

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON HOME AFFAIRS

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DISTRICT MINOR WORKS PROGRAMME

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the current progress of the District Minor Works (DMW) Programme.

Background

2. Following a review on the role and functions of the District Councils (DCs) in 2006, a dedicated block allocation, the DMW block allocation, was set up under Capital Works Reserve Fund in April 2007 to fund district-based works projects implemented by DCs costing up to \$21 million¹ each. The aim of the DMW Programme is to improve local facilities, living environment and hygienic conditions in the territory. The Programme covers minor building works, fitting-out works and minor alterations, additions and improvement works including furniture and equipment replacement incidental to such works, and slope inspections and minor slope improvement works in respect of all the district facilities under the purview of the DCs. It also covers all costs to be incurred in the planning of the above projects, such as consultants' fees, feasibility studies, site investigation and other studies.

3. From 2008-09 onwards, the annual provision for the DMW block allocation is \$300 million. Both the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) can be the lead departments in implementing the projects. In general, HAD works with the DCs in implementing minor works related to community halls and other projects which improve the living environment and hygienic conditions of the district; while LCSD works with DCs in

¹ On 2 November 2007, the Finance Committee approved an increase in the financial ceiling on the delegation of authority for approving works-related block allocation items from \$15 million to \$21 million.

implementing minor works related to leisure, culture, sports, soft landscaping works and recreation types of facilities.

Progress of implementation

4. The 18 DCs play a pivotal role in the planning and implementation on the DMW Programme. The DCs or the District Facilities Management Committees set up under the DCs are responsible for –

- (a) initiating projects and collating views and district aspiration;
- (b) endorsing projects proposed by government departments;
- (c) deciding on the scope and scale of projects;
- (d) setting the relative priorities of projects;
- (e) determining the timetable for implementation; and
- (f) monitoring the progress of implementation.

5. In addition to DCs which are vigorously engaged in the consultation of DMW projects from preliminary feasibility studies to design and planning, Area Committees (for urban areas), Rural Committees (for rural areas) and residents organizations such as Mutual Aid Committees/Owners Corporations will also be consulted on a need basis at the planning stage. Where circumstances warrant, the scope and design of the projects will be refined to better cater for public demands and local needs.

6. Apart from carrying out works by in-house staff, the lead departments also invite other works agents, e.g. Architectural Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Highways Department, etc to assist in works implementation. Architect-led term consultants and a quantity surveying term consultant are also engaged for the delivery of projects of larger scale or greater complexity requiring architectural services inputs. We have since 2008 appointed four term

consultants for a term of two years to assist in the implementation of DMW projects, each working respectively for the DCs of the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, New Territories East and New Territories West. The consultants' teams comprise professionals of various disciplines, and they undertake technical feasibility studies, design work, tender exercises as well as works supervision for the projects. The second two-year term consultants have been appointed to continue rendering professional inputs for the delivery of projects.

7. As at end March 2011, the 18 DCs have endorsed over 2 600 DMW projects with estimated project cost totaling \$1,519 million. So far, over 2 000 items have been completed. A breakdown of the endorsed projects by districts is at Annex A.

8. To meet the objective of improving district facilities, living environment and hygienic conditions in the districts, most of the DMW projects comprise works to provide or improve facilities such as parks, sitting-out areas, rain shelters and pavilions, works to improve leisure and cultural venues such as sports venues, district libraries, swimming pools and public beaches, as well as various types of beautification and greening projects.

9. With a substantial increase in the annual provision for carrying out DMW projects since 2008, the DCs can also carry out projects that meet the aspirations and needs of the local community. Examples include construction of a walkway cover outside the Shek Kip Mei MTR exit at Wai Chi Street in Sham Shui Po and the beautification of the open space at the site of the former North Point Estate. In addition to enhancing the quality of the living environment, some of the DMW projects are designed with themes to reflect local characteristics, improve the image of the districts and attract visitors. Examples include the provision of two archways ("paifongs") at Temple Street by the Yau Tsim Mong DC and the provision of a "paifong" at the Seafood Street of Tsing Shan Wan by the Tuen Mun DC. The Yuen Long DC is also planning to construct a multi-purpose beach volleyball court in Tin Shui Wai to meet local needs for sports and recreational facilities. The DCs generally appreciate that the DMW Programme has been effective in upgrading local facilities and improving the district environment. A breakdown of

DMW projects by types is at Annex B.

