

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)666/20-21(04)

Ref: CB1/PL/DEV

Panel on Development

Meeting on 23 March 2021

Background brief on the Pier Improvement Programme

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Pier Improvement Programme ("PIP") and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by Members on the subject since the 2017-2018 legislative session.

Background

2. According to the information provided by the Administration in July 2018, there are currently 117 public piers¹ in Hong Kong which are built, maintained and managed by the Government.² Public piers do not only serve remote villages relying on boats as their main transport and support fishermen's operation, but also facilitate rescue missions when necessary. Whilst the Government has carried out regular inspections and maintenance for public piers to ensure their structural integrity, some public piers at remote areas have been in service for many years suffering from ageing problem³, or cannot cope with the current needs or usages, such as:

¹ [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)1242/17-18\(02\)](#)

² In addition to the piers built, maintained and managed by the Government, there are also several piers built by local villagers for public use that are currently not maintained and managed by the Government.

³ According to the Administration, some of the piers in remote areas were constructed some 50 years ago. While there may not be apparent or imminent danger to public using these old piers, various measures such as the erection of temporary props for supporting the structure and the increased frequencies of inspection and maintenance of the piers were required to address their ageing problems.

- (a) unsatisfactory boarding condition of small or primitive piers leading to potential safety concerns to passengers especially for kids and the elderly;
- (b) inadequate water depth for larger vessels to berth especially during low tide;
- (c) limited berthing space or narrow accesses which cannot cope with the high utilization rate during festive times or weekends; and
- (d) aged pier structures pending reconstruction.

3. The 2017 Policy Address featured a new policy initiative, i.e. PIP, which seeks to improve a number of remote public piers to facilitate public access to outing destinations and natural heritage. It also responds to local requests to meet the basic needs of remote villagers who have to rely on marine transport or who engage in fishing operation.

4. The Administration has set up the Committee on Piers⁴ ("the Committee") to examine the requests received by different departments concerning improvement suggestions for public piers in the New Territories and outlying islands and set priority for pier improvement items under PIP taking into account a host of factors.⁵ The Committee has recommended implementing a list of 10 proposed pier improvement items under the first phase of PIP. The proposed pier improvement items under the first phase of PIP and their locations are indicated in **Appendix I**.

⁴ Spearheaded by the Development Bureau in coordination with relevant bureaux and departments, the Committee had been set up, comprising members from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Environment Bureau/Environmental Protection Department, the Home Affairs Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Tourism Commission, and the Transport Department. Representatives from the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Marine Department will also be invited to advise the Committee on an ad hoc basis when needed.

⁵ The host of factors includes structural and public safety concerns, accessibility of nearby natural and heritage scenic attractions, utilization and availability of alternative transport, requests from locals and districts, and technical feasibility.

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

5. Issues relating to the implementation of PIP were discussed at the meeting of Panel on Development on 18 July 2018 and that of the Panel on Transport on 17 May 2019.⁶ The major views and concerns expressed by Members of the two Panels are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Discussion by the Panel on Development

Scope of improvement works

6. Expressing support for the implementation of PIP, members enquired whether the proposed improvement works would cover the provision of ancillary facilities, such as public toilets and ticketing booths, as well as enhancement of the telecommunication infrastructure, road access leading to the piers, and the cleanliness of the piers. Members were concerned whether the existing piers would need to be closed temporarily during the works period.

7. The Administration advised that the Civil Engineering and Development Department was actively undertaking the consultancy studies for the pier improvement items under the first phase of PIP, which included assessing the need and feasibility of provisioning ancillary facilities at public piers, such as installing electronic display panels, drinking fountains, GovWiFi services and barrier-free access facilities; and exploring the need and feasibility of carrying out other enhancement works in the vicinity of the public piers, such as installing additional streetlights, repairing existing footpaths connected to the piers, and providing public toilets and ticketing booths. The Administration would consider setting up temporary piers during the works period to minimize disruption to the piers' operation.

Membership of the Committee on Piers

8. Noting that there was no village representative in the membership of the Committee, some members were concerned that the Committee might neglect the needs of local villagers when considering suggestions for improvement of public piers and setting the priority for pier improvement items. They also queried why the Committee comprised only officials from government departments and was without representatives from the major construction-related professional bodies. Members considered that

⁶ The Administration consulted the Panel on Transport on the proposal for the reconstruction of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island, the first pier improvement item under PIP seeking funding approval from the Finance Committee, at the meeting.

the Administration should consult the views of relevant stakeholders, such as villagers, District Councils and ferry service operators, on the improvement works required to be carried out at individual public piers under PIP.

9. The Administration advised that the Committee comprised representatives from various bureaux/departments, including the Environmental Protection Department and the Home Affairs Department. The participation of various bureaux/departments facilitated the Committee's assessment and prioritization of the pier improvement items under PIP taking into account a host of factors, including but not limited to the requests from locals and districts. The Administration welcomed views from construction-related professional bodies on the implementation of PIP. On consultation with stakeholders, the Administration advised that it had consulted the relevant District Councils, ferry service operators and village representatives on their views and suggestions in relation to the improvement works to be conducted under PIP since 2017.

