

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2138/10-11
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 22 February 2011, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Members absent : Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Tanya CHAN

Public officers attending : Agenda item IV

Mrs Carrie LAM CHENG Yuet-ngor, GBS, JP
Secretary for Development

Mr Thomas CHOW Tat-ming, JP
Permanent Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)

Mr Jimmy LEUNG Cheuk-fai, JP
Director of Planning

Mr LING Kar-kan
Deputy Director of Planning/Territorial

Agenda item V

Mrs Carrie LAM CHENG Yuet-ngor, GBS, JP
Secretary for Development

Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Agenda item VI

Mrs Carrie LAM CHENG Yuet-ngor, GBS, JP
Secretary for Development

Mrs Jessie TING YIP Yin-mei, JP
Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) 1

Mr Kieran O'NEILL
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development
(Greening, Landscape and Tree Management)

Mr KAM Chak-wing
Deputy Head of Civil Engineering Office
(Port and Land)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Connie SZETO
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Ms Sharon CHUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)4

Mr Simon CHEUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)9

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)4

Action

I Confirmation of minutes

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1309/10-11 -- Minutes of special meeting on 20 November 2010
LC Paper No. CB(1)1310/10-11 -- Minutes of meeting on 16 December 2010)

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 November 2010 and 16 December 2010 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since the last meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1177/10-11(01) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Kwun Tong District Council members on 13 May 2010 relating to problems arising from hiring of consultants by owners' corporations under Operation Building Bright
LC Paper No. CB(1)1178/10-11(01) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Kwun Tong District Council members on 13 May 2010 relating to proposed legislative

- amendments to prevent the adverse effects brought about by sub-division of flats
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1255/10-11(01) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Heung Yee Kuk members on 20 January 2011 relating to the planning and development strategy for the land released from the Frontier Closed Area and the land within the Frontier Closed Area and the Administration's response
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1255/10-11(02) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Heung Yee Kuk members on 20 January 2011 relating to the review of the Town Planning Ordinance: Freezing the use of private land and infringing upon the right to develop private land without making compensation and the Administration's response
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1255/10-11(03) -- Issues raised at the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Heung Yee Kuk members on 20 January 2011 relating to the review of section 12(c) of the Lands Resumption Ordinance and the New Territories zonal compensation system and the Administration's response
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1325/10-11(01) -- Submission on redevelopment plans for

Central Government
Offices from Ms Mary
MULVIHILL dated
10 February 2011

LC Paper No. CB(1)1352/10-11(01) -- Administration's response
to the letter dated
25 January 2011 from Hon
KAM Nai-wai on blocking
of windows legally
constructed (LC Paper No.
CB(1)1171/10-11(02))

2. Members noted that the above information papers had been issued since the meeting on 25 January 2011.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(01) -- List of outstanding items
for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(02) -- List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)1222/10-11(01) -- Letter dated 1 February
2011 from Hon LEE
Wing-tat on the practice
notes promulgated by the
Buildings Department for
implementing the policy to
foster a quality and
sustainable built
environment

LC Paper No. CB(1)1264/10-11(04) -- Letter dated 2 February
2011 from Hon Cyd HO
Sau-lan on the Pilot
Mediation Scheme and
Pilot Scheme on Outreach
Support Service for Elderly
Owners for parties involved
in compulsory sale
applications under the Land
(Compulsory Sale for
Redevelopment)
Ordinance)

3. The Chairman said that he and the Deputy Chairman had a meeting with the Secretary for Development ("SDEV") and other government officials to discuss how to follow up a number of items raised by members at the meeting on 25 January 2011 and recently for discussion by the Panel. He said that the Administration had agreed to provide written information on some items. After reviewing the information, if members were of the view that the items should be further followed up at Panel meetings, they were welcomed to raise the matters accordingly.

4. Mr LEE Wing-tat suggested inviting the Administration to brief the Panel on matters relating to the implementation of the Practice Notes promulgated by the Buildings Department for pursuing the policy to foster a quality and sustainable built environment. The Chairman said that he would discuss with the Administration on Mr LEE's request.

