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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 3rd meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Monday, 17 December 2012, at 10:45 am**

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP

Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

Members absent:

Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok

Public officers attending:

Ms Doris HO Pui-ling, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr Thomas CHAN Chung-ching, JP	Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) ¹
Mr Enoch LAM Tin-sing, JP	Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) ²
Ms Anissa WONG, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment
Ms Ivy CHAN Ah-wing	Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Ms Joyce NG Suet-ye	Chief Estate Surveyor (Acquisition) Lands Department
Mr LEUNG Koon-kee, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Mr FONG Siu-wai	Assistant Director (Property Services) Architectural Services Department
Mr CHAN Chi-chiu, JP	Director of Drainage Services
Mr HON Chi-keung, JP	Director of Civil Engineering and Development
Dr Ellen CHAN Ying-lung, JP	Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure) Environmental Protection Department
Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP	Under Secretary for Transport and Housing
Ms Rebecca PUN Ting-ting, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) ¹
Mr Edward TO Wing-hang	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) ⁵
Mr LAU Ka-keung, JP	Director of Highways
Mrs Joanna KWOK TAM Yuk-ying	Project Manager (Major Works) Highways Department

Mr Eric HUI Kwok-sun, JP	Assistant Director (2) Home Affairs Department
Mr Frankie CHOU Wing-ping	Chief Engineer (Works) Home Affairs Department
Ms Eva YAM Ya-ling	Deputy Secretary-General (1) University Grants Committee Secretariat
Ms Angela LEE Chung-yan	Principal Assistant Secretary (Health)2 Food and Health Bureau
Mr Donald LI	Chief Manager (Capital Planning) Hospital Authority
Miss Wendy CHUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Infrastructure and Research Support)
Dr LEE Kin-wang	Head of Estates, Health and Safety Division Vocational Training Council
Mr KOK Che-leung	Assistant Director (Subventions) Social Welfare Department
Mr MA Lee-tak, JP	Director of Water Supplies
Mr TSE Woon-por	Chief Systems Manager (Business Transformation) Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
Mr Kenneth WONG Hung-keung	Chief Civil Engineer Transport and Housing Bureau
Mr Sam WONG Chung-kwong	Chief Engineer (5) (Major Works) Highways Department
Miss Rachel KWAN Chui-lan	Principal Transport Officer (Bus and Railway)1 Transport Department
Mr CHENG Wing-fai	District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Tuen Mun) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Mr LAI Cheuk-ho	Chief Engineer (Sewerage Projects) Drainage Services Department
Miss Amy YUEN Wai-yin	Assistant Director (Water Policy) Environmental Protection Department
Mr LEUNG Wing-lim	Assistant Director (New Works) Water Supplies Department
Mr Norman HEUNG Yuk-sai, JP	Project Manager (Kowloon) Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr WAN Man-leung	Project Manager Home Affairs Bureau

Mr Janson WONG Chi-sing	Chief Engineer (Kowloon 2) Civil Engineering and Development Department
Dr CHAN Man-wai	Executive Director (Project Delivery) West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
Mr NG Ying-chuen	Head (Technical Services) West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Annette LAM	Chief Council Secretary (1)3
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Staff in attendance:

Mr Andy LAU	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Sarah YUEN	Senior Council Secretary (1)3
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

The Chairman reported that a total of three capital works projects amounting to \$2,842.7 million had been endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) in the 2012-2013 session so far. He further advised that six items were on the agenda for the meeting, which if endorsed would involve a total amount of \$1,931.38 billion.

2. The Chairman then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the Legislative Council (LegCo), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to any items under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the items. He also drew members' attention to Rule 84 of RoP on voting or withdrawal in case of direct pecuniary interest.

Capital Works Reserve Fund Block Allocations

PWSC(2012-13)39	—	Block allocations for Heads 701 to 711 under the Capital Works Reserve Fund
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3. The Chairman advised that the proposal was to seek approval of a

total allocation of \$12,391.8 million for 2013-2014 for the existing block allocations and proposed block allocation Subhead 6101TX under Heads 701 to 711 in the Capital Works Reserve Fund (CWRF).

General comments

4. Noting the substantial funding involved in the proposal, Ms Emily LAU considered it undesirable that funding for the many complicated projects involved should be sought in one go. She said that the Finance Committee (FC) should have more time to discuss the projects. The Chairman and the Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)3 (DS(Tsy)3) responded that it was the established practice to grant approval to funding for the CWRF block allocations on an annual lump-sum basis to ensure efficient and flexible works arrangement and resource allocation. DS(Tsy)3 further advised that details on the funding sought for the existing and proposed CWRF block allocations for 2013-2014 had been set out in Enclosures 1 to 11 to PWSC(2012-13)39. In particular, Annex 6C contained details on the Universal Accessibility Programme (the UA Programme), for which a new block allocation Subhead 6101TX under Head 706 was proposed to be created. The full list of all the items to be funded under each head of the above block allocations had been provided to and deposited at the Secretariat for members' reference.

5. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired about the reasons for the significant increase in proposed allocations for Head 708 and Head 711 for 2013-2014, in particular that for Head 708 which according to his understanding represented a six-fold increase. DS(Tsy)3 responded that the proposed allocation for the five block votes under Head 708 in 2013-2014 represented a 4.2% increase from the approved allocation for 2012-2013. Due to the increase in slope-related capital works for subvented organizations, the allocation for Subhead 8100BX under Head 708 was proposed to be increased by 626.9% from \$1.8 million in 2012-2013 to \$13 million in 2013-2014.

