

For discussion
on 4 July 2003

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON
PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

**Progress Report on Development of the
West Kowloon Cultural District**

Introduction

This paper provides a progress report on the work of the Steering Committee for Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) and informs Members that the private sector will shortly be invited to submit project proposals.

Background

2. The Government has a firm policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's position as a centre of arts, culture and entertainment in Asia and we believe that the private sector can and should play a major role in assisting us to achieve this objective. To this end, we have earmarked a waterfront site of about 40 hectares at the southern tip of the West Kowloon Reclamation for an integrated development of arts, cultural, entertainment, commercial and residential facilities.

3. In April 2001, we launched an international competition inviting submission of concept plans for development of the site, stressing that there was no link between the competition and the eventual development rights to the area. Five prizes were offered – first and second prizes and three honourable mentions. A jury of local and international experts chose the winning entries. These were announced on 28 February 2002, to wide publicity. Members were informed of the outcome of the competition in an information paper noted at the meeting of the Panel on 8 May 2002.

A

4. The first prize winning concept plan, at **Annex A**, was submitted by a team led by Foster and Partners of the UK (the Foster scheme). It envisages performance venues, museums, some high-class residential development and a boating lagoon at the western end of the site, a multi-level complex of shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities in the middle of the site and a commercial gateway at Canton Road with office and hotel towers. There is extensive open space comprising a podium park, landscaped terraces and a waterfront promenade. An automated people mover system runs from one end of the site to the other. Except for the high-rise gateway and the promenade, the development is covered by an open-sided and partially transparent canopy, which will create a pleasant open air leisure environment in the open spaces beneath it and serve as an icon of modern Hong Kong. The entire scheme is designed as an integrated development that will enrich the cultural life of the community and attract performers, exhibitors, commercial visitors and tourists from around the world. The Foster scheme has been well received locally and internationally and, having conducted a preliminary examination of its technical feasibility, we believe that the concept can be implemented.

West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Steering Committee

B

5. In September 2002, we established a Steering Committee for Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (the SC), chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, to plan and guide implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District project (the project). The terms of reference and membership of the SC are at **Annex B**.

6. The SC reaffirmed at the outset that the WKCD project should be planned and executed as an integrated development. This approach enables more efficient planning and provision of infrastructure, internal transport services and facilities or structures extending over large areas of the site.

7. In October 2002, we announced that the SC had decided in principle to adopt the Foster scheme as the conceptual basis for the masterplan

for the WKCD and that its key feature, the distinctive canopy, would be retained. The SC subsequently decided upon some modifications to the Foster scheme which, among other things –

- (a) identify the major arts and cultural facilities to be provided, taking into account the community's needs and expectations;
- (b) convert the boating lagoon into an open air amphitheatre that is closed off from the sea; and
- (c) increase the overall potential for commercial development, including incorporating into the scheme area the adjacent site currently occupied by the Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station Complex.

8. In March 2003, we announced that the SC had agreed that the core arts and cultural facilities in the WKCD should comprise a theatre complex, a major venue for indoor performances, a cluster of museums and diverse venues for open-air cultural and entertainment events. We also announced that we intended to invite development proposals from the private sector around the middle of 2003.

Development Brief

9. The SC has drawn up a development brief for preparation of the preliminary masterplan which will set out a “baseline scheme” for development of the site, i.e. the Foster scheme and our modifications to it. A computer-generated image of the baseline scheme is at **Annex C**. Proponents will be able to depart from the baseline development parameters – e.g. by proposing a higher development intensity or a different mix of uses – provided that they do not compromise the canopy or the overall character of the Foster scheme. This will provide proponents with considerable flexibility in the design of the main revenue-producing parts of the project and therefore assist them to devise financially viable proposals.

Core Arts and Cultural Facilities

10. The development brief will require the provision of the following core arts and cultural facilities –

- (a) a theatre complex comprising a main theatre with a seating capacity of at least 2,000 seats, and two smaller theatres, one with at least 800 seats and one with at least 400 seats. All of the theatres will be equipped with state of the art stage facilities and together will form a world class facility for the staging of drama, music, opera and dance performances;
- (b) an enclosed performance venue with a seating capacity of at least 10,000 seats. Versatility and flexibility will be key considerations, so that the venue will be able to hold many different types of large-scale cultural and entertainment events;
- (c) an open air "water amphitheatre" with a seating capacity of at least 5,000 seats, equipped for water, light, laser and live performances and taking advantage of the spectacular harbour view;
- (d) at least four diverse open air piazza areas where visitors can watch performances in an informal and original setting; and
- (e) a museum cluster comprising four museums of differing themes and an art exhibition centre. These facilities will form a loose cluster, with generous provision of open space between them so that they are very relaxing places to visit and walk around.

11. The above list of core arts and cultural facilities has been drawn up by the Home Affairs Bureau after consulting the arts and cultural community, and considering views expressed by tourism and business sectors and other interested parties, on the need for different types of facilities and the types of events that should be catered for. Project proponents will be given as much freedom as possible to produce landmark architectural designs for these major facilities. They will also be free to provide additional arts and cultural facilities. We envisage that the great majority of the arts and cultural facilities will be covered by the canopy.

Invitation For Proposals

12. Taking into account that –

- (a) the project is large and complex and proponents will have considerable flexibility in framing their proposals; and
- (b) we wish to negotiate with proponents before we select a successful one and tendering procedures do not readily provide for such negotiations,

we intend to issue an “Invitation For Proposals” (IFP).

