

For discussion on
4 April 2006

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON SECURITY

REDEVELOPMENT OF LO WU CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on our proposal to redevelop the Lo Wu Correctional Institution (LWCI).

Background

2. At the Panel meeting on 1 November 2005, we briefed Members [*vide LC Paper No. CB(2)192/05-06(03)*] on the problems of prison overcrowding and aging penal facilities. We informed Members of our plan to redevelop LWCI, and undertook to revert to the Panel with the results of the public consultations and details of the proposed project before seeking funding approval from the Finance Committee.

Project Scope

3. The scope of the proposed redevelopment of LWCI comprises :-
- (a) demolition of the existing structures at LWCI (with an existing capacity of 182 penal places) and an adjacent site currently occupied by the Lo Wu Saddle Club; and
 - (b) redevelopment of the site (50 170m²) into three new penal institutions, i.e. two medium security institutions each of a capacity of 400 places and one minimum security institution of a capacity of 600 places. The facilities of the institutions will include –
 - (A) Major facilities
 - (i) Dormitories
 - (ii) Dining halls and kitchens
 - (iii) Workshops
 - (iv) Laundry
 - (v) Hospital
 - (vi) Visit rooms
 - (vii) Recreation area

- (viii) Rehabilitation area
- (ix) Administration offices

(B) Support facilities

- (i) a visitor registration centre
- (ii) a barrack of 200 bed spaces and 536 locker spaces
- (iii) an officers' mess and a canteen for junior officers
- (iv) vehicle parking spaces

A location plan of the proposed project is at Annex.

Justification

4. As we mentioned in the previous Panel paper (paragraph 2 above refers), we are facing the problems of prison overcrowding, particularly in female, maximum security and remand institutions, and aging penal facilities.

Current Overcrowding

5. As at 10 March 2006, the total penal population was 11 296. The total number of certified penal places in the 23 penal institutions is currently 10 726. The occupancy rate is therefore 105.3%. In the case of male institutions, while the overall occupancy rate is 96.1%, there is a shortfall of 358 places in remand facilities and maximum security prisons¹. In the case of female institutions, there is shortfall at both the aggregate level, and in remand facilities and maximum security prisons¹. The shortfall at the aggregate level is 932 places. Of these 932 places, 414 are shortfall in remand facilities and maximum security prisons¹.

Projected Shortfall

6. Looking ahead, the penal population is projected to grow to 13 330 by 2010, and to 14 250 by 2015. Taking into account the current certified penal places (10 726) and the 794 places to be provided by two smaller scale projects² in the near term, at the aggregate level there will still be a shortfall of 1 810 places in 2010, and 2 730 in 2015. Overcrowding would remain in maximum security prisons, remand facilities and female institutions.

1 As some remand institutions are also maximum security facilities and vice versa, we are presenting the combined shortfall of these two types of institutions. Presenting separate shortfalls for the two types of institutions will result in double counting.

2 The two projects are : (a) the new Lai Chi Kok Correctional Institution (a medium security prison) to be opened in July 2006, providing 650 female places, and (b) a minor extension project at the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre to be completed by end 2006, providing 144 remand places for male.

7. The proposal to redevelop the LWCI will provide 1 400 penal places by the end of 2009. Taking into account the projected shortfall (paragraph 6 above refers) and the more acute demand for female penal facilities, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) currently plans to accommodate mainly female prisoners in the new institutions at Lo Wu to alleviate the overcrowding situation in female penal institutions. The design of the new institutions at Lo Wu will enable the flexibility of accommodating either male or female prisoners to meet actual demand in due course.

Aging Penal Facilities

8. Of the 23 existing penal institutions, nine will be over 40 years old by 2010 and nine were converted from buildings previously used for other purposes. If we do not make improvements to these institutions, their environment and facilities would make it more difficult to maintain our standards in prison management, security, and most importantly, rehabilitation work. As our existing penal institutions are already overcrowded, it would be difficult to carry out major in-situ improvement or redevelopment works without additional facilities for decanting prisoners.