Subhead 6101TX under Head 706 (the Universal Accessibility Programme)

Consultation

6. Ms Emily LAU noted that there was strong public support for the UA Programme, and that the provision of barrier free access (BFA) facilities at public walkways had been much discussed by LegCo Members. She enquired whether the finalized programme details had been discussed by relevant LegCo committee, so as to ensure that the projects requested by LegCo Members and District Councils (DCs) had been included in the UA

Programme. In response, the Chairman advised that the Panel on Transport (TP) had been consulted on the UA Programme and members were generally supportive of the proposal.

7. Mr TAM Yiu-chung considered it desirable to consult DCs on the priority of the projects under the UA Programme as DCs were in the best position to understand the urgency of the projects in their respective districts. Mr WONG Kwok-hing also stressed the need to give due regard to residents' requests and DC members' views when selecting projects for taking forward under the UA Programme. Sharing a similar view, Ms Emily LAU asked how DCs' comments on the UA Programme would be followed up in future.

8. The Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH, THB) replied that the list of the proposed locations of the existing public walkways for the installation of lifts in each district under the UA Programme (the List) had been worked out on the basis of suggestions from the public, including DC members, received by the Administration after screening out duplicated projects and projects which fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme. The List under the UA Programme had already been provided to TP vide LC Paper No. CB(1)307/12-13 on 13 December 2012. He said that upon obtaining funding approval from FC, the Administration would start consulting the relevant DCs to determine the priorities for the retrofitting projects in recognition of their understanding of the local needs and conditions, in particular the pedestrian flow, demographics, and special facilities that required accessibility improvement. Each DC would be invited to select three proposals on the List for early commencement of the relevant works. He added that once a project was supported by the district and confirmed to be technically feasible, the Administration would commence the design and construction works as soon as possible according to the agreed priority. At the request of Ms Emily LAU, USTH, THB agreed to update the TP on the outcome of the consultation with DCs in due course.

Admin.

9. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether new projects proposed by DCs which were not on the List would be included under the UA Programme. USTH, THB responded that while the Administration was willing to listen to the views of DCs in recognition that they best understood local needs, new projects proposed by the DCs which were outside the ambit of the UA Programme would be handled separately through other channels using funds from other heads.

The list of projects under the UA Programme

10. Referring to the List under the UA Programme, Mr Gary FAN noted

with concern that of the four lift retrofitting projects for Sai Kung in the List, the project on the public walkway across Tong Ming Street near Sheung Tak Shopping Centre had already been approved for works to commence very soon. He queried why the concerned project was still included in the List, and whether other similarly committed projects in other districts were also included in the List.

11. The Director of Highways (DHy) replied that different from the current practice which gave priority to ramps, the new policy would give lifts and ramps equal consideration in providing BFA facilities as long as site conditions permitted. The policy change might have triggered the public to make this suggestion which had been included in the List. Mr Gary FAN, however, pointed out that works to improve accessibility to the walkway concerned had already been taken forward to such an advanced stage that a decision had even been made to demolish its ramp to make room for a new park to be provided in its vicinity. He said that the Administration should exercise care not to include already committed project in the List.

Admin.

12. Sharing a similar view, Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the lift retrofitting project regarding the public walkway across King's Road near North Point Road (Highways Department Structure No. HF84) on the List was, according to his understanding, completed. DHy responded that only one end of the walkway had been retrofitted with lift. The other end had yet to be retrofitted pending the relocation of underground facilities. In response to Mr WONG, the Administration agreed to contact him before the relevant FC meeting to arrange a site visit or explain the details of the said project.

Admin.

13. Miss CHAN Yuen-han indicated support for the funding proposal. She suggested that, for the benefits of residents of each district, the Administration should play a co-ordinating role and compile a comprehensive list setting out all projects undertaken in different districts to improve accessibility, including those identified through the assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems (the assessment system), and minor capital works using DC funds, etc. Mr CHAN Han-pan shared her view. USTH, THB responded that the two types of projects were different in scale and funded under different funding sources. The works planning and consultation procedures were also different. Nevertheless, the THB would endeavour to respond to requests for these projects, and co-ordinate their delivery.

14. In response to Ms Emily LAU, USTH, THB confirmed that the List had incorporated the recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Commission. In response to Ms LAU and Mr WONG Kwok-hing, the

Admin.

Administration agreed to provide a comprehensive and updated list on the locations suggested by the public for installation of lifts at existing public walkways in each district under the UA Programme before the relevant FC meeting.

Proposals on projects to be included under the UA Programme

15. Mr WONG Kwok-hing highlighted the need to construct one escalator link each to supplement the service of the Central Mid-Level Escalator Link and the escalator link to Belcher Gardens, and also to provide escalator links/lifts to link up the Old Main Street of Aberdeen with Pokfulam Road, and Ap Lei Chau Estate with Ap Lei Chau Wind Tower Park. He said that the four escalator links/lifts projects had been proposed by the relevant DCs, and urged the Administration to seriously consider including them in the List. USTH, THB explained that proposals of hill-side escalator/lift systems were not under the UA Programme and would be handled under the current funding arrangement for public works.