13. Among other things, the IFP will invite submission of a preliminary masterplan based on our development brief and supporting technical, financial and operation proposals, including the amount of land premium offered, if any, and a comprehensive business plan setting out a strategy for establishing the WKCD as a world class arts, cultural and entertainment attraction. It will also require proponents to demonstrate that they have sound financial backing, the ability to finance their proposed level of investment and a sustainable financing plan.

Selection of the Successful Proposal

14. We intend to seek the views of Members of the Legislative Council before the preferred proposal is finally adopted. The authority for selection of the successful proponent will be the Chief Executive in Council.

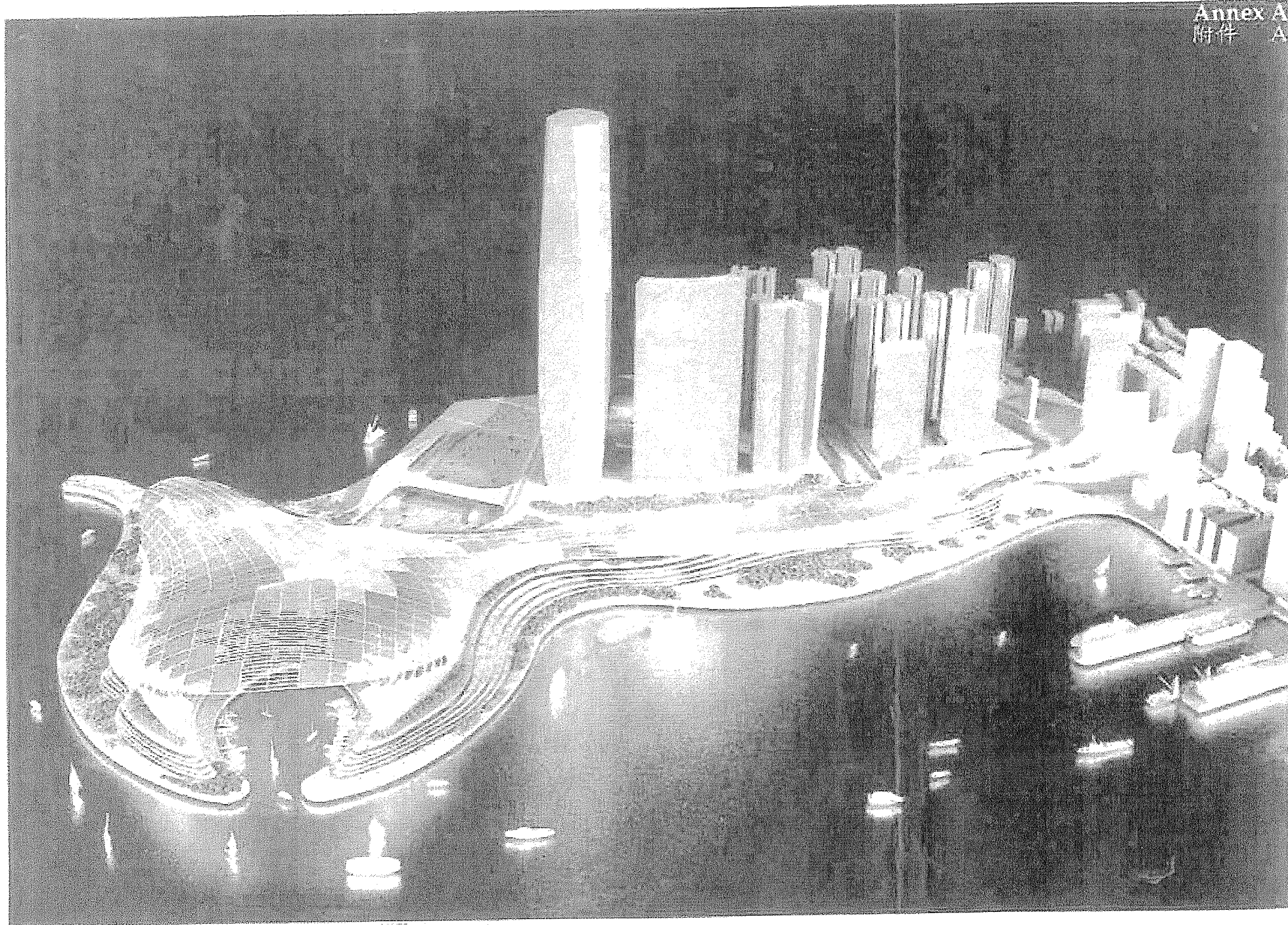
Project timetable

15. We anticipate issuing the IFP in August 2003. Allowing about six months for the preparation of proposals and time for us to assess them in detail, negotiate with proponents and take the necessary decisions, we anticipate being able to select the successful proponent by the end of 2004 or early in 2005. Allowing time for the signing of the necessary project agreement and the successful proponent to prepare the detailed masterplan and building

designs and obtain statutory approvals, we envisage that construction will commence by April 2006 and that the core arts and cultural facilities will come into operation in phases from the end of 2009 onwards. The phasing of the canopy and the commercial and residential development will be left to the proponent.

16. Members will be kept informed of progress with the project as it moves ahead.

Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
June 2003



**Steering Committee for Development of the
West Kowloon Cultural District**

Terms of Reference

To steer the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District to a successful conclusion.

Membership

Chief Secretary for Administration (Chairman)
Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Deputy Chairman)
Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Secretary for Home Affairs
Secretary for Justice or her representative
Permanent Secretary for Planning and Lands
Commissioner for Tourism
Director of Architectural Services
Director of Lands
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
Director of Planning
Director of Territory Development

