

Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development

Progress of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Introduction

This paper reports on the progress of work on the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) project.

Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities in WKCD

2. The Consultative Committee (CC) and its three Advisory Groups, namely the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG), the Museums Advisory Group (MAG) and the Financial Matters Advisory Group (FMAG) were established in April 2006 to re-examine and re-confirm if appropriate, the need for the core arts and cultural facilities (CACF) of the WKCD as well as the financial implications of developing and operating these facilities. The terms of reference of the CC and its three Advisory Groups are at **Annex A**.

3. Since the establishment of the CC and its Advisory Groups in April 2006, there has been considerable progress in the deliberations on the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD. The CC and its Advisory Groups have held a number of meetings. In addition, the PATAG and the MAG have held focus group meetings as well as open forums to gauge the views of the relevant sectors and the public.

Work of the Consultative Committee (CC)

4. The CC has been overseeing the progress of work of its three Advisory Groups. It has held three meetings so far. At its latest meeting held on 7 September 2006, the CC discussed the recommendations report submitted by the PATAG and agreed that the report would be forwarded to the FMAG for assessment of the financial implications. The CC expects to receive the recommendations reports from the MAG and FMAG during the next few months, so that it could submit its overall recommendations to the Chief Executive on the need and justifications for the CACF and other types of arts and cultural facilities to be provided in the WKCD, their financial implications, as well as the possible financing approaches for developing and operating these facilities.

Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG)

5. The PATAG is tasked to advise the CC on the need for and the major specifications of the various performance venues defined as CACF in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) issued in September 2003 to be provided at the WKCD, in particular from the perspectives of enriching performing arts and promoting tourism; and the need for other arts and cultural facilities (excluding museums and Art Exhibition Centre) in the WKCD.

6. The PATAG has so far held ten meetings. From May to July 2006, the PATAG organized six sector-specific focus group meetings and two open consultative forums to gauge views from the relevant sectors including the performing arts sector and the tourism sector as well as members of the public. In addition to the views expressed at these meetings and forums, a number of written and on-line submissions were received.

7. The PATAG had been deliberating on the core arts and cultural facilities on the basis of a number of guiding principles which could be divided into two categories, relating to the development of performing arts and positioning of performing arts venues and facilities respectively. The following two guiding principles are particularly noteworthy –

- a) *The performing arts facilities in WKCD should be capable of meeting the long-term development needs of arts and culture in Hong Kong; and contribute to maintaining and sustaining the diversity and vibrancy of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong.*
- b) *The performing arts venues and facilities should be suitably clustered together and integrated with the commercial facilities in the WKCD so as to attract people flow during the day and night, thus creating synergy and vibrancy.*

8. After intensive deliberations taking into account the views of the relevant sectors and the public which were received during the consultation, the PATAG had reached a consensus on the proposed performance venues and related facilities for the WKCD. The PATAG recommends providing a series of specified venues and facilities in two phases. Phase I includes a Xiqu Centre providing a dedicated and purpose-built venue for Cantonese Opera as well as all other Chinese opera, a concert hall, a chamber music hall, a great theatre, two medium-sized theatres, four black box theatres, a mega performance venue and piazza areas. Phase II includes a second great theatre and two more medium sized theatres. The timing of implementation of phase II venues and facilities will be subject to prevailing market forces.

9. The vision, guiding principles, recommendations on the arts and cultural facilities, as well as other relevant issues considered by the PATAG are summarized in the Executive Summary of its report to the CC at **Annex B**.

10. The report of the PATAG was discussed at the CC meeting held on 7 September 2006. The CC agreed that the report would be forwarded to the FMAG for assessing the financial implications.

Museums Advisory Group (MAG)

11. The MAG is tasked to advise the CC on the need for the four museums proposed in the WKCD under the IFP and the preferred themes of these museums, museums with other themes, as well as the Art Exhibition Centre and their major requirements and specifications.

12. The MAG has so far held eleven meetings. In May 2006, the MAG held a focus group meeting and two open consultation forums to solicit views from curatorial professionals and the public on the provision of museums in the WKCD. In addition to the views expressed at the meeting and forums, a number of written and on-line submissions were also received.

13. In order to gain a better understanding of the planning and operation of major museums overseas, the MAG invited five overseas museum experts from Australia, USA, Japan and France to Hong Kong in July 2006 for exchange of views and sharing of experience. In mid July 2006, the Convenor of the MAG led a small delegation to visit a number of museums and cultural institutions in Paris, London, New York and San Francisco to exchange views with their management and curators.