(Post-meeting note: The above item was included in the agenda of the Panel meeting on 29 March 2011.)

5. Members agreed that the following items be discussed at the regular meeting scheduled for 29 March 2011 --

- (a) PWP Item No. 5737CL – Dredging, management and capping of contaminated sediment disposal facility to the south of The Brothers; and
- (b) Proposed amendments to Administrative Instructions for Regulating Admittance and Conduct of Persons (Cap. 382 sub.leg. A) for the Legislative Council Complex at Tamar.

6. The Chairman advised that there would be another discussion item from the Administration; as such, the duration of the meeting on 29 March 2011 might have to be extended. Members had no objection to the proposed arrangements.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration later advised that the additional item was "Operation Building Bright -- an update".)

7. Regarding the regular meeting of the Panel in April 2011, the Chairman said that it would be rescheduled to Wednesday, 20 April 2011, at 2:30 pm to avoid clashing with the overseas duty visit to be conducted by the Subcommittee on Harbourfront Planning under the Panel.

IV Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(03) -- Administration's paper on Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary

LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(04) -- Paper on Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)1264/10-11(01) -- Letter dated 8 February 2011 from Hon Albert HO Chun-yan and Hon James TO Kun-sun on the consultation on the Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary

LC Paper No. CB(1)1264/10-11(02) -- Letter dated 8 February 2011 from Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan on the consultation on the Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary

LC Paper No. CB(1)1264/10-11(03) -- Letter dated 9 February 2011 from Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit on the consultation on the Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary)

8. SDEV briefed members on the Study on the Action Plan for the Bay Area of the Pearl River Estuary ("the Study"). She advised that the Study was one of the initiatives under the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation ("the Framework Agreement") signed between the Hong Kong and Guangdong governments in April 2010. The Panel on Development ("the Panel") was briefed on the initiatives at the meeting on 25 May 2010. She said that the Study had focused on broad planning concepts and ideas on the future development of the Bay Area

surrounding the Pearl River Estuary ("the Bay Area") with the aim to develop the area into a focal point of the Greater Pearl River Delta ("GPRD") region, making it an area for quality living and favourable to economic development. The Study, being conceptual in nature, did not recommend any new development projects in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong planning proposals and projects mentioned were all suggestions in studies conducted previously by the Hong Kong Government. The Administration would take into account the situation in Hong Kong in taking forward any these planning proposals and projects, and would follow the established mechanism in implementing the projects including complying with the necessary statutory procedures, conducting public consultation and seeking the required funding from the Legislative Council ("LegCo").

9. As regards public comments that Hong Kong was being "planned for" in the development of the Bay Area, SDEV said that such comments were unfounded and misleading. She stressed that the Study, which was jointly commissioned by the governments of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao, had been conducted in a fair and open manner with the participation of government officials, experts and academics from the three places. She admitted that the Administration should be more sensitive to public opinion and there was room for improvement in conducting consultation on the Study. To this end, the Administration had proposed to include matters relating to the Study for discussion by the Panel at the present meeting, and announced that it would continue to listen to public views and organize more public forums and discussion sessions in the next two months. The Administration would consider all views received carefully with a view to revising and refining the recommendations of the Study.

10. The Deputy Director of Planning/Territorial ("DD of P/T") supplemented that the Study had analyzed major literature on "liveability" and renowned liveable regions in the world. The Study had put forward initial views on the strategies of and planning actions for enhancing the liveability of the Bay Area. The major actions included:

- (a) establishment of a "Green Network";
- (b) establishment of a "Blue Network";
- (c) promotion of "Green Transport";
- (d) promotion of "Sense of Place";
- (e) establishment of "Low-carbon Communities"

- (f) establishment of "Cultural Villages";
- (g) facilitation of "Easy Boundary Crossing"; and
- (h) cooperation in cross-boundary environmental protection.

11. DD of P/T added that the Study had put forward principles and broad directions that could serve as a reference by the three places when formulating their own policies and measures in achieving the objective of enhancing the liveability of the Bay Area. To step up public consultation on the study, the Administration had lined up two public forums on 3 March and 9 April 2011 in addition to the one on 29 January 2011.

Cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong in cross-boundary developments

12. Mr Alan LEONG pointed out that the inclusion of Hong Kong's hiking trails, wetlands and country parks in a cross-boundary greenway network in the Bay Area with no prior consultation had given rise to concerns over violation of the principle of "one country, two systems" and Hong Kong being "planned for" in cross-boundary developments. He enquired whether the Hong Kong Government had been consulted by the Mainland authorities in pursuing the Study. He also expressed concern that the Administration might implement proposals put forth in the Study without inputs from the people of Hong Kong.

13. SDEV dismissed the comment about Hong Kong being "planned for" in cross-boundary developments, which was inconsistent with the spirit of the Study. She reiterated that the Study was commissioned jointly by the governments of the three sides, and government officials as well as experts from Hong Kong had played an active role in the process. Besides providing professional views to the Study, Hong Kong officials and experts also shared valuable experiences with their counterparts in the Mainland and Macao.

14. The Director of Planning ("D of Plan") added that the Study was a conceptual planning study indicating possible directions and cooperation for the future development of the Bay Area. Governments of the three places would take into account their individual circumstances and act in accordance with their established mechanisms to take forward their own proposals as appropriate with reference to the directions and concept recommended in the Study. On the proposed greenway network, he clarified

that the planning and development of related facilities such as cycling tracks which had already been planned in Hong Kong prior to the Study would be undertaken by the Hong Kong Government.

15. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that he had a strong feeling that Hong Kong was being "planned for" in the development of the Bay Area. He considered that the Administration should explain to the people of Hong Kong the decision making process in implementing the recommendations in the Study and related projects, and asked whether the Hong Kong Government could refuse to accept development plans "imposed on" Hong Kong in the event that there were different views in the development of the Bay Area from the consultations in Hong Kong and the Mainland.

16. SDEV reiterated that the Administration had reported progress of the Study to the Panel when it briefed members on the development-related initiatives under the Framework Agreement on 25 May 2010. The Study had not proposed any new development projects for Hong Kong. The Hong Kong projects mentioned in the Study were indeed initiated by the Hong Kong Government in various studies. As regards implementation of any such projects, the Administration would follow the established mechanism in doing so. There would be thorough consultation involving LegCo, District Councils, relevant organizations and stakeholders.

17. Ms Cyd HO pointed out that in the past, there were a number of cross-boundary development projects involving Hong Kong and the Mainland of which the public was not provided with sufficient information and the role and responsibilities of the Administration in these projects were unclear. A case in point was the development of Qianhai. She considered that the Administration had the responsibility to explain to Hong Kong people the details of and arrangements for cross-boundary development projects.

18. Mr James TO said that the Democratic Party had examined the information provided by the Administration on the Study, and would make separate submissions to the Administration and the Mainland authorities on the Study. In upholding the spirit of "one country, two systems", he considered that Hong Kong people should have the right to say "No" to cross-boundary development proposals even though they were insisted by the Mainland authorities. In the absence of such right, there would still be public concern about Hong Kong being "planned for" in cross-boundary developments.

19. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that the inclusion of Hong Kong in the National 12th Five-Year Plan and the handling of the Study had reflected the declining role of Hong Kong in cross-boundary developments and further undermining in Hong Kong's autonomy over its own development. He had a strong feeling that Hong Kong was being "planned for" by the Mainland authorities and the "one country, two systems" principle was no longer upheld in Hong Kong. He stressed that it was necessary for Hong Kong to understand its position in the national development plans so that it could further enhance its competitive edge. Cooperation in cross-boundary developments must recognize Hong Kong's unique position and in its interest. Given that Hong Kong had formulated its own development blueprint in the Hong Kong 2030 Study ("the 2030 Study"), Mr CHAN considered that cross-boundary developments should tie in with the plans set out in the 2030 Study. The Administration should advise the Mainland authorities of its long-term development plans so that neighbouring cities would tie-in their development plans with Hong Kong.