Priority setting of the pier improvement items

10. Some members questioned the justifications for the inclusion of the piers at Lai Chi Wo, Sham Chung, Lai Chi Chong and Yi O in the first phase of PIP given the small number of villagers residing in these remote areas. They surmised that the Administration's intention behind the proposed improvement of these piers was to pave way for the future development of tourism in the relevant areas.

11. The Administration stressed that the Committee had taken into account a host of factors when assessing and prioritizing the pier improvement items to be included in the first phase of PIP. These factors included structural and public safety concerns, accessibility of nearby natural and heritage scenic attractions, utilization and availability of alternative transport, requests from locals and districts, and technical feasibility.

Environmental impacts

12. In response to members' concern over adverse environmental impacts arising from the pier improvement works, the Administration advised that environmental impact assessments would be conducted in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) where necessary with a view to minimizing any potential environmental impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.

Proposed new block allocation Subhead to provide dedicated funding source

13. To expedite the implementation of PIP, the Administration proposed creating a new block allocation subhead under the Capital Works Reserve Fund ("CWRF") to cover the costs incurred in planning, design and construction stages of the pier improvement projects. Taking into account the estimated costs of the pier improvement items in the first phase of PIP, it was proposed that a financial limit of \$150 million⁷ be set for individual items under the new subhead to provide the Administration with requisite delegated authority for fast-tracking implementation of pier improvement items under PIP. Some Members considered the Administration's proposal extremely undesirable as it would undermine the role of the Legislative Council in scrutinizing and giving views on individual pier improvement items, in particular the controversial ones which might have environmental impacts.

14. The funding proposal for the reconstruction of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island⁸ under the first phase of PIP was considered by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") at its meeting on 27 November 2019. When being asked whether it had given up its plan of creating a new block allocation subhead dedicated for PIP, the Administration explained that having reviewed various feasible approaches for implementing PIP, the approach of launching projects once they were ready would be adopted. Where feasible, the Administration would consolidate several projects in one funding submission to seek approval from the Finance Committee ("FC") with a view to completing the 10 pier improvement projects under the first phase of PIP as soon as possible.

⁷ According to the Administration, the cost of improvement works for individual pier items varies with site conditions and design requirements. For the piers under the first phase, the estimated overall project cost for a proposed pier improvement item with two typical berthing spaces and catwalk of an overall plan area of around 500 square-metre, inclusive of expenditure in planning, design and construction stages is around \$65 million per item. There are also some proposed pier improvement items requiring larger catwalks to address practical needs such as tidal effect on water level, passenger flow demand and environmental mitigation measures, etc. Taking another pier improvement item with an overall plan area of about 1 100 square-metre under the first implementation phase as an example which requires for a large catwalk and more supporting piles, the preliminary estimated cost is close to \$150 million.

⁸ The relevant funding proposal (i.e. [PWSC\(2019-20\)21](#)) was endorsed by PWSC on 4 December 2019 and approved by FC on 28 February 2020.

Discussion by the Panel on Transport

Implementation of the Piers Improvement Programme

15. When considering the public works proposal for the reconstruction of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island, Members enquired about the implementation progress of the other nine public pier improvement projects under first phase of PIP. They urged the Administration to expedite the implementation of the relevant piers improvement works and incorporating more remote public piers into PIP to facilitate public access to these areas. Some Members called on the Administration to consider constructing more public piers to meet the basic needs of remote villagers who had to rely on piers to commute to urban areas.

16. The Administration advised that the technical studies on most pier projects proposed under the first phase of PIP were almost substantially completed. Relevant District Councils and stakeholders were being consulted on the preliminary designs of the pier projects progressively. The Administration would proceed to carry out the detailed designs of the pier projects and go through the relevant statutory processes as appropriate. Taking into account the effectiveness of and the experience gained from the first phase of PIP, the Development Bureau would consider the feasibility of taking forward more pier projects under the next phase of PIP.

Management of public piers

17. In response to Members' enquiry about the management of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island upon completion of the improvement works, the Administration advised that it would undertake the management and maintenance of the pier. Coordinated by the Transport Department ("TD"), the daily management duties of public piers would be undertaken by respective government departments with respect to their purview. For suggestions relating to the management of public piers, TD would liaise with relevant government departments as and when necessary for follow up and response.

Latest development

18. Given that PIP is welcomed and supported by the public, the Administration has advanced to kick off the second phase of PIP to enhance another 13 public piers, and the associated engineering feasibility

studies are anticipated for commencement in 2021 successively.⁹ The proposed pier improvement items under the second phase of PIP and their locations are also indicated in **Appendix I**.

19. At the meeting of the Panel to be held on 23 March 2021, the Administration will brief members on the proposal to upgrade the improvement works at Kau Sai Village Pier (58TF) and Lai Chi Chong Pier (59TF) under the first phase of PIP to Category A.