14. During the past few months, the MAG had deliberated at length the key considerations for developing new museums in the WKCD. These include whether the vision and objectives of the new museums are conducive to achieving the objectives of developing the WKCD into a world-class arts and cultural district, their functions as a cultural institution and sustainable development, feasibility of the new museums in terms of management and curating and the new museums' contribution to the cultural ecology of Hong Kong. The key considerations which MAG adopted for shortlisting and selecting suitable museum themes from some 60 proposed themes received from the public are at **Annex C**.

15. On the basis of these key considerations, the MAG deliberated at length what museum themes should be included in the museums in the WKCD. As a result, the MAG agreed to pursue the idea that one cultural institution with museum functions which focuses on “visual culture” in the 20th to 21st Century should be constructed in the WKCD. This proposed institution would include but not be limited to several specialized focus areas in a flexible manner including visual art (which should also cover ink art), design, film and popular culture with maximum cross-fertilizations amongst the different areas. The MAG would deliberate further on this proposal, including the vision and mission, issues relating to mode of governance as well as the major specifications and planning requirements of this institution before submitting its recommendations to the CC.

Financial Matters Advisory Group (FMAG)

16. The FMAG is tasked to advise the CC on the financial implications of developing and operating the CACF as recommended by the PATAG and MAG. Given the sequential nature of the work among the three Advisory Groups, the FMAG’s work has to dovetail with that of the PATAG and MAG. The FMAG has so far held one meeting and will hold its second meeting on 29 September 2006.

17. To support the work of the FMAG, the Government appointed GHK (Hong Kong) Ltd. as the Financial Advisor (FA) on 1 August 2006. The FA is currently conducting detailed assessment of the financial implications of developing and operating the performing arts and related facilities recommended in PATAG’s report submitted to the CC on 7 September 2006. Taking into account the relevant financial implications as well as relevant local and overseas experience, the FA is studying possible public-private partnership approaches for developing and operating the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD. The FA is also in the process of preparing a public sector comparator for developing and operating the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD.

18. The FMAG will hold further meetings in the coming two to three months to consider the findings and recommendations of the FA, with a view to making a report to the CC on the financial implications of developing and operating the recommended CACF by the end of this year.

Home Affairs Bureau
27 September 2006

**Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the
West Kowloon Cultural District**

Terms of Reference

Based on the existing arts and cultural policy and having regard to the current provisions in Hong Kong –

- To re-examine and reconfirm if appropriate the need for the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities (CACF) of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) as defined in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) issued in September 2003^(Note) to meet the aspirations and needs of the local arts and cultural community and attract visitors.
- To advise the Chief Executive on the justifications for the CACF and other types of arts and cultural facilities as appropriate and necessary to be provided at the WKCD and the financial implications of developing and operating these facilities.

^(Note) The CACF as defined in the IFP are:

- (i) a Theatre Complex comprising three theatres with seating capacities of at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats, respectively;
- (ii) a Performance Venue with a seating capacity of at least 10,000 seats;
- (iii) a Museum Cluster comprising four museums of differing themes to be proposed by the Proponents, and a total Net Operating Floor Area of at least 75,000 square metres;
- (iv) an Art Exhibition Centre with a Net Operating Floor Area of at least 10,000 square metres;
- (v) a Water Amphitheatre; and
- (vi) at least four Piazza Areas.

Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Based on the existing arts and cultural policy and having regard to the current provisions in Hong Kong, to advise the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District on the following –

- the need for and the major specifications of the various performance venues defined as Core Arts and Cultural Facilities in the WKCD in the Invitation for Proposals issued in September 2003^(Note), in particular from the perspectives of enriching performing arts and promoting tourism; and
- the need for other arts and cultural facilities in WKCD (excluding museums and Art Exhibition Centre).

^(Note) The performance venues include:

- (a) a Theatre Complex comprising three theatres with seating capacities of at least 2,000, 800 and 400 seats, respectively;
- (b) a Performance Venue with a seating capacity of at least 10,000 seats;
- (c) a Water Amphitheatre; and
- (d) at least four Piazza Areas.

Museums Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Based on the existing arts and cultural policy and having regard to the current provisions in Hong Kong, to advise the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) on the following –

- the need for the four museums proposed in the WKCD and the preferred themes of these museums^(Note);
- the need to include museums with other themes;
- following confirmation of the themes, the scale and major requirements of each museum as far as practicable; and
- the need for and major specifications of the Art Exhibition Centre.

^(Note) The Invitation for Proposals only requires a Museum Cluster comprising four museums of different themes, with at least 75,000 square metres Net Operating Floor Area. The four “preferred museum themes” are:

- Museum of Modern Art
- Museum of Ink
- Museum of Design
- Museum of Moving Image

These themes are not mandatory requirement in the IFP.