Public Consultation

9. We consulted the North District Council (NDC) on 8 December 2005 on the LWCI redevelopment project. We have also consulted representatives from the Sheung Shui Rural Committee and local villages on the project. The NDC and local community representatives in general supported the proposal, but had raised concerns about the existing condition of Ho Sheung Heung Road (the access road to LWCI). Some local community representatives also expressed concerns about the project's impact on local Fung Shui.

10. The Traffic Impact Assessment has concluded that the operation of the future institutions would not have significant impact on the traffic flow of Ho Sheung Heung Road, but some local widening at bends near the institution are necessary to ensure smooth and safe operation of large vehicles (e.g. 50-seater buses) that may be used by the future institutions.

11. As regards the on-going concerns of the local community about a few other bends and the width at some sections of the road, the Transport Department, District Office (North) and CSD will continue to liaise with local representatives to see how necessary and practical improvement works could be carried out.

12. Regarding the concern about the impact on local Fung Shui, District Lands Office (North) will try to resolve the issue in accordance with established policy. District Office (North) will help facilitate the liaison and discussion with local community representatives.

13. During public consultation, the local community has also mentioned the need to improve the drainage conditions of the Ho Sheung Heung area. The Drainage Services Department already has two projects in hand for this purpose. The first project is to construct a drainage across the Shek Tsai Leng area and the second project is to construct another drainage in the area between Tsung Yuen and LWCI. Subject to funding approval, construction works will commence in 2007 for completion in 2009.

14. As mentioned at paragraph 3(a) above, the proposed redevelopment project will also include a site adjacent to LWCI currently leased to the Lo Wu Saddle Club by the Government under a short term tenancy. In addition to this site, the tenancy also includes two other sites nearby. The Club has agreed to move out of the site adjoining the LWCI and continue their activities at the other two sites nearby. CSD and other relevant government departments have had meetings with the representatives of the Club to facilitate its relocation.

Outstanding Issues from the Panel meeting on 1 November 2005

15. At the Panel meeting held on 1 November 2005, the Administration was requested to provide the following information -

- (a) the progress of the establishment of transfer of sentenced persons arrangement with the Mainland; and
- (b) a comparison between the redevelopment of the LWCI and the institutions at Chi Ma Wan, and advise whether the redeveloped institutions at Lo Wu would be further developed to provide more than 1 400 places.

16. On paragraph 15(a), we started discussions with Mainland experts on the arrangements for transfer of sentenced persons (TSP) in 2000. Both sides have exchanged views on the main principles and provisions as set out in the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Ordinance (Cap. 513), and the agreements on transfer of sentenced persons that we have signed with other jurisdictions. These include, for example, the conditions for transfer, procedures for transfer and continued enforcement of sentence. We will continue to work on the setting up of TSP arrangements with the Mainland. However, it is difficult to assess whether TSP arrangements with the Mainland would actually help relieve the overcrowding situation in our penal institutions because, among other things,

the concerned prisoner's consent is necessary for a transfer to take place.

17. On paragraph 15(b), in order to address the shortfall of penal places and the problem of aging penal facilities in the longer term, and taking into account the physical constraint of the LWCI site, which precludes further expansion beyond the designed capacity of 1 400 penal places, we plan to start the redevelopment of LWCI first and then study the possibility of redeveloping the two institutions at Chi Ma Wan. Our initial assessment is that the Chi Ma Wan site (with a gross area of about 130 000 m²) currently occupied by the two correctional institutions (with a total capacity of 616 places) could be redeveloped to provide about 1 600 places. A rough estimate of the construction cost (excluding the cost of site formation related works) is around \$1,500 million. The redevelopment of the institutions at Chi Ma Wan would be more complicated than that of LWCI because of the topography of the former site, and the need to widen the existing access road substantially. Further studies will be needed. Besides, the redevelopment of LWCI only involves the decanting of some 180 prisoners, whereas the redevelopment of the institutions at Chi Ma Wan would require much more decanting space, which would not be feasible given the overcrowding situation in our existing penal institutions.

