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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 4th meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 17 December 2003, at 10:45 am**

Members present:

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Members absent:

Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, GBS, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Public officers attending:

Miss Amy TSE	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)3
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works) W1
Mrs Carrie LAM, JP	Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) 1
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Miss Janice TSE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mrs Ingrid YEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Health)2
Dr York CHOW, SBS	Cluster Chief Executive (Hong Kong West) Hospital Authority
Mr Donald LI	Executive Manager (Hospital Planning) Hospital Authority
Mr C H YUE, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr David S P TONG	Chief Architect/4 Architectural Services Department
Mr Patrick FAN	Chief Estate Surveyor/Acquisition (Acting) Lands Department
Mr K K NG	Assistant Director of Architectural Services (Property Services)
Mr F K LAI	Deputy Director of Drainage Services
Mr Raymond CHAN, JP	Director of Civil Engineering (Acting)
Dr Ellen CHAN	Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Facilities)
Mr MAK Chai-kwong, JP	Director of Highways
Mr Patrick LI, JP	Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2)
Mr John CHAI, JP	Director of Territory Development
Mr Jeff LEUNG	Deputy Secretary-General (1) University Grants Committee

Dr CHENG Man-yung	Deputy Director (Professional Services and Facilities Management), Hospital Authority
Mr LEE Kwok-sung	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (School Development)
Mr Tony TANG	Senior Education Officer (School Building) Education and Manpower Bureau
Mr LEE Kin-wang	Head of Estates, Health and Safety Division Vocational Training Council
Miss Johanna TSAO	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Subventions and Performance Monitoring)
Mr William KO, JP	Director of Water Supplies
Mr LEUNG Mang-chiu, JP	Assistant Director of Water Supplies (New Works)
Mr Simon YAN	Assistant Director of Information Technology Services, (E-government Projects Development)1
Mr Martin CHEUNG	Chief Civil Engineer Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
Miss Winnie HO	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment)2
Mr Alex NG	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Facilities Development)
Mr D J HAYES	Chief Engineer (Yuen Long) Territory Development Department
Mr M T CHOW	Chief Engineer/Drainage Projects Drainage Services Department
Ms Ernestina WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)5
Mr WAN Man-leung	Deputy Project Manager/Major Works(2) Highways Department
Mr LEE Yan-ming	Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West Transport Department
Mr CHOW Ying-shun	Regional Highway Engineer/Kowloon Highways Department
Mr LAM Hon	Chief Traffic Engineer/Kowloon Transport Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)6
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Staff in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Matthew LOO	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)3
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant 1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant 2

HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT

PWSC(2003-04)58 56MM Enhancement of infection control facilities in the public hospital system (Batch A)

Members noted that the Administration had briefed the LegCo Panel on Health Services (HS Panel) on this proposal at the meeting held on 8 December 2003, but due to insufficient time for discussion, Panel members had agreed that they would raise queries on the proposal at the Public Works Subcommittee.

2. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that he would not object to the proposed increase in project estimate in view of the urgent need to enhance the infection control facilities in the public hospital system. However, he had grave concern about the need for additional funds of \$14.8 million caused by phased decanting and services diversion works and \$48.1 million for the unforeseeable repair, maintenance and major alteration works. He was not satisfied that the problems including concrete spalling, water penetration and pipeworks were identified only when the proposed works had actually started, as these problems should be rectified in the day-to-day repair and maintenance carried out by the Hospital Authority (HA), and should not be unforeseeable. Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed the same concern and queried whether some repair and maintenance works, which should be funded under the recurrent subvention for HA, were covered in the present project estimate. Mr Kenneth TING considered that the proposed huge increase in project estimate by around 25% needed further explanation.

3. In response, the Director of Architectural Services (D Arch S) said that given the extremely tight time frame for the required enhancement works, the Administration had not been able to adhere to the usual approach of having developed the detailed user requirements and worked out the detailed cost estimates before putting up the funding proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee (FC) in July 2003. In the absence of detailed project specifications, Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) had to accept HA's preliminary cost estimates (based on the unit cost of previous hospital maintenance projects) for funding purposes, and to re-assess the user requirements and project costs in the course of the works, which was the only way forward to achieve the target

project delivery date. The Administration had explained this special arrangement in its previous submission to PWSC and FC. As no pre-vetting had been conducted for this project, some problems (such as additional alteration, repair and rectification works required) were identified only when works actually started. The Chief Architect/4 of ArchSD (CA4) added that the original plan of the Administration and HA was to complete the enhancement works within three months, which was the time required to complete the preliminary design of a similar works project under normal circumstances.