Financial Matters Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

To advise the Consultative Committee on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District on the financial implications of developing and operating the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities as recommended by the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group and Museums Advisory Group.

Report of the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group

Executive Summary

Vision

- Developing WKCD into an integrated world-class arts and cultural and entertainment and tourism district with a must-visit appeal to both local residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles

Development of performing arts

- Aiming to meet the long-term development needs of culture and the arts in Hong Kong, and maintain and sustain the diversity and vibrancy of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong.
- Promoting artistic excellence in the hardware and software of the arts and cultural facilities.
- Providing a hub for local and international creative talents,
- Fostering strategic partnerships with international arts and cultural organizations.
- Capacity for arts education and audience building within and outside Hong Kong.
- Encouraging wider community participation in arts and culture by providing performing arts facilities generally affordable to both performing groups and audiences.
- Developing new mode of management and operation of performing arts venue with greater involvement with the arts community and the public.

- Striving to operate performing arts facilities on a self-financing basis with a level playing field and healthy competition.
- Clustering and integrating the arts and cultural and the commercial facilities together to create synergy and attract people flow.

Positioning of performing arts venues and facilities in a cultural district

- Emphasizing on the concept of “central cultural district”.
- Allowing space for organic growth and sustainable development.
- Developing venues and facilities into attractions for local residents and tourists alike.
- Integrating arts and cultural facilities in WKCD with neighbouring areas to cultivate cultural ambience in the vicinity
- Building up WKCD as a hub for arts and cultural activities in Pearl River Delta and the region.

Recommendations on Arts and Cultural Facilities

Phase I Development

- A Xiqu Centre comprising a theatre with a seating capacity of 1,200 to 1,400 seats; a small theatre with a seating capacity of 400 seats, and a Xiqu Tea House type of venue.
- A Concert Hall with a maximum seating capacity of 2,000 seats including choir stall.
- A Chamber Music Hall with a seating capacity of 600 to 800 seats.

- A Great Theatre I with a seating capacity of 2,100 to 2,200 seats.
- Two Medium-sized Theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats.
- Four Black Box Theatres each with a seating capacity of 150 to 250 seats.
- A Mega Performance Venue with a maximum seating capacity of 15,000 seats with flexible seating configuration to allow converting the venue into smaller size performance venue.
- Piazza Areas of a total area of at least 30, 000 square meters.

Phase II Development

- Requirements for a Great Theatre II of a seating capacity of 1,800 to 1,900 seats and two Medium-sized Theatres each with a seating capacity of 500 to 800 seats should also be catered for when planning the upfront arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD. It should be up to the prevailing market force to decide when these facilities will actually need to be in place.

Other relevant considerations

- Need for comprehensive strategy and measures to facilitate the long-term development of the performing arts sector, and sustain the vibrancy and diversity of the performing arts scene in Hong Kong.
- Need for appropriate mode of governance and venue management strategy for performing arts venues and facilities.
- Ensuring the availability of sufficient resources for the start-up operation and sustainability of the arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD.

- Highlighting the need for development of cultural software and talents to narrow the gap between the demand for and the supply of talents when the cultural hardware is in place.
- Enhancing WKCD as a major tourist attraction of the Mainland and the Asia Region.

Key Considerations for Building New Museums in the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD)

(a) Vision and Objectives of the New Museum Facility

- (i) Whether the proposed theme(s) and development concept of the museum are conducive to achieving the objectives of developing the WKCD into a world-class arts and cultural district comprising local, traditional as well as international elements, and to sustaining Hong Kong's cultural position as a special administrative region in China which bridges Chinese culture and other cultures of the world.
- (ii) Whether the proposed theme(s) could reflect the cultural characteristics of Hong Kong.

(b) Function of a New Museum Facility

Whether the proposed theme(s) are compatible with the development of the museum as a cultural institution performing its core functions, including preservation, research, interpretation and education.

(c) Sustainable development of the New Museum Facility

Whether there is strong potential to sustain the interests of, and engagements with local and overseas visitors.

(d) Feasibility of the New Museum Facility

- (i) Whether there is sufficient expertise available to provide sustainable support in museum management and curating as well as providing input to enhance the museum's collection acquisition, development, research and educational role.
- (ii) Whether there is strong potential for quality collection development and creative interpretation.

(e) Contribution to the Cultural Ecology of Hong Kong

Whether the theme(s) can enrich the cultural ecology of Hong Kong.