20. SDEV said that it would be inappropriate for Hong Kong to put pressure on neighbouring Mainland cities to tie-in with the development plans of Hong Kong. In taking forward development projects in Hong Kong, she said that the Administration was mindful of the need to follow the established mechanism in consulting the public and recognized the valuable views received, even though at times the lengthy process might cause delay in the implementation of the projects. In respect of the role of Hong Kong in cross-boundary developments and national development plans, she opined that sustained development in the Mainland in the past 30 years had resulted in substantial growth in many areas. But she was optimistic that Hong Kong still had competitive edge in a lot of aspects.

21. Referring to paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper, Ir Dr Raymond HO pointed out that the Study was an indicative planning concept study with the aim to formulate possible directions for the future development of the Bay Area. He did not believe that Hong Kong would be forced to follow plans imposed by the Mainland authorities in pursuing cross-boundary developments. He was also confident that views from the people of Hong Kong would be respected and considered carefully. Given its diversified natural features, rich cultural background and heritage resources, and high potentials in economic development, the Bay Area would become a showcase for similar developments in the Mainland. Joint efforts and further cooperation between the three places were necessary for taking forward the Bay Area development as early as possible. To make the Bay Area development a success, the Administration should strive to win the support of Hong Kong people for the Study through enhanced promotion

and publicity, launching more public involvement activities, as well as enlisting assistance of professionals to explain the details to the public.

22. Mrs Sophie LEUNG commented that with the Administration's clarification that the Study was an indicative planning concept study and its assurance to follow Hong Kong's established mechanism in undertaking related projects, there should be no question that Hong Kong was being "planned for" by the Mainland. She stressed that with high potentials, development of the Bay Area would be beneficial to Hong Kong. In the light of rapid economic development in the Mainland, further integration with and cooperation between Hong Kong and the Mainland would be in mutual interest, and Hong Kong should not stay away from the Bay Area development.

23. Mr CHAN Kam-lam remarked that as Hong Kong was part of GPRD region, it was natural for the development of the Bay Area to involve Hong Kong. The Study would provide an opportunity for Hong Kong to integrate with the development in the cities in GPRD region so that they would complement each other with their respective strengths in fostering their development. He said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong was of the view that Hong Kong should capitalize on the National 12th Five-Year Plan to further its development through closer cooperation with other cities in GPRD region.

24. Mr Paul TSE said that the Study had mainly involved technical issues. He was surprised that the matter had been distorted and turned into a heated debate involving the "one country, two systems" principle and Hong Kong's autonomy. Citing the work in tourism and environmental protection areas as examples, he stressed the need for Hong Kong and the Mainland to cooperate and join efforts to attain the desired results in cross-boundary developments. With growing integration between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Hong Kong should participate proactively in national development plans otherwise it would be lagged behind by other cities in GPRD region.

25. SDEV thanked members for supporting the development of Bay Area and commented that further enhancement in cooperation between Guangdong and Hong Kong, adoption of an interactive approach and the concerted efforts from both sides would benefit Hong Kong's development in the long run.

Arrangements for the public consultation of the Study

26. As the deadline of public consultation on the Study, which ended on 10 February 2010, had not been extended, Mr Alan LEONG was concerned whether public views received in the next two months would be treated seriously by the Administration. Mr LEE Wing-tat and Mr James TO echoed the concern and urged the Administration to extend the deadline of the consultation.

27. Noting that concrete completion dates for some projects under the proposed Green Network were given in documents released by the Mainland authorities, Ms Cyd HO asked if public consultation would be carried out for these projects.

28. SDEV envisaged that the Study would be completed within 2011. She stressed that the Administration would continue to receive public views on the Study after 10 February 2011, and that two public forums had been lined up for 3 March and 9 April 2011. Given that the Study was jointly commissioned by the three places, consultation had also been conducted in Guangdong and Macao simultaneously. Since any development projects to be implemented in Hong Kong would go through the established consultation and funding process, the public would have ample opportunities to give views and voice their concerns on each and every project.

29. D of Plan reiterated that the Study was a platform for exchanging planning concepts and ideas over enhancing the livability of the Bay Area, including the establishment of a green network and low-carbon communities. The Study also provided an opportunity for governments of the three sides to look at their own planning proposals and development projects with a view to improving the livability of the Bay Area. The Hong Kong Government would have autonomy in taking forward projects within the Hong Kong boundary.

