisfactory. The construction of a new carriageway to cater for the addition of an access point to the carpark would also result in a reduced area of land available for provision of parking spaces.

21. DCED responded that the proposed carriageway would provide a more direct route to the extended carpark, thus negating the need for vehicles to pass through the residential area near the waterfront. It would thus improve the living environment of residents, and also facilitate the remaining phase of Improvement Works at Mui Wo, including beautification of the south waterfront promenade. Upon completion of the extension, the original access point of the existing carpark would remain in use and the number of access points would not be increased.

Landscaping works

22. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the reasons why the cost of slope improvement works was as high as \$10.8 million; the reasons why the cost of relevant landscaping works and other ancillary works (\$6.8 million) was higher than that of the carriageway (\$5.3 million); and the works cost for the realignment of the access road adjacent to Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road. DCED replied that as the west side of the carpark proposed to be extended was close to a hillside, slope stabilization works were necessary. The landscaping works involved transplanting and planting within the site boundary. As a relatively large number of trees had to be transplanted, the relevant works entailed a higher cost.

Provision of other new facilities at Mui Wo

23. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung asked whether the Administration would construct additional storeys on top of the carpark proposed to be extended for provision of community facilities, and whether it would provide cycle parking facilities on the carpark site. DCED replied that provision of cycle parking facilities would be included in the next phase of Improvement Works at Mui Wo.

24. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration would construct a cover for the footpath linking Mui Wo Ferry Pier Road with the carpark. In response, DCED said that the Administration would consider

constructing a cover for the footpath near Mui Wo Ferry Pier under the next phase of the improvement works.

Remainder of the improvement works at Mui Wo

25. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that the remainder of the improvement works at Mui Wo included improvement to the south waterfront and reprovisioning of a cargo loading and unloading area; construction of an entrance plaza near the ferry pier; reprovisioning of a cooked food market and a covered cycle parking area; and provision of a cycle track network and a heritage trail at Mui Wo. He enquired about the timetable and capital cost of the aforesaid works, and the number of cycle parking spaces that would be provided in the proposed covered cycle parking area.

26. DCED replied that the Administration was gauging the views of stakeholders on the remainder of the improvement works. After community support was garnered for the works concerned, the Administration would draw up a timetable and conduct a cost estimate accordingly.

Suggestion of opening the Silvermine Cave

27. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that residents of Mui Wo suggested that the Silvermine Cave be opened for tourism development so as to boost local economy. He asked whether the scope of the improvement works at Mui Wo included beautification and opening of the Silvermine Cave; if not, how the Administration would follow up the suggestion of opening the Silvermine Cave.

28. Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) replied that the Administration had completed a three-month public engagement exercise on the proposed development strategy for Lantau, and views submitted by members of the public had yet to be studied. DCED advised that the Administration would consolidate the views collected from public engagement, so as to promulgate a blueprint for the development of Lantau in the coming six months, and set out the details and implementation timetable of the development projects to be launched. The proposed project under discussion aimed at alleviating the problem of inadequate parking spaces at Mui Wo.

29. There being no further questions from members on the item, the Chairman put the item to vote.

30. The item was voted on and endorsed. Ms Cyd HO requested that this item be voted on separately at the relevant meeting of the Finance Committee ("FC").

Head 703 – Buildings

PWSC(2016-17)24 22NB Provision of Columbarium at Wo Hop Shek Cemetery – Phase 1

31. The Chairman said that the proposal, i.e. PWSC(2016-17)24, was to upgrade 22NB to Category A at an estimated cost of \$945.6 million in MOD prices for the provision of columbarium facilities at Kiu Tau Road and the associated improvement measures. The Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene had been consulted on the proposed project on 12 April 2016. Panel members supported the submission of the relevant funding proposal to the Subcommittee for consideration. A report on the gist of the Panel's discussions had been tabled at the meeting.

