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14 January 2021

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road,  
Central, Hong Kong.  
(Attn: Ms Wendy JAN)

Dear Ms JAN,

**Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 72  
Management of Greening Master Plans**

Thank you for your letter dated 6 January 2021 under reference. I am authorised to provide this reply.

In delivering the greening works under Greening Master Plans (“GMPs”), the Civil Engineering and Development Department (“CEDD”) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) have made use of different parameters or descriptions to measure the quantity of trees and shrubs in their respective areas of work to suit operation needs. The reasons of adopting different measurements have been provided in the response to the Director of Audit’s Report No. 72 by the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services dated 27 May 2019 (see paragraph 21 of the extracted reply as attached).

In response to the Director of Audit’s recommendations, CEDD and LCSD have reviewed the situation and considered the genuine need to retain the prevailing descriptions of greening works and related parameters to suit the operation needs. To remove ambiguity and avoid confusion at the time of handing over, CEDD and LCSD have jointly devised a new handover record form to consolidate all necessary parameters and descriptions to facilitate proper handover and maintenance of greening works completed

under GMPs. LCSD subsequently completed the enhancement of its Tree Data Bank System (“TDBS”) in December 2019, such that detailed information in the handover record form, including the total number of trees with individual identity, species, size (irrespective of its trunk diameter) and geographical location, as well as the locations and size of shrubs planting areas along with the quantity and species of shrubs planted under GMPs, can be captured and transformed into the enhanced TDBS systematically.

Apart from taking over greening works for subsequent maintenance from CEDD, LCSD may also take up maintenance of soft landscaped planting from other works departments. Being the owner of the TDBS, LCSD will apply the same policy and record arrangements on future greening projects initiated by other departments.

Yours sincerely,



( Vina Wong )

*for* Secretary for Development

- c.c. Director of Civil Engineering and Development (Fax no. 2246 8708)  
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Fax no. 2602 1480)  
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Fax no. 2537 1736)  
Director of Audit (Fax no. 2824 2087)

**Report No.72 of the Director of Audit  
Chapter 2 – Management of Greening Master Plans**

**Response from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
to Public Accounts Committee**

**Part 3: Handover and Maintenance of Greening Works under GMPs**

21) Regarding paragraph 3.7, please inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) While CEDD and LCSD have different definitions of trees and different measurement bases for shrubs, posing a serious hindrance to the handover, how will the problem be solved?
- (b) How will the Department ensure proper keeping of handover records by its staff?

## LCSD's Response

- (a) CEDD and LCSD have different definitions of trees. CEDD adopted classification by plant species as set out in the "Check List of Hong Kong Plants" published by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. In addition to the classification mentioned above, LCSD also makes reference to the Technical Circular of the Development Bureau (DEVB) on tree preservation requirements (DEVB TC(W) No. 7/2015) for the definition of trees, by which a plant is classified as a tree only if its diameter at breast height (DBH) (measured at a height of 1.3m) is 95mm or more. For such trees, a tree risk assessment has to be conducted at least once a year. However, since most of the trees planted by CEDD under GMPs were young trees with DBH less than 95mm, the number of trees handed over by CEDD and the number of trees taken over by LCSD were different.

As for shrubs, CEDD adopted the number of shrubs as the unit of quantity for handover, whereas LCSD adopted the size of planting area as the unit of quantity for takeover. CEDD used the number of shrubs for the sake of cost calculation for purchasing and monitoring of contractors' planting work. At the time of the handover, the shrubs had grown up after one year's establishment period. It was likely that each shrub had developed new plantlets that could hardly be identified separately. Moreover, shrubs are planted in large numbers, usually in tens of thousands, making it impractical and not cost effective to count them one by one during the handover. Besides, it is also a common practice in the field of horticulture that plant maintenance contractors use planting area as a unit in calculating the tender cost for shrub maintenance. In view of the above, LCSD, as a department responsible for plant maintenance, adopts shrub planting area as a unit for takeover.

Although CEDD and LCSD adopted different units for counting the number of trees and measuring shrubs with regard to their actual operational needs, it did not affect LCSD's taking over and maintenance of greening works under GMPs. During the handover, CEDD would issue memoranda/letters with record drawings to LCSD. LCSD would base on these documents to confirm the species of plants and the quantity and location of the trees before taking over all the plants, and arrange its staff or contractors to carry out daily horticultural maintenance work such as watering, weeding, pruning and fertilising.

LCSD and CEDD will work out a common form of plant handover records for future use upon completion of the projects of Southwest and

Northeast New Territories, so as to cater for the different operational needs of the works department and maintenance department.

- (b) In future, LCSD will keep the relevant handover records properly and input all information on the trees taken over into its Tree Data Bank System to record the number of such trees. As for shrubs, since it would be impractical and not cost-effective to count the shrubs one by one during the handover, LCSD will continue to use planting area as the unit in handover records.