16. Citing the walkway across King's Road and Tong Shui Road in North Point as an example, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the List included projects to improve the accessibility of public walkways which were under-utilized due to the lack of lifts and used as shelters by the homeless. DHy responded that since the UA Programme was introduced for the purpose of improving accessibility, and that the relevant DC had also raised concerns about the problems associated with the above walkway, the Administration would closely liaise with the DC to ascertain the need to accord priority to the relevant lift retrofitting works, and to identify other measures to address the above problems. Mr WONG subsequently noted that the walkway concerned had not been included in the List and expressed regrets about that. In response, USTH, THB and DHy emphasized that the projects in the List were public suggestions from various districts.

17. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was supportive of the UA Programme, and highlighted the importance of providing BFA facilities for access to hospitals because some of them were built on elevated ground (e.g. Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital). He urged the Administration to accord priority to works that could help improve accessibility to hospitals, especially those serving persons with disabilities (PwDs), such as Princess Margaret Hospital, The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital in Sandy Bay, etc, as the Rehabus service was inadequate and difficult to book. He pointed out that it was generally difficult for PwDs, the elderly and the chronically ill to access hospitals, many of which were situated on the hills and connected by green minibus only. Sharing a similar view, the Chairman urged the Administration to take note of Dr CHEUNG's views.

Cost concerns

18. Noting that a project under the UA Programme requiring the retrofitting of one to two lifts would cost about \$20 million to \$40 million, Mr Michael TIEN questioned if the proposed allocation of \$187.272 million for implementing projects under the UA Programme was sufficient. DHy responded that the funding sought was to cover the expenditure to be incurred for the UA Programme in 2013-2014, which were still in the early implementation stage, the cost of which should not be too significant. The estimated spendings for ensuing years would be worked out year by year in the light of the progress of the UA Programme in the year concerned.

19. Mr Michael TIEN commented that the respective costs for lift installation at \$20 million each, and lift maintenance at an average of about \$400,000 per annum under the UA Programme were too high. He enquired about the number of contractors eligible for bidding for the projects. In his view, instead of inviting tenders for the relevant contracts separately, a bulk tender exercise should be conducted to minimize the cost through economies of scale.

20. DHy responded that while maintenance contracts could be awarded through bulk tender as lift maintenance work was in general similar, the approach might not be applicable to lift installation projects because they would be implemented in different districts at different time. To enable the projects to proceed expeditiously as urged by the relevant DCs, the projects would be taken forward as soon as the go-ahead was given, after making reasonable efforts to tender them out along with other projects in the vicinity should there be any. Moreover, the conditions of different projects might vary, with some requiring relocation of underground facilities which might incur higher cost. DHy further advised that there were sufficient approved contractors to ensure competition to keep tender prices reasonable.

Other views and concerns about the UA Programme

21. While indicating support for the UA Programme, Mr WU Chi-wai expressed concern about the plan to use air-conditioning systems instead of air ventilation systems in the lifts to be retrofitted under the UA Programme. In his view, use of the latter could facilitate maintenance and ensure air ventilation even during service breakdowns. The Chairman advised that the issue had been discussed by the TP, and the Administration had undertaken to give regard to the actual circumstances when designing the lifts and the ventilation systems.

22. Noting that all projects under the UA Programme would be undertaken at public walkways only, Mr WU Chi-wai enquired whether the Administration would consider installing lifts at footbridges which were connected to the premises of public bodies and if so, the cost sharing arrangements. USTH, THB replied that footbridges which were not connected to public walkways were not within the ambit of the UA Programme. Nevertheless, the Administration had been encouraging both the private sectors or public sectors to provide BFA facilities in their premises. The Administration would relay local requests for lift retrofitting works which fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme to the relevant parties, such as the MTR Corporation Limited, the Housing Authority (HA) and the Link Real Estate Investment Trust. He also noted that HA had been making active efforts to improve accessibility to its housing estates.

Admin.

23. Mr TAM Yiu-chung considered the progress of the UA Programme slow despite the urgent need for BFA facilities. He therefore welcomed raising the financial ceiling of individual items under the UA Programme from the standard ceiling of \$30 million to \$75 million, and considered it helpful to expedite the progress of the implementation. At his request, the Administration agreed to report the progress of the UA Programme to TP in due course.

24. Mr CHAN Han-pan regretted that projects under the assessment system were progressing very slowly, especially in the outlying islands which did not have public walkways to benefit from the UA Programme although their populations were aging. To ensure fairness, he called upon the Administration to expedite projects under the assessment system. The Administration took note of his views.

Head 708 Subhead 8001SX

25. Ms Cyd HO enquired whether the welfare facilities to be provided under Head 708 were new facilities to improve service or in fact old facilities to be relocated as a result of the redevelopment of housing estates. The Assistant Director (Subventions), Social Welfare Department (AD(S), SWD) responded that projects under Part II of Head 708 were all new items.

26. Noting that the four welfare facilities to be provided at the Anderson Road public housing development would be separately housed, Ms Cyd HO enquired about the considerations behind the relevant arrangement.

27. AD(S), SWD responded that this was because the housing development at the Anderson Road would be constructed by phases on different sites, and the four welfare facilities might be operated by different non-governmental

Admin.

organizations. Ms HO commented that in planning the new housing development, every opportunity should be taken to centrally house the facilities in one building to facilitate service provision and facility management. The Chairman urged the Administration to consider her views. At Ms HO's request, the Administration agreed to provide before the relevant FC meeting additional details on the locations of the welfare facilities and to explain the considerations behind the decision to separately house these facilities in different blocks instead of centrally in one building, including the advantages of pursuing the separate location option.