Complementary transport facilities

32. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that residents of Fanling and District Council members expressed grave concern about the crowded condition at the existing footbridge linking MTR Fanling Station and Pak Wo Road. He enquired if the widening works of the footbridge and the footpath under the proposed project would be carried out concurrently with the construction of the columbarium blocks. Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed a similar concern and took the view that after the commissioning of the proposed columbarium blocks, more people would visit Wo Hop Shek Cemetery ("WHSC") during peak grave-sweeping periods, which would aggravate the problem of crowdedness at the footbridge and footpath at Pak Wo Road.

33. Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") replied that, to cope with the visitor traffic brought about by the two new columbarium blocks, the Administration planned to widen the footbridge and the footpath at Pak Wo Road and extend the bus layby at Pak Wo Road southbound and the subway. The improvement works would be completed before the completion of the columbarium blocks. Principal Assistant Secretary (Food)2, Food and Health Bureau ("PAS(F)2/FHB"), supplemented that the construction works for the two columbarium blocks were scheduled for completion by end-2019, and the widening works of the footbridge and footpath would be completed two months before the completion of the blocks. Allocation of niches at the new blocks would begin in 2020 the earliest. Based on the recommendation of the relevant traffic impact assessment ("TIA"), the footbridge at Pak Wo Road would be widened from 5.5 to 11 metres. The widened footbridge

could cater for the additional pedestrian traffic brought about by Phase 1 to Phase 3 of the columbarium developments at WHSC.

34. Mr CHAN Hak-kan requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the completion date of the footbridge widening works at Pak Wo Road, and the date of commissioning of the two proposed columbarium blocks.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

35. Mr WU Chi-wai opined that most columbarium visitors would access the proposed columbarium blocks at WHSC by MTR. He enquired if the Administration would request the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") to widen the platforms at MTR Fanling Station to accommodate the additional passenger traffic during peak grave-sweeping periods in future. PAS(F)2/FHB replied that when planning the widening works of the footbridge linking MTR Fanling Station and Pak Wo Road, the Administration expected that MTR Fanling Station would have sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional number of columbarium visitors. As recommended by the TIA study conducted by the consultant, in addition to the access from MTR Fanling Station, arrangements could be made, when necessary, for columbarium visitors to go to WHSC by road transport from MTR Tai Po Market and Tai Wo Stations during Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals.

36. Mr WU Chi-wai requested the Administration to provide the following supplementary information:

- (a) the estimated number of worshippers visiting the two proposed columbarium blocks during peak grave-sweeping periods; and
- (b) details of the transport arrangements to be implemented by MTRCL to cope with the number of columbarium visitors mentioned above.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

Design of the proposed columbaria

37. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired if the Administration would provide covers for the outdoor staircases of the proposed columbarium blocks to provide shelter from sun and rain for columbarium visitors. Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired if the Administration would consider providing escalators within or outside the blocks.

38. Director of Architectural Services ("DArchS") advised that the two columbarium blocks under the project would each be equipped with two lifts, two indoor staircases and two outdoor staircases. Past experience had shown that columbarium visitors usually went up and down columbarium blocks using the staircases during the peak grave-sweeping periods in Ching Ming and Chung Yeung Festivals. The staircase between two floors within the proposed blocks comprised about a dozen steps. Under the project, the steps of the staircase would have lower risers and longer treads than those usually used and be covered with non-slippery floor tiles, so as to make it more comfortable for columbarium visitors going up and down the buildings. Moreover, the uncovered outdoor staircases could facilitate good ventilation.

39. Mr WONG Kwok-hing commented that the Administration did not have a people-oriented concept in mind when designing the outdoor staircases. He requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on whether covers would be provided for the outdoor staircases of the two proposed columbarium blocks.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

40. Mr James TO expressed concern that the lifts in some existing columbarium blocks could carry only four people at a time, which failed to meet the needs of columbarium visitors (especially the elderly) during peak grave-sweeping periods. He enquired about the carrying capacity of the lifts to be provided in the proposed columbarium blocks. DArchS advised that the proposed columbarium blocks would each be equipped with two lifts, each with a carrying capacity of 18 persons.

41. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired if the Administration would adopt the prize-winning design of the Diamond Hill Columbarium in the proposed project so that the proposed blocks would be designed to fit into the surrounding environment. DArchS advised that in designing the two proposed columbarium blocks, the major consideration lied in how they

could fit into the surrounding natural environment. When it came to the in-depth design, reference would also be made to the design details of the Diamond Hill Columbarium.

42. Mr WU Chi-wai requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on whether waiting areas would be provided on the ground floors of the two proposed columbarium blocks for worshippers so that they would not have to wait for their relatives and friends on the roadside.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

Recommended measures for increasing the supply of public columbarium niches

43. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen advised that to avoid giving rise to massive visitor traffic during the peak grave-sweeping periods, the Administration should, on a trial basis, prescribe different time slots to stagger visitors to the new columbarium blocks. Time limits should also be set on the use of the new niches (such as 20 or 30 years) for their efficient utilization. Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr WU Chi-wai urged the Administration to implement staggering worship measures for visitors to the new columbaria as soon as possible. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that if staggering worship measures were implemented and the visitor traffic to the new columbaria could be spaced out, the Administration should give consideration to constructing one or two additional storeys for the two proposed blocks in order to increase the supply of niches.

44. In response, USFH said that Phase 1 to Phase 3 of the columbarium developments at WHSC would provide a total of 104 000 new niches upon completion. If the Administration was to increase the number of niches at WHSC, TIA and feasibility study should first be conducted and support of the District Council concerned be secured. PAS(F)2/FHB supplemented that should there be consensus in the community for the implementation of staggering worship measures for columbarium visitors in future, the Administration could consider introducing such measures at some of the new columbarium developments where technically feasible.

45. DArchS said it was technically feasible to make alterations to the structural design of the proposed columbarium blocks to accommodate additional storeys if such addition was justified. However, adding storeys on top of the buildings would block the views of the ridgeline and create

visual impact on the landscapes enjoyed by neighbouring residents. Furthermore, given the elongated shape and proximity to the hillside of the site on which the two proposed columbarium blocks were built, any attempts to increase floor areas would require extra excavation and upgrading works on the hill slopes and hence considerably higher project cost.

46. Dr KWOK Ka-ki requested the Administration to provide the following supplementary information:

- (a) the expected number of additional columbarium niches that could be provided in the two proposed columbarium blocks if (i) different worship times were set to stagger columbarium visitors, and (ii) two additional storeys were built for each of the columbarium blocks; and
- (b) the expected number of additional columbarium niches that could be provided under Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the columbarium developments at WHSC if the two aforesaid proposals were implemented for the two phases.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

47. Miss CHAN Yuen-han noted that the original plan of the Administration was to carry out columbarium development under Phase 1 on four sites within WHSC (i.e. sites T1, T2, T3(a) and T3(b)) to provide 44 000 niches. Given the concerns of the villagers living near the sites over the visual impact of the project, only sites T3(a) and T3(b) were included in the Phase 1 development, but the number of niches to be provided remained at 44 000. She enquired if the Administration had increased the number of storeys of the columbarium blocks to be built on both sites T3(a) and T3(b), so as to provide the same number of niches as in the original plan to develop the four sites.

48. PAS(F)2/FHB replied that the number of niches to be provided by columbarium development was mainly determined depending on the limitations of the TIA results. Through the development of multi-storey columbarium blocks, Phase 1 columbarium development at WHSC was able to provide 44 000 niches without affecting the supply of public niches, despite the fact that only two sites, i.e. T3(a) and T3(b), were covered. The Government had also earmarked other sites within WHSC for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the columbarium developments.

Long-term supply of public columbarium niches

49. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned about the long waiting time for public columbarium niches, which spanned up to five years. He enquired about the waiting time expected to be shortened upon the allocation of the 44 000 niches to be provided under the proposed project. PAS(F)2/FHB said that new niches were allocated by way of computerized balloting and not according to the waiting list order. The waiting list for public niches only applied to reused niches, for which the average waiting time was 45 months.

50. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that in order to implement the District-based Columbarium Development Scheme, the Administration had identified a total of 24 sites in 18 districts for columbarium development. He enquired about the current progress of columbarium development in other districts, apart from the columbarium development on the sites in Wo Hop Shek and Chai Wai which were set to be implemented.

51. USFH replied that apart from the proposed Phase 1 columbarium development at WHSC, the columbarium development at Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun, would be completed in 2018-2019 to provide about 160 000 new niches. In order to relieve the tight supply of niches, the Administration had relaxed the restriction on the maximum number of sets of ashes that could be deposited in a niche since January 2014, and had all along provided service for temporary storage of ashes. PAS(F)2/FHB said that in taking forward columbarium development projects, the Administration was required to conduct various studies (including TIA, engineering feasibility study, etc.), consult District Councils and seek funding approval. The Administration had conducted consultation in respect of nine sites. All of the District Councils concerned either supported or expressed no objection to the columbarium development projects. The nine columbarium development projects would provide about 490 000 new niches upon completion. The Administration was following up the remaining 15 projects.

52. Miss CHAN Yuen-han requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the locations of the 24 sites, the respective numbers of new niches to be provided by various projects under the District-based Columbarium Development Scheme, the progress of various projects, and their estimated dates of completion.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide [LC Paper No. PWSC271/15-16\(01\)](#) on 21 June 2016.)

53. Given the fact that the Administration had relaxed the restriction on placing additional sets of ashes in niches, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired whether the increased storage of ashes would add pressure to the transport system. PAS(F)2/FHB replied that statistics of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") in recent months showed that there were 281 applications for placing additional sets of ashes in niches. Among them, 96% applied for placing of an additional set of ashes of a deceased person who was the spouse, parent, son or daughter of the deceased person whose ashes were the first to be kept in the niche. This would mean that the potential columbarium visitors in respect of a niche deposited with additional sets of ashes would usually be members of the same family. Therefore, the arrangement of placing additional sets of ashes should have minimal effect on increasing visitor traffic during the peak grave-sweeping periods.

54. Mr Albert CHAN enquired about the details of the arrangement for relaxing the restriction on placing additional sets of ashes in public columbarium niches, and whether there was a cap on the number of sets of ashes that could be deposited in a niche. In response, USFH said the Administration had stepped up publicity on the arrangement of placing additional ashes in public columbarium niches. Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, supplemented that there was no cap on the number of sets of ashes that could be deposited in a niche. More than two sets of ashes could be deposited in a standard niche and more than four sets in a large niche. FEHD had also relaxed the restriction on the kinship relations between the deceased person whose ashes were to be placed additionally and the person whose ashes were the first to be kept in the niche. Mr CHAN was of the view that to avoid disputes, the Administration should set a preliminary cap on the number of additional sets of ashes that could be deposited.

55. Miss CHAN Yuen-han opined that in designing the transport infrastructure of new development areas, the Administration should assess the potential impact of future columbarium development on the transport system of the new development areas concerned to allow room for columbarium development.

56. Mr Albert CHAN considered that although the Administration had identified 24 sites for columbarium development, it might not be able to secure the support of the respective District Councils for provision of the columbaria on some of the sites. He suggested that the Administration should consider formulating new guidelines on town planning, under which columbarium facilities should be provided in proportion to population in planning for new development areas. These guidelines could ensure that

sites would be earmarked in each district for development of columbarium facilities.

57. In response, USFH said that in order to address the shortage of columbarium niches, the Administration was stepping up promotion for green burial and would continue to implement the District-based Columbarium Development Scheme. PAS(F)2/FHB supplemented that the Food and Health Bureau would maintain communication with the Development Bureau and reflect the community's demand for columbarium niches when conducting the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" study to facilitate the latter's consideration of the demand for land for columbarium development.

58. There being no further questions from members on the item, the Chairman put the item to vote.

59. The item was voted on and endorsed. The Chairman consulted members on whether the item would require separate voting at the relevant FC meeting. No member made such a request.

[At 10:25 am, the Chairman proposed that the meeting be extended by 15 minutes to 10:45 am. No member raised any objection.]

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:44 am.