30. On consultation arrangements for the Study, Ms Cyd HO expressed disappointment that the exercise had very low transparency. The Administration had failed to provide the details and only allowed a short period for public response. She urged the Administration to improve the public consultation arrangements and convey to the Mainland authorities on the need for Hong Kong to adhere to its established consultation mechanism. She considered it unacceptable for the consultation on the Study, which involved important cross-boundary development projects, to be treated light-heartedly by the Administration. Mr LEE Wing-tat

criticized the poor arrangements for the consultation on the Study, including a short period of only 18 days, lacking in transparency, limited information and public participation.

31. Mr CHAN Kam-lam pointed out that as the planning for the Bay Area development was still in preliminary stage, he did not see the need for large-scale consultation at district level for the time being. Nonetheless, due to insufficient publicity and limited information provided by the Administration, the consultation of the Study had been distorted and politicized. He considered that there was room for improvement in the consultation arrangements, and that there should be increased public participation in the process.

32. SDEV advised that in order to enhance public consultation, the Planning Department would provide more "reader-friendly" details on the Study for reference of the public. D of Plan added that depending on the nature of the subject involved, the Administration would adopt the most appropriate format to gauge public views. Noting the public aspirations on the Study, the Administration would handle the consultation period in a flexible manner. In addition to inviting public views on the Study, the Administration would organize more public forums and briefings to seek views on the Study. The Administration would continue to listen to public views through various means. It would promulgate the Study Report together with the public views collected for further discussion by the community.

33. Mr Alan LEONG was of the view that Hong Kong should give views on the national development plans. In view of wide public concerns, he urged the Administration to provide more information on the Study. He also suggested the Panel to conduct hearing sessions to receive views from the public and interested parties.

34. Mr Abraham SHEK opined that the Panel should consider whether to conduct public hearings on the Study after completion of the Administration's consultation, as the Administration could then report the outcome of its consultation to the Panel for the latter to consider whether further discussion with interested parties was necessary. The Chairman agreed with Mr SHEK's views. He also requested the Administration to provide more information on the Study to members and the public.

35. In summing up, SDEV stressed that the Administration had been proactive in cooperation with the Mainland in cross-boundary developments and participating in related projects in a pragmatic manner consistent with

the principle of "one country, two systems" and taking into account Hong Kong's circumstances and interests. She said that the Administration was aware of the inadequacies in the public consultation arrangements for the Study and had been taking concrete steps to make improvement.

V An update on the construction manpower in Hong Kong

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(05) -- Administration's paper on an update on the construction manpower in Hong Kong

LC Paper No. FS04/10-11 -- Fact sheet on employment statistics in the construction industry (as at 16 February 2011) prepared by the Research Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(06) -- Paper on construction manpower in Hong Kong prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief))

36. SDEV briefed members on the Administration's paper which provided an update on the progress of the Capital Works Projects approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") in response to an earlier request from members for information on the implementation arrangements for the projects. The paper also reported the latest manpower situation in the construction industry as well as related efforts made to address the manpower needs. She said that Annex A to the paper had set out the details of the progress of each Capital Works Project approved by FC since the 2007-2008 legislative session. The projects were making good progress which had reflected the increased Government expenditure on projects and the improved employment situation in the construction industry in recent years. The expenditure on Capital Works Programme for 2010-2011 was estimated at \$49.6 billion. The unemployment rate of the construction sector as announced on 21 February 2011 was 4.5%, and had declined from the peak of 12.8% in the aftermath of the financial tsunami. As the demand for construction manpower was on the rise, the Administration was mindful of the need to monitor manpower supply in the construction industry. In 2010, FC approved a one-off funding of \$100 million to support the Construction Industry Council ("CIC") to enhance training for construction

workers and related activities. The progress on the initiatives taken by CIC was provided in Annex B to the paper. The Administration would continue its efforts to address manpower needs in the construction industry including stepping up promotion and publicity activities to attract more people to join the industry, and enhancing the working conditions and safety in construction sites.