4. The Cluster Chief Executive (Hong Kong West) of HA (Cluster CE) said that due to the lack of experience in urgent large-scale works projects, HA could only estimate the project cost based on previous small-scale works projects. The unit cost adopted for the original project estimate was \$9,833 per m². D Arch S supplemented that the revised unit cost of the enhancement project was less than \$12,000 per m², which was reasonable in comparison with the average cost of \$11,800 per m² for hospital repair and maintenance projects in the past eight years. As a reference, the tender price of a recent works project undertaken in Tang Shiu Kin Hospital, which included maintenance of the hospital façade, was around \$14,000 per m².

5. As regards the proposed increase of \$48.1 million for repair, rectification and major alteration works, D Arch S said that the additional funding would mainly be spent on purchase and installation of additional transformers, generator sets and chillers to enlarge the capacity of the power and chilled water supply in the hospitals concerned. He also pointed out that the enhancement works were far more complicated than expected. For instance, no major refurbishment works had been carried out for some time in three hospitals covered in this project, because it had not been practicable to arrange decanting of wards in these hospitals for large-scale maintenance works without affecting the operation of the hospitals. While the problems of concrete spalling, water penetration and pipeworks mentioned in the paper would not affect the structural safety of the hospitals, the building conditions of some of the wards were neither satisfactory nor fit for conversion into isolation rooms, the standard of which was much higher and stringent than that of general wards. Additional funding for urgent repair and rectification works, which had not been budgeted for in the original project estimate, was therefore required. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Health)² (PAS(H)²) added that of the proposed increase of \$48.1 million for repair, rectification and major alteration works, about \$12 million would be spent on urgent repair and rectification works while the remainder on enhancing the capacity of the power and chilled water supply systems.

6. D Arch S also confirmed that given the extremely tight time frame, only repair and rectification works that were necessary for the conversion to isolation wards had been included in this project; and that after careful consideration of the funding arrangement, the Administration considered it appropriate for the works to be funded under this project vote. PAS(H)² also confirmed that funding for other minor repair and maintenance works for HA hospitals was provided under block allocation

subhead 8100MX. In light of the experience in this project, the Administration would review the funding priority for repair and maintenance for HA hospitals in future budgeting exercises.

Admin

7. Mr Kenneth TING commented that a more detailed breakdown of project estimates should be provided in future submissions to PWSC. In particular, the estimate for repair and maintenance works should be separated from that for purchase and installation of various systems. The Administration took note of Mr TING's comment for appropriate presentation of project estimates in future.

8. Mr WONG Sing-chi maintained that concrete spalling and water penetration in hospitals were serious problems. Both ArchSD and HA should closely monitor the building conditions of hospitals and rectify such problems as soon as possible. Referring to her personal experience of hospitalization, Miss CHAN Yuen-han commented that the existing facilities in many HA hospitals were highly unsatisfactory, and better building management and maintenance was necessary to ensure efficient delivery of quality hospital services.

9. In response, D Arch S and Cluster CE advised that regular repair and maintenance works had been carried out for each hospital. However, some problems might only arise and be identified when major works were carried out. Nevertheless, D Arch S said that he would follow up the matter with HA with a view to improving the situation. PAS(H)2 also assured members that the Administration would learn from this experience and improve the regular maintenance of hospitals.

10. On Mr WONG Sing-chi's concern about the additional expenditure of \$14.8 million caused by phased decanting and services diversion works, D Arch S advised that the original project estimate was worked out based on the assumption that the wards to be converted into isolation wards would be decanted in one go. However, as all of the six hospitals were major acute hospitals, there were considerable difficulties in arranging decanting in one go without affecting the existing hospital services. In the end, the works could only be completed in two phases in accordance with the decanting plans. Furthermore, since most of the hospital services provided by the affected wards were essential, ArchSD had to carry out necessary diversion works for building services. As the services diversion works had to be carried out at night for almost the entire duration of the project in order to suit the operational needs of the hospitals concerned and to expedite the works, extra costs for night works had to be incurred.