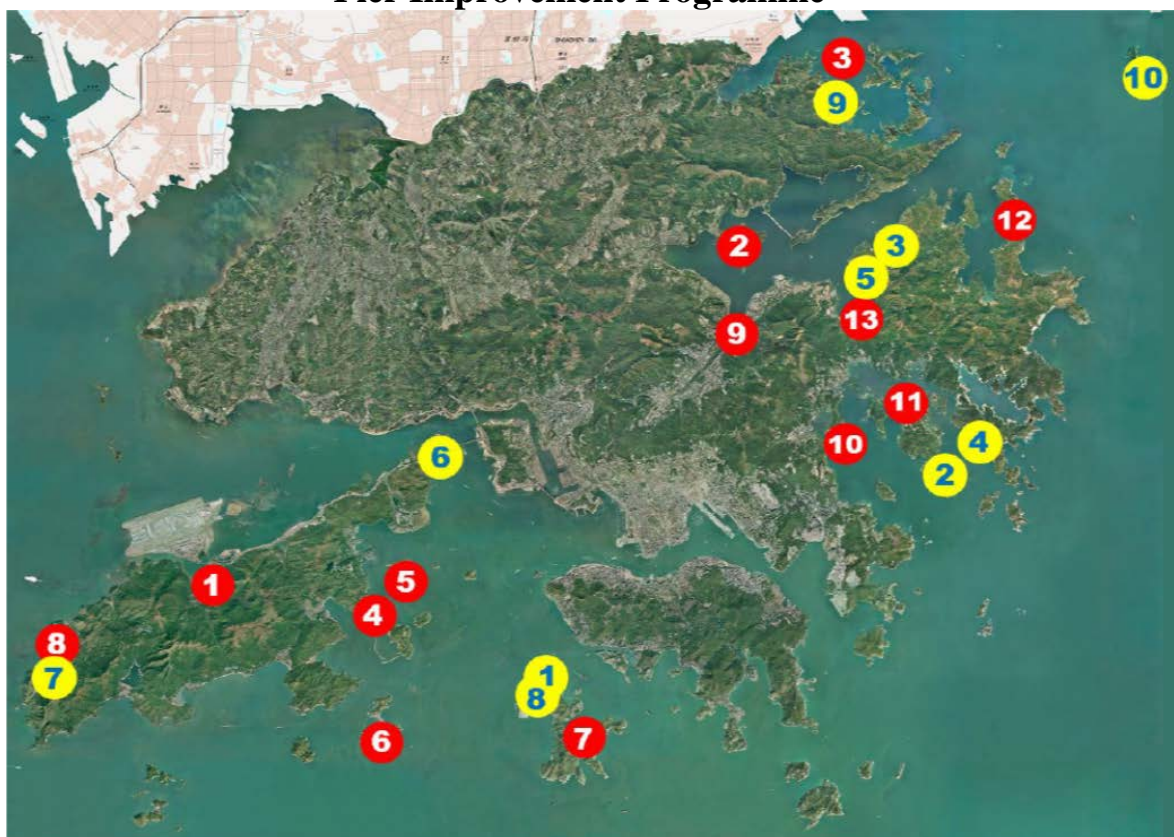
Relevant papers

20. A list of relevant papers with their hyperlinks is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
19 March 2021

⁹ Source: [Website of the Civil Engineering and Development Department](#)
[Accessed March 2021]

Proposed pier improvement items under first and second phases of Pier Improvement Programme



First phase (coloured in yellow):

(1) Pak Kok Pier	(6) Shek Tsai Wan Pier
(2) Kau Sai Village Pier	(7) Yi O Pier
(3) Lai Chi Chong Pier	(8) Yung Shue Wan Public Pier
(4) Leung Shuen Wan Pier	(9) Lai Chi Wo Pier
(5) Sham Chung Pier	(10) Tung Ping Chau Public Pier

Second phase (coloured in red):

(1) Ma Wan Chung Pier	(8) Tai O Public Pier
(2) Sam Mun Tsai Village Pier	(9) Ma Liu Shui Ferry Pier
(3) Ap Chau Public Pier	(10) Ma Nam Wat Pier
(4) Man Kok Tsui Pier	(11) Yim Tin Tsai Pier
(5) Peng Chau Public Pier	(12) Tap Mun Pier
(6) Sai Wan Jetty, Cheung Chau	(13) Yung Shue O
(7) Sok Kwu Wan Pier No.2	

(Source: [Website of the Civil Engineering and Development Department](#))
[Accessed March 2021]

Implementation of the Pier Improvement Programme

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	18 July 2018	<p>Administration's paper on "Pier Improvement Programme" [LC Paper No. CB(1)1242/17-18(02)]</p> <p>Minutes of meeting [LC Paper No. CB(1)1431/17-18]</p> <p>Administration's follow-up paper [LC Paper No. CB(1)76/18-19(01)]</p>
Panel on Transport	17 May 2019	<p>Administration's paper on "051TF – Reconstruction of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island" [LC Paper No. CB(4)850/18-19(04)]</p> <p>Minutes of meeting [LC Paper No. CB(4)1230/18-19]</p>
Public Works Subcommittee	27 November 2019 4 December 2019	<p>Administration's funding proposal "51TF – Reconstruction of Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island" [PWSC(2019-20)21]</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (27 November 2019) [LC Paper No. PWSC57/19-20]</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (4 December 2019) [LC Paper No. PWSC86/19-20]</p>