18. The issue of the removal of a grave inside LWCI was also raised by a Member at the previous Panel meeting. As reported at the meeting, following the established procedure, the District Lands Office (North) issued a grave removal notice in September last year (prior to the Chung Yeung Festival) and a second notice on 22 March this year (prior to the Ching Ming Festival). So far, no one has claimed ownership of the grave. In case no grave owner is identified upon expiry of the second notice, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (as the statutory Authority) will, with the consent of District Officer (North), remove the grave to the Sandy Ridge Cemetery in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). The District Lands Office (North) has informed the local community representatives of this established procedure. We have so far received no objection to this arrangement.

Environmental Implications

19. The Environmental Protection Department has confirmed that the project is not a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499). Therefore, an Environmental Impact Assessment for the project is not necessary. The initial findings of the Preliminary Environmental Review are that the project would not have any long-term environmental impacts. The whole redevelopment will be subject to a height restriction of 13 meters to reduce visual impact on the surrounding areas.

Financial Implications

20. The project capital cost for the redevelopment of LWCI, subject to further refinement at a later stage, is estimated to be \$1,375.0 million in MOD prices with a breakdown as follows:

	\$ million
(a) Site works & demolition	12.1
(b) Site formation & geotechnical works	46.3
(c) Piling	127.3
(d) Building	489.3
(e) Building services	277.8
(f) Drainage & sewage treatment plant	62.3
(g) External works	65.0
(h) Furniture and equipment	107.0
(i) Consultants' fees for construction stage-	6.0
(i) quantity surveying services	4.0
(ii) landscaping services	1.0
(iii) risk management services	1.0
(j) Contingencies	<u>107.9</u>
	Sub-total 1,301.0 (in Sept 2005 prices)
(k) Provision for price adjustment	<u>74.0</u>
	Total 1,375.0 (in MOD prices)