11. In response to Mr Kenneth TING's enquiry about the respective project scope of 56MM and 57MM, D Arch S advised that ArchSD was responsible for the enhancement works of six hospitals under 56MM, and HA was the works agent of 57MM which covered similar enhancement works in three other hospitals. PAS(H)2 said that under 56MM, the total number of isolation beds that could be provided was 843, comprising 59 beds in intensive care units (ICUs) and 784 non-ICU beds. The number of ICU isolation beds was increased from 19 in the original plan to 59,

because after the works had started, it was found technically feasible to provide more ICU isolation beds. The provision of more ICU isolation beds was preferred as ICU beds could be used as non-ICU beds if required but not vice versa. As regards 57MM, PAS(H)2 advised that the project covered the provision of 10 ICU isolation beds and 411 non-ICU isolation beds. Cluster CE also advised that an additional amount of around \$10 million was required for the proposed enhancement works under 57MM.

Admin

12. Mr Albert CHAN said that many government projects delivered in an expedited manner had resulted in additional costs and some additional costs were unnecessary had the projects been delivered in the normal pace. He commented that the Administration should review the process of this project to avoid recurrence of similar problems in future. In response to Mr CHAN's request, PAS(H)2 agreed to provide information on the approach and procedures adopted in estimating the costs of the enhancement project in comparison with the usual approach adopted for similar works projects.

13. Mr Albert CHAN said that the unit cost of the enhancement project of \$12,000 per m² was very high and enquired whether the Administration had explored other options, such as the construction of new buildings adjacent to the hospitals concerned for infection control facilities. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also recalled the discussion at previous HS Panel meetings that in addition to the conversion works, the Administration had undertaken to build new wings attached to the existing acute hospitals concerned to house infection control facilities. In response, D Arch S advised that in general the construction cost would be higher if the works were to be carried out whilst the hospitals were still in operation. As a reference, the construction unit cost of the remodelling project at Tang Shiu Kin Hospital was around \$14,000 per m². He said that the proposed conversion works were the short-term measure to prepare for the possible return of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), while new infectious disease blocks would be built as a longer-term measure. PAS(H)2 agreed and said that a new centre in the form of a separate building for treatment of infectious disease would be built in Princess Margaret Hospital as a longer-term measure. She however pointed out that construction of new infectious disease blocks required a much longer lead time. She said that as explained in the funding submission in July 2003, the purpose of the proposed conversion works was to meet the imminent need of isolation facilities in the event of a resurgence of SARS in winter this year. Currently, around 900 isolation beds had been well in place to treat SARS patients in acute hospitals.

14. Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired whether the Administration had made reference to the "Xiaotangshan hospital" mode in Beijing as a measure to prepare for possible resurgence of SARS. In response, Cluster CE advised that taking into consideration the merits and demerits of the "Xiaotangshan hospital" mode, HA considered the mode not suitable for Hong Kong. HA would follow the advice of microbiologists in the design of long-term infection control facilities in Hong Kong.

15. On Mr TAM Yiu-chung's concern about the overseas experiences in the provision of infection control facilities, particularly the Mainland, Canada and Singapore which had also experienced a serious SARS outbreak, Cluster CE advised that infection control facilities similar to those in Hong Kong were provided in the Mainland and Singapore, but he did not have information about the facilities in Canada.

Admin

16. Mr Henry WU declared that he was the Trustee of the Queen Mary Hospital Charitable Trust. In response to his enquiry about the provision of additional power and chilled water supply in the six hospitals under the project, CA4 advised that the spare capacity was insufficient to support new features in isolation rooms including negative pressure gradient in patient rooms and provision of 100% fresh air supply at no less than 12 air changes per hour. The requirements of additional power and chilled water supply in these hospitals to support the new facilities varied and, for example, a new transformer room was required in Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital. On Mr WU's request, the Administration agreed to provide information on the existing spare capacity of power and chilled water supply of the six hospitals, and the additional capacity required for the enhanced infection control facilities in these hospitals.

17. In reply to Mr TAM Yiu-chung's enquiry, CA4 also confirmed that the provision of emergency power supply for hospitals to support fire services installations was a statutory requirement. Emergency power supply was also required to support the essential medical equipment. Cluster CE added that additional power supply was required to support facilities in isolation wards to meet the infection control standards set by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

18. The item was voted on and endorsed.

CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND BLOCK ALLOCATION

PWSC(2003-04)54

**Block Allocations for Heads 701 to 711
under the Capital Works Reserve Fund**

19. Members noted that the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (ITB Panel) had been consulted on the funding requirements for the implementation of computerization projects under the Capital Works Reserve Fund *Head 710 - Computerization Subhead A007AGX* for 2004-05 at the meeting held on 5 December 2003. Mr SIN Chung-kai, Chairman of ITB Panel, reported that the Panel had no objection to the proposal, but some members were worried that the proposed reduction in allocation for 2004-05 by 22% might affect the quality of government services. Mr SIN also advised that he had expressed disappointment at the considerable reduction, and considered that the Administration should make the best

use of the present opportunity of falling prices to take forward justified computerization projects. Some members had requested the Administration to include information on the benefits arising from the computerization projects in the relevant PWSC paper.