28. The item was voted on and endorsed.

29. Ms Emily LAU said that if she found the supplementary information provided by the Administration unsatisfactory, she would request that this item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

Head 706 – Highways

PWSC(2012-13)42 76TI Bus-bus interchanges on Tuen Mun Road

30. The Chairman said that the proposal was to increase the approved project estimate of 76TI by \$43 million from \$162.3 million to \$205.3 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices. The Chairman advised that TP was consulted on the proposal on 16 November 2012. TP members in principle supported the proposal and urged the Administration to complete the relevant works as soon as practicable. TP members also called upon the Administration to liaise with the concerned bus companies for the introduction of more bus-bus interchange (BBI) concession schemes and monthly tickets, and for the increase in bus routes using the BBIs on Tuen Mun Road (TMR BBIs). Some TP members had also expressed concerns about the ventilation facilities of the TMR BBIs and the shading effect of the bus shelters therein. The Administration was requested to provide the number of low platform buses that would use the TMR BBIs. The requested information had been provided to TP.

The proposed toilet facilities

31. Members in general welcomed the plan to provide permanent toilet facilities at the TMR BBIs in view of the strong public demand and as requested by the Tuen Mun DC (TMDC).

32. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether more female than male toilet compartments would be provided at the TMR BBIs. DHy responded that

there would be one toilet for PwDs, one for female with four toilet compartments and one for male with two toilet compartments and four urinals at the permanent toilet facilities. In response to Ms LAU, DHy confirmed that portable toilets would be provided on both the Kowloon-bound and the Tuen Mun-bound TMR BBIs before the commissioning of the permanent toilet facilities.

33. Mr TAM Yiu-chung was concerned whether works undertaken to provide permanent toilet facilities would affect the operation of the TMR BBIs. In response, DHy said that there was no cause for concern as the only outstanding works by that time would be those relating to the provision of toilet facilities and landscaping works which were minor in nature.

34. Noting that the proposed permanent toilet facilities would adopt various forms of energy efficient features, and that the facilities would be located in an open area, Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether consideration would be given to using solar energy by installing solar panels on top of the facilities. DHy responded that energy saving concept would be duly taken into consideration during the design process. While the design of the toilet facilities had not yet commenced, the design principle was to adopt as many energy efficient features as possible.

35. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok opined that the energy efficient features highlighted in paragraph 27 of PWSC(2012-13)42 should be made standard features of public toilets in future. He further opined that as the price of the more efficient light-emitting diode (LED) lights went down with improved design, LED fluorescent tubes should be used in place of T5 energy efficient fluorescent tubes. The Chairman urged the Administration to take note of Ir Dr LO's views.

36. DHy responded that the Administration would, as far as practicable, adopt energy efficient features for public facilities. He further advised that according to the tests conducted by the Highways Department (HyD) on T5 energy efficient fluorescent tubes and LED fluorescent tubes, the two were equally efficient although the latter cost ten times more. HyD would decide on the type of fluorescent tubes to be used after analyzing the results of the tests conducted.

37. In response to Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, DHy advised that the construction cost of the permanent toilet facilities at the TMR BBIs was similar to those of other public toilet facilities.

38. Miss Alice MAK considered it undesirable that the permanent toilet facilities for the TMR BBIs would only be completed in the fourth quarter of

2014, which was more than a year after the commissioning of TMR BBIs. She also called upon the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to ensure that the portable toilets to be provided in the meantime would be kept clean at all time. The Administration noted her views.

Provision of passenger information

39. Ms Emily LAU sought details on the electronic display boards to be provided at the TMR BBIs. The Principal Transport Officer (Bus and Railway)1, Transport Department (PTO(B&R)1, TD) responded that the electronic display boards would provide real-time traffic and transport information, including TMR's traffic conditions, to enable passengers to choose which bus routes to take. Bus companies would also provide bus information displays to indicate the time required for the next bus to come.

40. Miss Alice MAK urged the Administration to ensure that the information in the bus information displays at the TMR BBIs would be accurate and serve the purpose of providing useful information to facilitate interchange. She also highlighted the importance of providing clear signage to help passengers find the bus stops and the relevant queuing area. PTO(B&R)1, TD said that drawing experience from the operation of existing BBIs, efforts had been made to ensure the provision of clear signage and directions at the TMR BBIs.

41. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether provision of display boards at bus stops had become a new policy initiative, and whether bus information announcement systems would also be provided at the TMR BBIs to facilitate passengers with visual impairment. PTO(B&R)1, TD responded that the Administration would endeavour to provide display boards at every BBI in future to facilitate passengers. The provision of announcement systems would be examined in detail in conjunction with PwDs' earlier request for their provision at bus stops in urban areas.

42. Ms Emily LAU expressed regret that bus information announcement systems were not provided at the TMR BBIs despite PwDs' strong request raised long time ago. Sharing a similar view, Dr Fernando CHEUNG said the Administration should endeavour to put the systems to trial at the TMR BBIs with a view to extending the systems to other BBIs if the trial scheme was successful. PTO(B&R)1, TD responded that as the Kowloon-bound TMR BBI would be commissioned on 26 December 2012, it might not be possible to provide such system at the TMR BBIs. She undertook to consider the provision of such facilities when reviewing the operation of the TMR BBIs.

Admin.