21. The additional recurrent expenditure arising from the project is estimated to be \$84 million per annum.

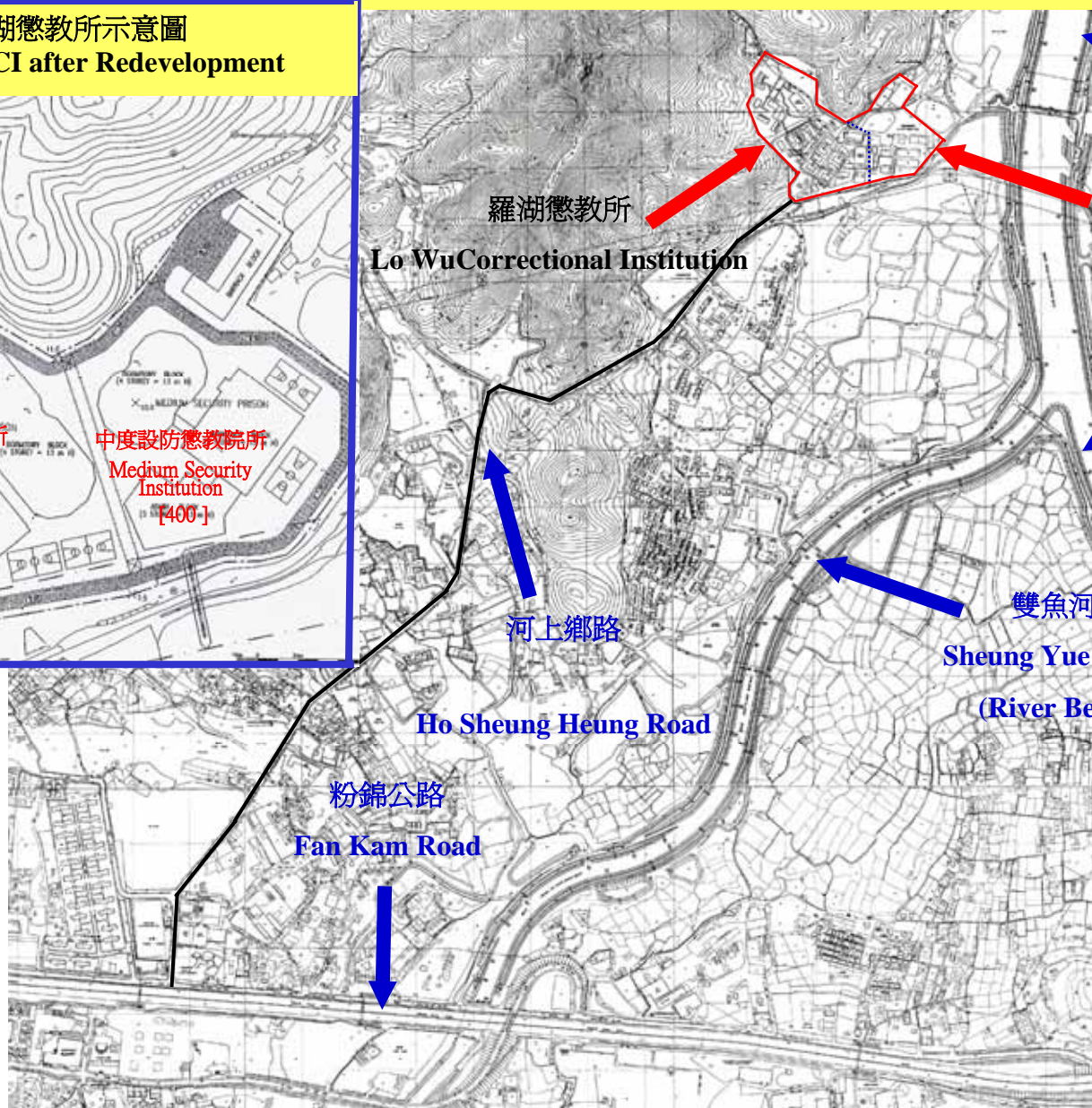
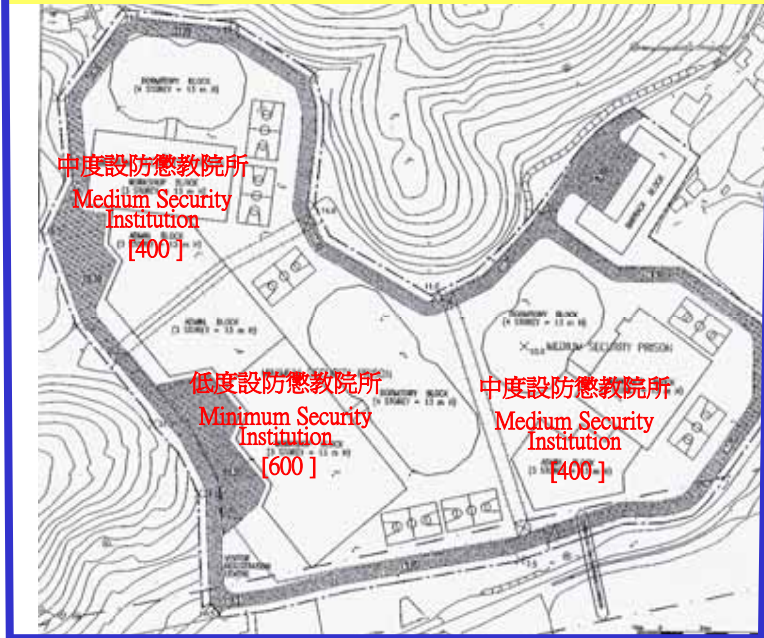
Implementation Plan

22. We plan to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee in July 2006. Subject to funding approval, we plan to start the proposed project in April 2007 for completion in December 2009.

Security Bureau
March 2006

Location Plan of the Redevelopment of Lo Wu Correctional Institution

重建後的羅湖懲教所示意圖
Layout Plan of LWCI after Redevelopment



梧桐河
Ng Tung River
羅湖騎術會
Lo Wu Saddle Club
石上河
Shek Sheung River
雙魚河
Sheung Yue River
(River Beas)

羅湖懲教所
Lo Wu Correctional Institution

河上鄉路

Ho Sheung Heung Road

粉錦公路
Fan Kam Road

中度設防懲教院所
Medium Security
Institution
[400]

低度設防懲教院所
Minimum Security
Institution
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中度設防懲教院所
Medium Security
Institution
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