20. *On Head 703 - Buildings*, Mr WONG Sing-chi reiterated his concerns raised at the previous meetings about the provisions of primary and secondary school places in Hong Kong, and requested the Administration to give careful consideration before submitting school projects to PWSC. Ms Emily LAU echoed Mr WONG's views. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (School Development) (PAS(SD)) advised that new primary schools were proposed mainly for the implementation of whole-day primary schooling. Additional secondary school places were also required to meet the forecasted shortfall up to 2007. PAS(SD) advised that the Administration would consult the Panel on Education in January 2004 on the planning and provision of public sector school places in Hong Kong.

21. Mr WONG Sing-chi asked that why \$1 million was still earmarked for the planning and engineering feasibility study for development on Sham Tseng further reclamation under *Head 711 - Housing*, given that the Administration had already decided not to pursue reclamation projects in the Harbour except for the reclamation in Central, Wanchai and South East Kowloon. In response, the Chief Civil Engineer of Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau confirmed that the reclamation project had been dropped. The \$1 million was earmarked for the outstanding consultant fees for the completed preliminary studies and other preparatory work for the project.

22. Miss CHAN Yuen-han noted that \$60 million was earmarked under *Head 701 - Land Acquisition Subhead 1004CA* for the application by Wong Wai Tsak Tong (the Tong) to the Lands Tribunal for determination of compensation. She was concerned that the reserved funding for the case would convey the message that the Government was prepared to pay the amount for compensation notwithstanding that the relevant litigation was still in progress. She thus suggested that the Administration should apply for supplementary funding for the compensation after the Lands Tribunal had ruled the case. The Chief Estate Surveyor/Acquisition (Acting) of Lands Department (CES/A) said that it was the usual procedure for the Administration to earmark funding for compensation arising from applications to the Lands Tribunal. The reserved funding was only an estimate and the actual amount of compensation would be determined by the Lands Tribunal. The Administration expected that the Lands Tribunal would deliver its judgement on the case soon although the confirmed schedule was not yet available.

23. Mr Albert CHAN said that the Tong's case had dragged on for a long time. The Tong was willing to resolve the case with the Administration, but the Administration had adopted a rigid approach to file the case to the Lands Tribunal, which might not be the best solution as this arrangement might result in the spending of more public money. Mr Andrew WONG added that the legislative intent of the Block Crown Lease (Cheung Chau) Ordinance (Cap. 488) was to terminate the block

Admin

crown lease without any compensation to the Tong. Nevertheless, the Ordinance was amended in 1998 to allow the Tong to claim compensation. In response to members' concerns, CES/A agreed to report on the updated position of the application by the Tong to the Lands Tribunal pursuant to section 10(2) of the Block Crown Lease (Cheung Chau) Ordinance.

24. Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired about the three projects under *Head 701 Subhead 1004CA - Land Acquisition*, namely, (a) Resumption of Inverness Road squatter area, Kowloon, (b) Re-development of the squatter area at Diamond Hill for public housing and school developments, and (c) Hong Kong Housing Society's Urban Improvement Programme at Bonham Strand and Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan. CES/A advised that the proposed provisions were earmarked for the compensation arising from the land resumption for these projects. The land resumption process for the three projects was completed in March 2000, March 2000 and January 1991 respectively.

25. Mr Henry WU declared that he was a Council Member of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He asked whether there was any duplication between the refurbishment works in the theatre, lecture hall and foyer at Sheung Wan Civic Centre (SWCC) under *Head 703 - Buildings Subhead 3004GX* and the renovation of the 5th and 6th floors of SWCC under *Head 703 - Buildings Subhead 3101GX*. The Assistant Director of Architectural Services (Property Services) (AD(PS)) advised that the project under Subhead 3004GX was to improve the air-conditioning, lighting, sound and security systems of the theatre, lecture hall and foyer at SWCC. The works would start in April 2004 for completion in November 2004. As regards the project under Subhead 3101GX, AD(PS) said that the project covered renovation of the 7th and 8th floors of SWCC instead of 5th and 6th floors as inadvertently stated in the paper. He also confirmed that there was no duplication between the two projects.