Recruitment of construction manpower

37. Ir Dr Raymond HO expressed appreciation on the Administration's efforts in preparing the paper which provided comprehensive information about the past and present situations of construction manpower in Hong Kong as well as the various initiatives to meet the rising manpower demand. While welcoming the improvement in the unemployment rate in the construction industry, he expressed concern about skills mismatch and ageing problems faced by the industry. He called on the Administration to step up efforts in promoting the image of the construction industry and enhancing the working conditions in construction sites with a view to attracting more people, especially young people, to join the industry.

38. Permanent Secretary (Development) (Works) ("PS/DEV(Works)") advised that about \$20 million out of the total of \$100 million funding approved by FC to CIC for implementing training and trade-testing initiatives in the construction industry was dedicated to promotion and publicity activities aiming at attracting fresh blood to the industry. A three-year publicity campaign would be rolled out shortly to promote the image of the construction industry to attract young people to join the industry under which a roving exhibition at schools would be conducted.

39. Sharing Dr Raymond HO's concern, Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that it would be a challenge for the Administration to provide adequate construction manpower to meet the increasing demand arising from the implementation of a large number of infrastructure projects in the next few years, including the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the new rail lines in Hong Kong, projects in relation to the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District and the Lok Ma Chau Loop, etc. To better understand the manpower supply situation in the construction industry and to ensure the supply of manpower could meet the demand, Mr CHAN urged the Administration to work out a projection of construction manpower supply in Hong Kong for the next ten years with information on the age distribution and respective skill levels of the workers, and to examine how the forecasted supply in manpower could cater for the workforce demand of major construction projects to be implemented. The

Administration was requested to provide the information to members after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's follow-up paper was circulated to members on 1 April 2011 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1785/10-11(01).)

40. Mr Albert CHAN opined that, if recruitment efforts in the construction industry eventually failed to meet the manpower demand, the Administration should consider adjusting the immigration policy to cope with the shortage in manpower supply. As import of skilled workers would take time, the Administration should make the necessary planning early.

41. SDEV advised that according to two surveys completed in 2011, the supply of building professionals and technicians was adequate to meet the needs in the construction industry, while there was a shortage of skilled workers. The situation had prompted the Government to earmark \$100 million in the 2010-2011 Budget for CIC to strengthen its work to attract more people, especially young people, to join the construction industry, and to upgrade workers' skills through training and trade testing. She added that while currently there were 265 500 registered construction workers, intake to the industry was slow and acute shortage was found in workers in some trades.

42. PS/DEV(Works) supplemented that, by making reference to the data collected by the Census and Statistics Department on the employment situation in the construction industry for the past 20 years, while the current supply of manpower in the construction industry was adequate in terms of quantity to meet demand, the problems of ageing workers and skill mismatch were serious. To address the problems, CIC had allocated \$80 million of the funding of \$100 million approved by FC in May 2010 for attracting new recruits to the industry and enhancing workers' skills through training and trade testing. Of the participants of CIC's new training programmes, almost 30% were below the age of 30. In comparison with the statistics on registered construction workers, which showed that only 6% were below the age of 25, CIC's work was successful in attracting young people to join the construction industry.

43. As regards the concern about inadequate supply of construction workers for the major works projects coming on stream, PS/DEV(Works) said that notwithstanding the substantial increase in annual expenditure on Capital Works Programme from \$30 billion in the past two decades to the estimated expenditure of \$50 billion in 2010-2011, the increase in the

volume of construction works would be manageable taking into account of cost escalation during the period. The problems of shortage of workers and non-skilled workers could be solved with CIC's efforts in strengthening training for workers and encouraging in-service workers to become multi-skilled.

44. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared interest that her family had a close connection with the construction industry. While she welcomed the efforts of the Administration and relevant bodies in enhancing the recruitment and training of construction workers, she was of the view that in order to attract young people to join the construction workforce, it was necessary to impress upon them of the important role and contribution of construction workers to Hong Kong society, and the good prospects and job security offered by the industry. To enhance the advancement prospects of construction workers, she suggested that consideration should be given to introduce a mechanism in the industry whereby workers could be promoted to supervisors and employed on long-term contracts when they gained more skills and experience.

