

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS

Paper on Public Filling Programme

BACKGROUND

1. At the Panel meeting on 23 March 1999 the Administration briefed members on the Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Area 137 Reclamation Stage 2 project. Members asked for further information on the public filling programme.

PUBLIC FILLING PROGRAMME

2. The amount of Construction and Demolition Material¹ (C&DM) generated by Hong Kong's construction industry has risen from about 3.5 million cubic metres in 1990 to 6.6 million cubic metres in 1998 (+89%). Even during the recent economic downturn, the construction industry generated 13% more C&D material in 1998 than in 1997. The percentage of reuse of public fill² in reclamations has varied from 51.4% (1990), 23% (1991), 35.1% (1994) to 78.5% (1998). The lower percentage in earlier years was mainly due to extensive use of marine sand for reclamation in infrastructure projects. The historical data for C&DM generation and reuse of public fill is at Annex A. It

¹ C&DM is a mixture of inert and non-inert material arising from site clearance, excavation, construction, refurbishment, renovation, demolition, and road works.

² "Public Fill" is the inert portion of construction and demolition material, which does not decompose nor cause any bad smells. Public Fill, which comprises broken rock and concrete, debris from building demolition and excavated soil, can be beneficially reused as fill material for reclamation purpose.

is expected that the amount of public fill generated will remain stable at about 5.3 million cubic metres per annum by 2010 as shown.

3. The policy on the use of public fill is to maximise the reuse of public fill in land formation and reclamation to minimise the disposal of construction and demolition waste at landfills. At present, there are three reclamation projects designated as public filling areas³ that accept public fill for reclamation. They are located at TKO Area 137, Tuen Mun Area 38 and Pak Shek Kok in Shatin as shown in Annex B.

4. The available public filling capacity for any one year depends on the programme of individual reclamation projects. The public filling programme for 1999 to 2005 in Annex C lists the committed Public Works Programme (PWP) Category A reclamation projects. Besides using public fill for reclamation, departments also use public fill to surcharge newly reclaimed land to accelerate the settlement. When the required settlement has been achieved, the public fill will be removed and deposited as fill in other reclamation projects. Although surcharging could offer year-to-year additional capacity as stockpile, it would not increase the overall public filling capacity as this is dictated by the overall capacity of reclamation projects.

5. Based on the capacity of committed reclamation projects, an acute capacity shortfall is anticipated in year 2000 if no further reclamation projects are approved. If reclamation projects that are already in PWP Category B status, including the TKO Area 137 Reclamation Stage 2 (as in Annex D), proceed as planned, the situation could be less acute. In the longer

³ A "Public Filling Area" is a designated part of a development project that accepts public fill - in lieu of general fill - as filling material for reclamation purposes. Disposal of public fill in a public filling area requires a licence issued free of charge by Port Works Division of Civil Engineering Department.

term, it is intended to maximise the use of public fill in reclamation projects such as Green Island Development, South East Kowloon Development, Kowloon Point Development, Tsuen Wan Bay Development and TKO Area 131 Reclamation. However, due to the uncertainty associated with these projects, they have not been included in the public filling programme.

BARGING POINTS

6. Long haulage of public fill by truck to public filling areas places additional burdens on the road network, such as that experienced at Wan Po Road in TKO. It also adds to air pollution. To reduce these impacts barging facilities, temporary and long-term, are set up at convenient locations close to the source of the material to encourage the construction industry to use marine transport to transfer the public fill to the public filling areas. Maps showing the locations of the existing and proposed barging facilities are at Annexes E and F.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

7. Relying on reclamation projects associated with our urban development as the only outlet for public fill is not sustainable in the longer term. We have to reduce the amount of public fill requiring disposal by minimising the amount produced in the first place and then recycling and reusing as much as possible. A taskforce will be established shortly under the Waste Reduction Committee with representatives from the construction

industry, professional institutes, government and academia to examine how best to minimise wastage and promote recycling and reuse in the industry. In the more distant future we might need to better integrate the management of C&DM with that of municipal solid waste. One possibility is to use public fill to form land required for the next generation of landfills.

Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau
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