26. Mr Albert CHAN referred to the resumption of Tung Chung Area 30 for public housing development, and resumption of land for phase 2B of the Tung Chung New Town Development Area 31, Lantau under *Head 701 - Land Acquisition Subhead 1004CA*. Considering the high cost of over \$500 million required for the land resumption compensation for each of the above two developments in Tung Chung, Mr CHAN said that instead of resuming the private land for public housing development, the Administration should consider designating the land lots for residential use and invite the landowners to carry out their own developments in order to save the public money for compensation. Public housing, if needed, should be developed on government land as far as possible. In response, CES/A said that the two pieces of land in Tung Chung had been resumed in 1995 and 1998 respectively for public housing development. On Mr CHAN's request, CES/A agreed to provide the scope of land resumption, with information on titles of lands, and the town plan zoning of the two resumed lands in Tung Chung.

Admin

27. Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired about the scope of the proposed cycle track network in New Territories under *Head 707 - New Towns and Urban Area*

Development Subhead 7100CX, and whether the Administration would take into account Members' views on the network expressed at previous meetings of the Panel on Transport. In response, the Director of Territory Development (DTD) advised that the funding of \$2.7 million was earmarked for 2003-04 for a feasibility study of the proposed cycle track network which covered Shatin, Fanling, Sheung Shui, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Ma On Shan, Sai Kung, Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun. He confirmed that Members' views would be taken into consideration in the feasibility study and subsequent design of the network.

28. Mr LAU Kong-wah enquired about the development plan for Tai Po Area 39. He was particularly concerned about the supporting road infrastructure to Cheung Shue Tan and Area 39 and enquired whether the related works would start in 2004 as previously advised by the Administration. In response, the Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2) advised that a minor rural improvement works project for village access at Cheung Shue Tan, Tai Po would be carried out under *Head 707 - New Towns and Urban Area Development Subhead 7014CX*. As regards the overall development plan for Tai Po Area 39, the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)³ advised that the development plan might fall outside the scope of the block allocations under the Capital Works Reserve Fund. She suggested that members might wish to follow up the matter at the relevant LegCo Panel. In response to Mr LAU's request, DTD agreed to update members on the development plan for Tai Po Area 39 and the supporting road infrastructure.

Admin

29. In this connection, Mr Andrew WONG pointed out that the planned development in Cheung Shue Tan had been withheld for a long time, whilst the owners of the land were prohibited from using the land for other purposes. He commented that such prolonged delay of planned development was not fair to the owners of the land. Some owners had also proposed that the development might be carried out in phases. DTD noted Mr WONG's views and would follow up the matter.

30. Ms Emily LAU was concerned about the public consultation for projects under *Head 706 - Highways Subhead 6100TX*. She pointed out that the Complaints Division of the LegCo Secretariat had received complaints relating to the construction of five interfacing projects of Road T3 in Shatin. At least five case conferences between LegCo Members and the Administration had been held to deal with issues arising from the complaints. In her recent meeting with the affected residents in Tai Wai, Ms LAU had also received a complaint that affected residents were given only 12 days to consider the proposed works and raise objection. Ms LAU considered such arrangement unsatisfactory and that a more direct consultation with the affected residents for public works projects was required. Ms LAU also requested the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau to make sure that public consultation had been properly conducted before the relevant proposals were submitted to PWSC. In response, the Director of Highways (DHy) advised that it was the standard procedure for the Administration to consult relevant District Councils on works projects. In some cases, the Administration would also consult the

affected residents by mail and by posting notices at the affected buildings. DHy also advised that all projects under Head 706 - Highways Subhead 6100TX were minor projects. The scope of these projects was much smaller than the interfacing projects of Road T3, and some of these projects such as the provision of covered walkways and renovation of footbridges were proposed by the local communities.

31. The item was voted on and endorsed.

HEAD 705 - CIVIL ENGINEERING

PWSC(2003-04)57	161DR	Restoration of Shuen Wan Landfill – post-completion monitoring work	environmental monitoring work
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32. Members noted that the Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) had been consulted on the proposal at the meeting held on 17 October 2003. Miss CHOY So-yuk, Chairman of EA Panel, reported that the Panel supported the proposal in principle. Noting that the landfill gas generation rate had reduced from 2 500 m³ per hour in 1997 to 650 m³ per hour in 2003 and the concentration level of total nitrogen in the leachate had decreased by 40%, some members had asked why the cost of environmental monitoring work for the second seven years did not proportionately decrease. Panel members had therefore requested the Administration to provide information on the content of landfill gas and leachate of Shuen Wan Landfill (SWL) as well as the types of tests conducted in the submission to PWSC. Members had also expressed concern about the usage of restored landfills. Some members suggested that consideration could be given to using the precious landfill space for activities, such as those similar to the Harbour Fest. Some members considered that some landfill sites might not be suitable for developing recreational facilities in view of their remote locations. It would be more worthwhile to let out these landfill spaces at low prices to recyclers to facilitate the development of recycling business on the one hand and revive the economy on the other.