43. Pointing out that many bus routes would serve the TMR BBIs, the Chairman asked the Administration to seriously examine the technical feasibility of providing the bus information announcement systems at the TMR BBIs. In response to the Chairman and Ms Emily LAU, the Administration agreed to inform FC of its consideration on providing the bus information announcement systems at the TMR BBIs to facilitate passengers with visual impairment. The Administration was also requested to seek the views of relevant organizations of visually-impaired persons on the provision of the said facilities and provide information on the outcome of the consultation to TP in due course.

Concerns about the relevant site investigations

44. Mr WU Chi-wai indicated support for early completion of the TMR BBIs. Noting that the current proposal to increase the approved project estimate of the TMR BBIs had partly arisen from unforeseen difficult ground conditions, he enquired whether such cases were common and questioned why the difficult ground conditions had not been detected earlier despite the many site investigations conducted in the past.

45. DHy responded that the Administration had exercised great care in conducting the relevant site investigations, and had made reference to the site investigation information obtained before and during construction of the existing Brothers' Bridge in the project site, and sunk additional boreholes to ascertain the extent of the rock levels underneath. Notwithstanding the above extra efforts, during the construction stage of the TMR BBIs, geotechnical conditions were found to vary widely and were worse than expected, i.e. the rock levels were lower than expected hence deeper piles for the bridge foundation were required. Moreover, it was necessary to revise the design of retaining walls to suit the actual ground profile and to overcome the unexpected poor sub-soil conditions, so as to meet current design and safety standards. DHy said that it was sometimes inevitable that preliminary site investigations were unable to reflect all actual site conditions despite thorough investigations.

46. Pointing out that the results of site investigations would form the basis of determining whether a project would be taken forward, Mr WU Chi-wai highlighted the need for the Administration to ensure the reliability of site investigations. He said that Members might in future have reservation about the advice of the Administration in this regard if the results of site investigations always turned out to be unreliable.

Other views and concerns

47. Mr Albert CHAN was keen to ensure that pick-up and drop-off areas for private cars and taxis should be provided at the TMR BBIs for the convenience of passengers. He also opined that such areas should be made standard facilities for every new BBI, and urged the Administration to provide these facilities for the Tsing Ma Control Area as well. Ms Emily LAU shared his views.

Admin. 48. Referring to Enclosure 1 to PWSC(2012-13)42 that showed the locations of the pick-up and drop-off areas for private cars and taxis, USTH, THB said that the design of the TMR BBIs had already provided for such facilities. DHy also assured Mr CHAN that taxis and private cars could easily drive into and out of the areas without detour after dropping off or picking up passengers at the areas. At Mr CHAN's request, the Administration agreed to provide information on the locations of the pick-up and drop-off areas before the relevant FC meeting, and to finalize details of the relevant BBI concession schemes before commissioning of the TMR BBIs.

49. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the reasons for providing lifts at only one of the TMR BBIs. DHy responded that there was no need to install lifts at the Kowloon-bound TMR BBI because it was on the ground level. The Tuen Mun-bound TMR BBI, however, required the provision of lifts because there was level difference for passengers interchanging between Tuen Mun-bound routes running along the Castle Peak Road and those running along TMR. In response to Ms LAU, DHy further confirmed that all low platform buses could use the TMR BBIs.

50. Noting that the Kowloon-bound TMR BBI would be commissioned during the Christmas holidays, Mr TAM Yiu-chung urged the Administration to make thorough preparatory work, including publicity efforts and provision of clear signage and directions, to ensure smooth operation, particularly during peak hours.

51. PTO(B&R)1, TD responded that leaflets and posters had already been disseminated to different housing estates in Tuen Mun to publicize the commissioning of the Kowloon-bound TMR BBI. Information on the relevant bus routes and BBI concession schemes could be found in the leaflets and a special page of the website of TD. Large banners had also been erected in Tuen Mun Town Centre. In the early days of the operation of the Kowloon-bound TMR BBI, TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre would closely monitor the traffic conditions along TMR and the BBI.

In addition to deploying staff at the BBI to inform passengers how to switch among bus routes, concerned bus companies would also assign staff to major stops and termini in Tuen Mun to inform passengers of the commissioning of the BBI.

52. Referring to the high lost trip rates of buses, Mr Michael TIEN highlighted that the successful operation of the TMR BBIs would hinge on whether the lost trip rates could be improved so that passengers would not have to waste their time waiting for interchange to another route. He stressed the need for random checks instead of only termini checks to assess the level of bus service, and urged the Administration to require the concerned bus companies to make performance pledges on average journey time for all bus routes. He also considered it necessary for the Administration to set aside resources for monitoring the operation of BBIs instead of only responding to service complaints.

53. The item was voted on and endorsed.

54. Ms Emily LAU said that if she found the supplementary information provided by the Administration unsatisfactory, she would request that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

PWSC(2012-13)41 819TH Traffic improvements to Tuen Mun Road Town Centre section

55. The Chairman briefed members on the gist of TP's discussion of the funding proposal on 16 November 2012. He said that TP members in principle supported the proposal. Some TP members, however, had requested the Administration to consider whether the three footbridges without ramps to be reconstructed under 819TH could really meet residents' needs. Some TP members had also sought information on the cost of the vertical and roof greening of the noise barriers/enclosures concerned, and the percentage it accounted for in the revised project estimate. Supplementary information was provided in PWSC(2012-13)41.

