

For information on 28 October 1999

Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Progress of Year 2000 Compliance Exercise Relating to Planning and Lands Matters

Purpose

1. This paper is an update on progress in the Y2K programme for Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau (PELB), the Departments and Non-Government Organisation (NGO)¹ within the Planning, Lands and Buildings policy areas.
2. The areas reported on include :
 - the present position in addressing and resolving the Y2K problems;
 - the Y2K contingency plans; and
 - the arrangements for rollover to Year 2000.

Present Position

3. All mission-critical systems² within the various Departments/NGO under the policy purview of planning, lands and buildings have been confirmed as Y2K compliant³.
4. Since June 1999, we have engaged an external consultant to help us (including our departments) review the preparatory work for the rollover, including contingency planning and setting up of coordinating centres during Y2K critical dates.

Y2K Contingency Planning

5. Departments and NGO have already prepared their Y2K contingency plans in line with the recommendations made by the Steering Committee on Year 2000 Compliance. Staff of the departments are adequately briefed about the contingency plans so as to ensure all are well prepared for the rollover. These plans have been and will be subject to further refinements as may be required in the time leading to the rollover.

¹ This paper covers Buildings Department (BD), Lands Department (LandsD), Land Registry (LR), Planning Department (PlanD), and Lands Development Corporation (LDC).

² Mission-critical systems, according to the definition set by the Steering Committee on Y2K Compliance, are those systems whose proper functioning is related to public health and safety, the provision of critical service to the public, and payment and revenue collection.

³ These systems include systems which are confirmed to be compliant, have been rectified, and systems which can be rectified by resetting the clock on or after 1 January 2000.

6. PELB departments and the NGO, during the rollover to Y2K critical dates including 1 January and 29 February 2000, will either set up their Y2K Coordinating Centre to monitor their key business or perform comprehensive system checks before starting their business on the next working day. Also, they will take necessary precautionary measures such as backup of critical business data, shutting down of business systems, and re-scheduling of critical activities to minimise business risks. They have also drawn up a detailed emergency contact list of staff responsible for critical system operation.

Town Planning

7. Regarding town planning, the critical business would not be affected by the rollover as the computer system for delivery of the business, i.e. the Town Planning Information System (TPIS) is Y2K compliant. An impact assessment was also carried out to identify the probable impact to the business operations if the critical system would fail in the rollover. The results of the assessment indicated that with proper precautionary and contingency measures in place, the statutory town planning function can still be carried out effectively. Planning Department will also set up their coordinating centre during the rollover to Y2K critical dates to monitor their critical systems.

Land Registration and Search

8. Regarding land registration and search, the critical businesses to maintain, update and provide search facility on land registers and documents would not be affected by the rollover, as the business systems are Y2K compliant. Impact assessments have been carried out to identify the probable consequence of system failure which might be caused by Y2K induced incidents, contingency plans have been developed to deal with these failures and to minimise the disruptions.

9. Thorough system testing will be conducted on 1 and 2 January 2000 to ensure that the systems are functioning properly. In case problems emerge during the testing, the vendors of the systems will be immediately called upon to fix the problem. In the worst situation of complete system failure which stretches to the business date on 3 January 2000, key services will be provided by manual processing with slight delays.

Land Administration

10. Regarding land administration, the critical services delivered by Lands Department would not be affected by the rollover, as the various business systems are all Y2K compliant. These critical services include disposal of land parcels, acquisition of land for public purposes, management and control of land use and development, provision of surveying services and maintenance of an up-to-date computerised mapping and administration of the Lands Department Consent Scheme. An impact assessment was also carried out to identify the probable impact on the business operations should the mission-critical systems fail in the

rollover. The results of the assessment indicated that with proper precautionary and contingency measures in place, they would still be able to provide key services although there would be slight delays in the services to the public. Lands Department will also set up their coordinating centre during the rollover to Y2K critical dates to monitor their critical systems.

11. The various business systems in the Land Development Corporation are Y2K compliant. They have also prepared detailed contingency plans for their key operational systems to avoid disruption of services to the public.

Building Safety

12. Regarding the control for building safety, this critical service delivered by the Buildings Department should not be affected by the rollover, as the various business systems are all Y2K compliant. Apart from the preparation of the contingency plans, they have carried out a risk/impact assessment of their business operations and identified one operation, namely the 24-hours reporting and advisory services for dangerous buildings and slopes, which, albeit with a low risk of failure, would have a high impact on the departmental services if it fails. This operation has therefore undergone comprehensive review and special efforts were made to formulate the contingency plan to ensure continuance of this critical service on the Y2K critical dates. Additional measures including backup mobile telephones, special arrangements with Police duty controller and periodic checking of communication equipment will be put in place during the rollover of Y2K critical dates. All other business services were classified as low risk and low impact.

13. If the weather situation before the transition to Y2K critical dates so warrants, Buildings Department will activate their Emergency Duty Centre.

Arrangements for Year 2000 Rollover

14. A Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau Y2K Coordinating Centre (PELB-CC)⁴ will be set up in conjunction with Works Bureau to monitor any incidents which may affect the business areas under PELB's policy purview and report details to the Central Coordinating Centre (CCC) under the command of ITBB. The centre will operate concurrently with the CCC round the clock during the rollover.

15. Individual departments have been responsible for the testing of their contingency plans in line with the requirements of ITBB. The focus of testing to date has been desktop based to ensure the scope of the plans is in order. All preparative actions and communication mechanisms will be tested in the

⁴ PELB will be integrated with Works Bureau Coordinating Centre forming the WPELB Coordinating Centre. The centre will be headed by a Chief Assistant Secretary of Works Bureau (WB) and will be supported by staff from PELB and WB.

forthcoming territory wide drill in November 1999. Most of the business areas of the PELB departments are relatively self-contained, and the key business partners upstream in their supply chain are mainly power companies, telecommunication services providers and works contractors. We will involve the necessary business partners from time to time as required.

16. We shall carry out additional testing of the communications mechanisms with departmental coordinating centres before the rollover to ensure the systems work effectively.

17. Regarding the publicity programme for the Y2K exercise, we shall be working together with ITBB and will follow their guidelines issued from time to time. Information which may need to be conveyed to the public during the rollover of Y2K critical dates will be disseminated under the coordination of the CCC.

18. We shall gather all information from the individual PELB departments pertaining to any events during the rollover period and carry out a post millennium review in preparation for the leap year transition in February 2000.

**Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau
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