33. Mr Henry WU noted that the methane content in the landfill gas generated from SWL had reduced from 59% in 1997 to 50% in 2003, and it would take at least two and up to three decades for SWL to be fully restored when the methane content reached the safety level of 1%. He enquired whether a more precise estimate on the future restoration period, say 25 years, could be provided. In response, the Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Facilities) (AD(WF)) advised that the methane content of landfill gas should be reduced to 1% before a landfill concerned could be regarded as fully restored because landfill gas with methane content over 1% might still cause explosion. According to the experience worldwide, it normally took two decades to 30 years for a landfill to be fully restored, and it would be difficult to have a more precise estimate than that, as the restoration period could be affected by many factors including climate and types of wastes in a landfill. The Administration would continue to conduct environmental review every five years to determine if the

restoration and/or monitoring work should continue.

34. On Miss CHOY So-yuk's concern about the cost of the second seven-year post-completion environmental monitoring work, the Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment)2 (PAS(E)2) advised that despite the lower amount of landfill gas generated at SWL, the concentration of methane in the gas was still high and hence the same stringent post-completion environmental monitoring work had to be maintained and the cost could not be proportionately reduced. AD(WF) supplemented that taking into account members' views raised at the EA Panel meeting held on 17 October 2003, the Administration had reduced the project estimate from \$27.5 million to \$24.1 million. The reduction included the downward adjustment of environmental monitoring and audit cost from \$7.4 million to \$6 million by reducing the frequency of tests required, and the deletion of the \$2 million provision for contingencies which was considered unnecessary in view of the experience of the monitoring work at SWL over the past six years. In response to Miss CHOY's request, AD(WF) agreed to provide the types of tests carried out at SWL, and to group the tests into categories for easy reference.

Admin

35. As regards the usage of restored landfills, PAS(E)2 said that there were various constraints on the use of restored landfills. For example, they were not suitable for the construction of permanent building structures. Therefore, restored landfills were mainly used for provision of recreational facilities. The Administration had not ruled out suggestions on their alternative usage. AD(WF) also advised that in addition to SWL, another three restored landfills, namely, Ma Yau Tong Central Landfill, Tseung Kwan O Landfill II/III and Siu Lang Shui Landfill, were suitable for development of recreational facilities. The Pillar Point Valley Landfill, which had not been restored, also had the potential for development. AD(WF) also advised that construction of recreational facilities at Sai Tso Wan Landfill in March 2003. The Administration was also studying the feasibility of building a small park at Ngau Chi Wan Landfill. In response to Ms Emily LAU, AD(WF) undertook to advise members on the current and/or planned uses of the 12 restored landfills in Hong Kong.

Admin

36. Mr WONG Sing-chi enquired about the progress of proposed conversion of the existing golf driving range at SWL into a nine-hole golf course. In response, AD(WF) said that the majority of the capital cost of the proposed conversion would be contributed by the Hong Kong Jockey Club, and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) would be responsible for the recurrent expenditure of the golf-course. Nevertheless, the project was currently held in abeyance as the Government was facing a large budget deficit and LCSD was reviewing the priority of capital works projects under its purview. Other options such as involving the private sector in the development of the golf course would be considered.

37. In response to Miss CHOY So-yuk's suggestion of letting out restored landfills for recycling business, AD(WF) said that there might be site constraints and practical difficulties for using these sites for recycling business as some of the

landfills were close to residential developments and/or had steep slopes. Furthermore, recycling industry required three-phase electricity supply the provision of which might not be feasible at the sites. If suitable sites were identified for the recycling industry, the Administration was still required to consult relevant District Councils and work out the letting out arrangements.

38. The item was voted on and endorsed.

39. Due to meeting time constraint, the Chairman suggested and members agreed to defer the consideration of the remaining items PWSC(2003-04)55, PWSC(2003-04)56 and PWSC(2003-04)60 to the next meeting.

40. The meeting ended at 12:50 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 January 2004