45. Regarding public perception about construction workers, PS/DEV(Works) said that results of an opinion survey commissioned by CIC and conducted by the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme in 2010 revealed that public awareness on the construction industry was inadequate, and there were general misconceptions and negative impression about the industry. Jobs in the industry were considered unsafe, insecure, lacking in prospects and respect. He re-iterated that in order to promote public awareness about improved job opportunities and prospects in the construction industry, a three-year publicity campaign would be launched shortly. As for career prospects in the construction industry, it was important for workers to be multi-skilled as well as specialized in certain trades so as to improve their employability. Employers in the construction industry would be more willing to offer long-term contracts to multi-skilled workers. In this respect, CIC had launched a wide range of training programmes for prospective and in-service workers to enhance their skill level and diversify their trades.

Job opportunities in the construction industry

46. Ir Dr Raymond HO opined that to increase job opportunities in the construction industry, the Administration should implement works projects of various scales, especially those with a contract sum of below \$1 billion, and nature including civil works and building works projects. He pointed out that fabrication of precast building elements could provide many jobs for

local construction workers. However, it was found that most of the fabrication work was carried out in the Mainland. He urged the Administration to consider providing land in remote areas, such as in outlying islands, at a low premium for the construction industry to set up fabrication sites in order to provide jobs for local workers.

47. PS/DEV(Works) said that the Administration had considered providing sites in Hong Kong for making precast items for use in large scale works projects. However, due to cost consideration, contractors often preferred to have the precast items produced in the Mainland. The Administration would continue to explore ways to facilitate local fabrication of precast building elements for major works projects. He added that with the forecasted increase in demand for construction labour in the next few years, the industry, CIC and relevant bodies would explore measures to reduce manpower demand for trades with anticipated shortage, through reviewing the design and construction practices, and encouraging the adoption of mechanized methods in construction.

48. Mr Abraham SHEK appreciated the Administration's efforts in preparing the information paper and allocating the necessary funding to implement various works projects to create jobs for the industry, and introducing measures to meet the manpower needs of the industry. He agreed with Dr Raymond HO's view that it was necessary for the Administration to launch works projects of various scale and nature to provide jobs for construction workers of different trades and skill levels. He hoped that with concerted efforts from the Administration and concerned parties, problems facing the construction industry could be solved.

49. Members agreed to extend the meeting for 15 minutes to finish the remaining business on the agenda.

- VI Development of Greening Master Plans for the New Territories**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(07) -- Administration's paper on development of Greening Master Plans for the New Territories
LC Paper No. CB(1)1308/10-11(08) -- Paper on Greening Master Plans prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief))

50. SDEV introduced Mr Kieran O'NEILL, Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Greening, Landscape and Tree Management), to the meeting. She said that Mr O'NEILL, who had solid experience and profound knowledge about greening, landscape and tree management, joined the Development Bureau in December 2010 to head the new unit -- the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section. She added that Mr O'NEILL would appreciate the opportunity to exchange views with members during a site visit to be arranged for inspecting greening works in the urban areas carried out by the Administration in recent years.

51. The Chairman said that the Deputy Chairman was unable to attend the Panel meeting as he had to chair a meeting of the Heung Yee Kuk. On behalf of the Deputy Chairman, he asked why the Administration had not consulted Heung Yee Kuk, Rural Committees and village representatives in the development of Greening Master Plans ("GMPs") in the New Territories.

52. Noting that the development of GMPs in the New Territories was an important subject and in view of the limited time for discussion of the item, Mr Abraham SHEK and Mr CHAN Kam-lam suggested deferring the item to a future meeting. Mr WONG Kwok-hing, the proposer of the item, appreciated the Administration's effort in preparing the paper, and said that he had no objection to the proposal by Mr SHEK and Mr CHAN. Members agreed that arrangement be made for the item to be discussed in a future meeting of the Panel.

VII Any other business

53. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:36 pm.