Measures to Improve the Operation of the DMW Programme

10. We have, from time to time, reviewed the DMW Programme with a view to improving its operation and sustainability. In the process, we have obtained feedback from the DCs and works agents in the light of operational experience.

Enhancing closer cooperation with the DCs

11. To better gauge the views of the DCs, we organized a regional forum on the DMW Programme in June 2010 under the 2010 Summit on District Administration. Participating DC members expressed views on the management and maintenance of facilities completed under the Programme, the work of the term consultants and the desire for opportunities for experience-sharing among DCs.

12. As a follow-up to the Summit, we have strengthened our monitoring of and support for consultant-led projects. We have prepared reference drawings and standard contract templates for sharing with the term consultants and our in-house works staff for reference. Moreover, we have arranged a seminar in March 2011 for DC Members to exchange views and share their experiences in project planning. Expert speakers were invited to give presentations on local and overseas experiences in enhancing city streetscape. The seminar was well received by participating DC Members, who expressed the view that the seminar was inspiring and should be organized again in future.

Improvement to the management of Architect-led Term Consultants

13. Some DC Members have expressed concerns about the progress of work of the term consultants, their communication with the DCs and project cost estimates. To address these concerns, HAD, through its in-house professional architects, engineers and quantity surveyor, has stepped up the monitoring of consultants through regular liaison meetings. We have also reminded the term consultants to prepare user-friendly materials for making presentations to the DCs and

deploy sufficient staff for handling DMW projects. To address DC Members' concern about project cost estimates, we have explained that the project costs were estimated by a quantity surveying consultant independent from the architect-led consultants. More importantly, consultants' fees were based on actual construction costs, which are dependent on the tender outturn instead of the project estimate prepared at the planning stage.

Planning and monitoring

14. With a view to strengthening the planning and monitoring of the DMW projects, senior directorate meetings between HAD, LCSD and the works agents meet on a regular basis to keep in view the overall progress and discuss issues of common concern. In addition, for projects requiring consultation with other departments, we have reminded the departments concerned to respond expeditiously and to escalate complex issues to higher levels as and when necessary.

Strengthening staff resources

15. To cope with the increased workload arising from the DMW Programme, we have increased our staff resources. Since 2007, the following additional posts have been created:

- (a) 10 professional grade posts (one Senior Architect, five Architects, two Engineers, one Building Services Engineer and one Quantity Surveyor);
- (b) 12 Inspector of Works grade posts (two Senior Inspectors of Works, three Inspectors of Works and seven Assistant Inspectors of Works); and
- (c) 14 Works Supervisor II posts.

Management and maintenance of completed projects

16. With the completion of more DMW projects, there will be a corresponding increase in the requirement for resources for the management and maintenance. While we have the resources to cover

the current requirement on this front, we will work with the DCs on longer-term solutions to maintain the sustainability of the DMW Programme. We will also keep the Programme under review with a view to improving it.

Advice Sought

17. Members are invited to note the progress of implementation of the DMW Programme.

Home Affairs Department
May 2011

**Funding for District Minor Works Projects
(As at 31 March 2011)**

District Council	No. of Projects*	Estimated Total Project Expenditure (\$m)
Islands	159	75.866
Kwai Tsing	161	71.018
North	115	123.573
Sai Kung	115	89.335
Sha Tin	173	99.767
Tai Po	109	77.209
Tsuen Wan	156	87.877
Tuen Mun	118	124.109
Yuen Long	65	115.709
Central & Western	197	40.915
Eastern	130	53.623
Kowloon City	192	47.279
Kwun Tong	159	86.678
Southern	231	97.387
Sham Shui Po	250	91.438
Wan Chai	100	42.764
Wong Tai Sin	108	111.254
Yau Tsim Mong	112	66.015
Headquarters	12	17.661
Total	2662	1519.477

Note: * No. of projects denotes the total no. of DMW projects endorsed by DC / relevant DC Committee, including projects already completed and account finalized in previous fiscal years.

Annex B**Types of District Minor Works Projects
(as at 31 March 2011)**

Types of projects	Percentage	No.
Parks / Sitting-out areas / Rain shelters / Pavilions	21%	556
Leisure and cultural venues, such as sports venues, district libraries and swimming pools	37%	986
Beautification and greening works	13%	357
Footpaths / Footbridges / Walking trails / Access roads	5%	137
Community halls / Community centres	5%	121
Drainage facilities	1%	26
Others (Provision of notice boards , erection of sculptures, desilting programmes)	18%	479
Total	100.0%	2662