56. Ms Emily LAU opined that the reasons quoted in paragraph 12 of PWSC(2012-13)41 to account for the higher-than expected awarded tender price, namely, busy traffic environment and stringent site conditions, should have been taken into consideration when working out the estimated tender price. DHy responded that the Administration had already made reference to the prices of recent similar contracts, and given regard to the special conditions of the current contract when estimating the tender price. Nevertheless, tenderers would put in bids taking into account various factors

including changes in market conditions, such as the anticipated increase in labour cost in view of the large number of projects to be undertaken during the same period, and would also factor in their own circumstances, such as whether they possessed the equipment necessary for conducting the works economically.

57. Ms Emily LAU asked the Administration to explain the "limitation on working hours required for construction in the extremely busy traffic environment" quoted as a factor that affected the tender price of the current project. DHy responded that after communicating with TD and the Hong Kong Police Force and consulting TMDC, HyD had included as a condition in the relevant works contract the requirement to keep all lanes of the TMR Town Centre section open during peak hours. As such, many works had to be conducted during night time, incurring higher costs.

58. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether the existence of a large number of projects quoted as another reason for the higher tender price for the current project were government projects, or private projects which the Administration could not foresee. DHy responded that the projects concerned were mainly medium-scale government projects. However, whether low tender prices could be secured for the current project depended on many factors, in particular the number of tenderers interested in bidding for it, and whether any tenderer was already conducting projects in the vicinity and hence could afford to take on the current project at a lower price due to the economy of scale.

59. Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether the number of Hong Kong contractors capable of handling projects that cost upwards of \$2 billion was large enough to ensure market competition. DHy responded that there would be sufficient competition as all Group C contractors were qualified to bid and there were more than 10 of them.

60. Pointing out that the scheduling of government projects would impact the employment situation of the construction trade, Mr WU Chi-wai said that the Administration should, as far as practicable, space out government projects evenly over time to provide job security and stability for construction workers, and to minimize labour market fluctuations that would discourage new blood. DHy explained that there were calls in the community for early implementation of government projects. The Administration had, however, maintained close liaison with the Construction Industry Council (CIC) on measures to maintain sufficient construction workforce. To tackle the problem of manpower supply, funding had been sought from FC to promote CIC's courses. At present, some 60% of the course attendants were aged below 35, pointing to some success in attracting young men into the trade.

61. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 704 – Drainage

**PWSC(2012-13)40 382DS Sewerage at Clear Water Bay Road,
Pik Shui Sun Tsuen and west of Sai
Kung town**

62. At the Chairman's invitation, Ms Cyd HO briefed members on the gist of the Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA Panel)'s discussion of the funding proposal at its meeting on 26 November 2012. EA Panel members generally supported the submission of the funding proposal to PWSC. Some EA Panel members, however, had noted with concern that all returned tender prices for the works under the first contract were higher-than-expected because tenderers had included more risk allowance taking into account the severe site constraints, such as the difficult access to the hilly and congested village areas in Sai Kung and the stringent traffic restrictions at Clear Water Bay Road, leading to higher-than-expected risk costs. These members considered that the Administration should be more cautious in making project estimates by taking into account all relevant factors, including the site constraints to ensure a realistic cost estimate. Certain EA Panel members had also expressed concern about the possibility of further increases in the project cost during the construction stage.

63. Ms Emily LAU shared EA Panel members' concern about the higher-than-expected tender prices for the project. The Director of Drainage Services (DDS) explained that apart from making reference to the construction prices of recent similar projects, the Drainage Services Department had made price adjustments in the original estimate to provide allowances for risks arising from this project's site constraints which were different from those of similar projects. However, this allowance was still unable to reflect the market conditions and the tenderers had included more risk allowance in the project. He assured members that the Administration was aware of the need to ensure accuracy in the cost estimate of future projects.

64. Noting that the Administration had decided against a re-tendering, Ms Emily LAU enquired about the considerations behind the decision. DDS responded that various options, including improving works arrangements, adjusting project scope, reviewing the construction method, and re-tendering, etc, had been considered after all returned tender prices were found to be higher than expected. However, considering that about 36 contractors were eligible to tender for the contract, there had already been

sufficient competition and a re-tendering exercise was therefore unlikely to reduce tender prices. The Administration had therefore decided not to pursue the option of re-tendering and instead proposed to increase the approved project estimate.

65. Ms Emily LAU opined that the Administration should make better efforts to minimize cost, and enquired how the Administration could ascertain that the higher-than-expected tender prices were reasonable. DDS reiterated that the tender prices were higher than expected because the tenderers concerned had factored in more risk allowances taking into account the relevant site constraints and traffic restrictions. For instance, the works at Clear Water Bay Road could be conducted only between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm and the road section concerned would have to be decked over and undecked each day. Hence, the actual time for carrying out the works was significantly reduced.

66. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired whether the tenderers concerned had provided information on the work hours and manpower resources committed to justify the high tender prices. In response, DDS emphasized that because of the narrow access roads and limited working spaces in the congested village areas in Sai Kung and the need to maintain unobstructed access for the villagers, many works had to be conducted by small-sized constructional plant or through manual operation, thus necessitating greater manpower input for this project. Moreover, given the implementation of a great number of capital works projects during the same period, which exerted a great demand for labour, tenderers had prudently made provision for increase in labour costs in the tender prices.

67. Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether the contractor concerned would return cost savings to the Government if the manpower input for the project concerned turned out to be less than estimated. DDS responded that the works concerned would be delivered on a re-measurement basis whereby the contractor was paid according to the actual quantity of works carried out instead of the number of workers deployed. In this way, the contractor concerned could enjoy flexibility in deploying workers and equipment to the project site according to the types of works conducted, and the resources they could deploy at the time of work.

68. The item was voted on and endorsed.

69. At this juncture, the Chairman extended the meeting by 15 minutes to 1:00 pm.

Head 709 – Waterworks**PWSC(2012-13)44 334WF Expansion of Tai Po water treatment works and ancillary raw water and fresh water transfer facilities — part 2 works**

70. At the Chairman's invitation, Mr Tony TSE, Deputy Chairman of the Panel on Development (DP), briefed members on the gist of DP's discussion of the funding proposal on 27 November 2012. He reported that DP members in general supported the proposal. Some DP members had expressed concerns about the cost-effectiveness of the in-situ reprovisioning of Sha Tin water treatment works (WTW) and in association the viability of the upgrading of Tai Po WTW to take up all the loading of Sha Tin WTW for supplying fresh water; the disposal of waterworks sludge; and the traffic impacts of the laying of water mains in Sham Shui Po and Kowloon City.

Cost concerns

71. Mr Albert CHAN considered the estimated cost of \$6,176.7 million for upgrading the project to Category A substantial. He enquired how the Administration could ensure that the project would be completed within budget, and asked whether the unit cost of the proposed works to expand the capacity of Tai Po WTW was higher than those of similar projects in the past and if so, the difference.

72. In response, the Director of Water Supplies (DWS) made the following points –

- (a) Since the Tai Po WTW expansion works were to be undertaken under a design-and-build form of contract, the tendering exercise had already been conducted. Under the current funding proposal, further tendering would only need to be conducted for the works for expanding the Butterfly Valley fresh water primary service reservoir and for laying water mains;
- (b) Taking into account inflation, the cost of the works for the Tai Po WTW was comparable to those of similar projects in the past. As to the mainlaying works, the cost for the relevant works involving the laying of about 900 metres associated fresh water mains, at some \$90,000 per metre, was also similar to other contracts for the replacement and rehabilitation of water mains; and
- (c) Recognizing that the cost for water treatment components was

the largest item in the cost breakdown of the project, the Administration was confident about controlling the project cost to within budget.

73. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed concern about the likely need to seek additional funding for the project in future, considering that the proposed mainlaying works would be conducted in some busy districts of Kowloon where congested traffic environment might give rise to higher-than-expected tender prices. He asked whether the project estimate had taken the above factor into consideration.

74. DWS responded that the Administration had already anticipated that the laying of water mains with a diameter of 1 800 millimetres at the junction of Cornwall Street and Chak On Road South would need to be conducted using the more costly trenchless method to minimize traffic impacts. Allowance had also been made for higher cost for conducting the mainlaying works at the very busy road sections at Waterloo Road and Prince Edward Road West in view of the need to impose work hour restrictions to minimize disruption to traffic. However, since the length of mains to be laid at these road sections made up only a small portion of the total length of mains to be laid, effective cost control was feasible. In response to Mr WU Chi-wai, DWS further advised that since the trenchless method would necessitate the excavation of the launching pit and the receiving pit, and that the very busy road sections at Waterloo Road and Prince Edward Road West had to be decked over for vehicular use during busy hours, certain traffic management measures would have to be taken during construction.

Environmental concerns

75. Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the Administration's plan to dispose of some 6 400 tonnes of non-inert construction waste at landfills, instead of using it for reclamation in order to relieve pressure on landfills as he had all along requested. DWS responded that as the project involved foundation works, inert construction waste (e.g. excavated soil and rock) and non-inert construction waste would inevitably be generated for disposal in public fill reception facilities and landfills respectively. It was believed that the Development Bureau would, in response to Mr CHAN's request, map out suitable policies for necessary improvements on disposal of non-inert construction waste.

76. Mr Albert CHAN expressed dissatisfaction on the lack of swift response to his suggestion although he recognized that the generation of public fill had been exceeding demand in recent years due to the suspension

of almost all reclamation projects. He stated that he might in future vote against funding proposals that involved disposal of non-inert construction waste at landfills.

77. The Permanent Secretary for the Environment responded that it was inevitable that construction waste would be generated by public works projects. The current policy was that contractors would be required to separate the inert portion from non-inert construction waste on site for disposal at appropriate facilities. Only waste not suitable for reuse would be disposed at landfills. Waste that could be reused would be disposed at public fill reception facilities for reuse in construction projects or for reclamation. The Environment Bureau was of the view that disposal of non-inert construction waste at landfills should be minimized. Owing to the growing number of construction activities, the pressure on public fill reception facilities was mounting, and arrangements had to be made for surplus public fill to be delivered to Taishan for use in reclamation.

78. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 707 – New Towns and Urban Area Development

PWSC(2012-13)43 753CL Infrastructure works for West Kowloon Cultural District, phase 1—design and site investigation

79. Mr SIN Chung-kai declared interest that he was a member of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD).

Co-ordination and entrustment of relevant projects

80. Ms Emily LAU indicated support for the proposal. She opined that in consideration of the many complicated issues involved in the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), in particular its accessibility and connectivity with adjacent areas, a joint subcommittee should be formed, as in previous sessions, to monitor the implementation of the WKCD Project and examine the related work projects in detail before submission to PWSC and FC. She urged the Secretariat to follow up the establishment of the joint subcommittee. The Director of Civil Engineering and Development (DCED) responded that the Administration was always ready to discuss projects in the WKCD development in detail with LegCo Members on suitable occasions.

