

Information Paper for LegCo
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Progress Report on the Improvement Measures Taken
after the Flooding on 14 April 2000

Introduction

At the meeting on 18 May 2000, the Administration briefed the LegCo Members on the latest status of the flood control and prevention measures and also the findings on the causes of the widespread flooding in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun on 14 April 2000. The Administration was requested to provide a progress report on the improvement measures taken to avoid the recurrence of the widespread flooding on 14 April.

2. The major drainage improvement projects as listed in the Appendix C in the information paper presented on 18 May will alleviate the flooding situation in the long-term. Prior to their completion, the following interim measures are now in place to improve the situation.

Improvement Measures

3. The Drainage Services Department (DSD) have made great effort in ensuring that all existing drainage systems are properly maintained at their maximum hydraulic capacity. As a lot of vegetation, debris and silts were washed down into the watercourses on 14 April, DSD has carried out comprehensive inspection, clearance and bank protection works along major watercourses in the Northwestern New Territories (NWNT) to remove blockages and to restore their hydraulic capacity. About \$1 million of urgent repairs and desilting works have been completed since the rainstorm. DSD have also continued with their routine inspection of the watercourses and other drainage facilities under their preventive maintenance programme, and they

have carried out more than \$3 million worth of preventive maintenance works in NWNT since 14 April.

4. In connection with village drains/channels, the Home Affairs Department has also carried out emergency desilting and repair works at 28 locations in Tuen Mun since 14 April costing about \$0.8 million. They have also carried out about \$1.4 million of urgent desilting and repair works at some 33 locations in Yuen Long.

5. On 14 April, a pump failure occurred at the flood pumping station in Sheung Cheung Wai, which had caused a slight increase in the flood level. In order to improve reliability of the floodwater pumping stations, DSD is undertaking the following measures:

- (a) To upgrade the high level alarm and the monitoring and control systems of the pumping station. Interim improvement will be in place by mid July 2000 with further enhancement completed before the next wet season;
- (b) To man the flood pumping station at Sheung Cheung Wai under adverse weather conditions to ensure its proper functioning; and
- (c) To strengthen the maintenance measures to clear debris, vegetation and sediments at the flood storage ponds.

Site Control at KCRC's Works Sites

6. As the West Rail works will continue for some time, DSD has maintained close liaison with Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) in connection with their works within or adjacent to existing watercourses/drains. DSD has assigned dedicated staff to regularly inspect the West Rail sites to ensure that KCRC has good control on site so that their contractors strictly follow the agreed conditions for carrying out the works. DSD's staff will notify KCRC's senior management for immediate follow-up

action if any non-compliance is observed.

7. KCRC has stepped up control measures at its works sites to ensure that there is no adverse effect to all the existing watercourses/drains during the course of works. KCRC has also briefed the LegCo Members in the Case Conference on 19 June 2000 about the detailed control measures in the four specific flooding locations, namely, Yick Yuen Tsuen, Sheung Cheung Wai, Fung Chi Tsuen and Tsz Tin Tsuen. The latest progress of these measures is as follows:

(a) Yick Yuen Tsuen

KCRC have already increased the capacity of the drainage channels/pipes which cross the haul road. Regular inspections are being carried out to ensure that channels/pipes are unobstructed, and debris and silt are cleared.

(b) Sheung Cheung Wai

An earth bund was constructed to reduce the catchment area draining towards Sheung Cheung Wai. Emergency standby pumps are in place to pump water away from the Sheung Cheung Wai catchment area during heavy rain. A sandbag bund was constructed along the edge of Tin Fuk Road to channel rain water to the road gullies and prevent water draining to the Sheung Cheung Wai catchment area. Regular inspections are being carried out to ensure that the two major drainage inlets within KCRC's works areas are unobstructed, and debris and silt are cleared.

(c) Fung Chi Tsuen

KCRC has already replaced the two small diameter pipes beneath the haul road by a 400 mm diameter steel pipe. An additional 300 mm diameter pipe will also be installed before the end of June to further improve the situation.

(d) Tsz Tin Tsuen

The temporary works, which were in the Tuen Mun Nullah on 14 April, have been completely removed. Limited working in the Tuen Mun Nullah is now in progress, mostly above flood level. The conditions for working in the Tuen Mun Nullah, imposed by DSD, will be strictly enforced.

8. KCRC's resident site staff (RSS) will continue to carry out day-to-day supervision of the site construction including drainage measures to ensure that they are carried out properly and in accordance with the agreed conditions. They have to ensure that the obligations of the contractors required under the contracts in respect of existing watercourses and drainage systems are met. In this regard, KCRC's RSS will continue to inspect all existing watercourses/drains within the work sites regularly and to instruct the contractors to keep the watercourses/drains clear of obstructions and debris and silt.

9. KCRC has also formulated emergency action plans to deal with adverse weather conditions, and will make use of the weather information directly received from the Hong Kong Observatory to monitor the changes in weather conditions. KCRC has set up well-defined working procedures for removing designated plant, temporary works and materials from the watercourses prior to heavy rainstorms, to ensure there is no impediment to storm flows. KCRC will suspend works if necessary depending on the severity of the weather conditions. KCRC has also installed a 24-hour telephone hotline to receive complaints or comments from the public on the West Rail works so that KCRC's RSS can take prompt action to rectify any reported irregularities.

10. In addition, KCRC has set up a dedicated task force, comprising a qualified engineer, a senior inspector of works and two inspectors of works, to monitor and audit drainage activities for the remainder of the wet season. These KCRC staff will be fully mobile, independent of the RSS and solely

allocated to policing the drainage of West Rail sites in the New Territories.

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Works Bureau