81. Ms Emily LAU referred to paragraph 14(I)(c) of PWSC(2012-13)43 regarding on-cost payable to WKCD for management and supervision of entrusted works, and sought clarification on the relevant arrangements to

ensure there would not be multiple layers of entrustment giving rise to higher costs. DCED responded that the current proposal involved the implementation of government infrastructure works to support the phase 1 of WKCD development. As these infrastructure works would mainly be constructed in WKCD, the Administration considered it cost-effective and efficient for these works to be entrusted to WKCD as part of the overall design and site investigation for phase 1 of the WKCD development. This arrangement would help meet the implementation programme of the WKCD development and would also allow better co-ordination of interface issues between the government infrastructure works and the WKCD development. He assured members that the above arrangement would not give rise to multiple layers of entrustment because WKCD would directly engage suitable contractors and consultants to carry out the works.

82. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan echoed Ms Emily LAU's concern about the entrustment arrangement, saying that the Civil Engineering and Development Department should have more expertise for carrying out the relevant works than WKCD. She was concerned that the entrustment arrangement might not be conducive to ensuring the facilities in WKCD could complement each other. In this regard, she highlighted complaints from residents in West Kowloon, in particular Jordan, about accessibility to and connectivity of WKCD. In her view, works to ensure accessibility of WKCD should not be put under different parties, with WKCD and MTRCL responsible for different works respectively. Instead, one party should be designated to oversee all relevant works to ensure comprehensive planning.

83. The Chairman said that due regard should be given to connectivity with adjacent areas when designing WKCD, and also to the need for compatibility of all WKCD projects. He further pointed out that it was in recognition of such a need that the Administration had proposed to entrust the works to WKCD.

84. DCED reiterated the need and the benefits to entrust all relevant works to WKCD to synchronize implementation. The Project Manager (Kowloon), Civil Engineering and Development Department added that since accessibility to and connectivity of WKCD with adjacent areas was a great concern to many people, WKCD had already provided details on the transport arrangements and connection facilities for WKCD when submitting the WKCD development plan to the Town Planning Board for consideration. Moreover, to facilitate the commissioning of the terminus of the Hong Kong–Shenzhen–Guangzhou Express Rail Link adjacent to WKCD, works were already under way to improve sections of Austin Road West and Lin Cheung Road for completion in 2015. HyD would also conduct improvement works at various road junctions to increase the traffic capacity,

and TD was studying the improvement of the pedestrian facilities connecting WKCD with Nathan Road, in particular the Tsim Sha Tsui and Jordan MTR stations.

Concerns about the proposed site investigations

85. Mr Albert CHAN enquired about the unit cost for conducting the proposed site investigations for government infrastructure works for supporting phase 1 of the WKCD development under the proposal, and how it compared with that for the site investigation for other infrastructure projects. In his view, the former should presumably be lower considering that the WKCD site had been formed by reclamation, so that the Administration should know the relevant soil conditions well. Ms Cyd HO shared his view, pointing out that since the reclamation concerned had been conducted many years before, ground settlement should have already ended to preclude any uncertainties regarding soil conditions.

86. In response, DCED explained that as many of the works to be conducted under the funding proposal involved the construction of foundations, further site investigations had to be conducted to optimize the foundation design. He said that the \$39.2 million earmarked for the proposed site investigation works took up only a small portion of the funding sought under the proposal.

87. Mr Albert CHAN was not convinced of the explanation, and said that the Audit Commission should look into the matter. DCED further explained that there was insufficient or lack of substrata information underneath the reclaimed area and that when constructing a flyover or a footbridge on the reclaimed site, it was necessary to ascertain the soil and rock conditions underneath the reclaimed area to optimize design of the foundation, in particular the depth of the piles. In fact, it was always important to obtain as much information on the relevant substrata conditions as practicable when conducting civil engineering works. The Administration undertook to provide before the relevant FC meeting information on the unit cost difference between conducting the site investigations under the proposal and that for other relevant infrastructure projects.

Admin.

Concerns about the financial implications

88. Ms Cyd HO noted with concern that the provisions for contingencies and for price adjustment amounted to \$119.4 million was nearly one-fourth of the \$478 million sought under this proposal, especially that the soil conditions of the reclaimed WKCD site should pose few uncertainties. In response, DCED reiterated the need to make allowance for minimising as far as practicable unforeseen substrata conditions. He further explained that the provision for contingencies had been worked out according to an established formula, and would be used to cover cost increase arising not only from the proposed site investigations but also other works under the proposal due to unforeseen circumstances. Likewise, the provision for price adjustment would only be used when there were really upward movements in the costs of relevant manpower, plant and materials.

89. Ms Cyd HO highlighted members' concern in previous sessions about the rigid calculation of consultancy fees, and said that to make a more realistic cost estimate, the provision for contingencies should not be rigidly worked out according to a fixed formula without regard to the actual circumstances, such as the nature of the projects concerned. DCED responded that the relevant consultants' fees were worked out according to the mechanism agreed with Members in previous sessions, having regard to the estimated man-months required and the average salary point concerned.

90. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Any other business

91. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.