

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1334/12-13
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 26 March 2013, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG

Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP

Members attending : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon Dennis KWOK
Hon TANG Ka-pui

Members absent : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon CHAN Han-pan

Public officers attending : **Agenda item IV**

Mr Thomas CHAN Chung-ching, JP
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands)¹

Mr Eric YUE Chi-kin
Acting Assistant Director/Special Duties
Planning Department

Mr Stephen LI Tin-sang
Chief Engineer/New Territories East 1
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Ms Carmen CHU
Associate Director
Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong Ltd.

Agenda item V

Mr Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming
Principal Assistant Secretary (Works)³
Development Bureau

Mr CHIN Chu-sum, JP
Assistant Director/Development
Water Supplies Department

Mr MAK Shing-cheung
Chief Engineer/Development 2
Water Supplies Department

Mr CHAN Kin-man
Chief Chemist
Water Supplies Department

Agenda item VI

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

Mr Alfred SIT Wing-hang, JP
Deputy Director / Regulatory Services
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr Harry LAI Hon-chung
Assistant Director / Gas & General Legislation
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr CHUI Wai-sing
Chief Electrical & Mechanical Engineer/General
Legislation
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Sharon CHUNG
Chief Council Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Mr Anthony CHU
Senior Council Secretary (1)6

Mr Fred PANG
Council Secretary (1)6

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)6

Action

I Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)735/12-13 -- Minutes of meeting on
22 January 2013)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2013 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)638/12-13(01) -- Referral from the Public
Accounts Committee on issues
relating to small house grants
in the New Territories

LC Paper No. CB(1)649/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 26 February 2013
from Hon Claudia MO
expressing concerns about the
impact of conversion of land
use on the provision of public
car parks and related issues

LC Paper No. CB(1)672/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 4 March 2013
from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN
Ka-lok expressing concerns on
the planning procedures for the
sites in the 2013-2014 Land
Sale Programme

LC Paper No. CB(1)711/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to
the letter dated 4 March 2013
from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN
Ka-lok expressing concerns on
the planning procedures for the
sites in the 2013-2014 Land
Sale Programme (LC Paper
No. CB(1)672/12-13(01))

LC Paper No. CB(1)718/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 14 March 2013

- from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki expressing concerns on the ownership of the roads for access to New Choi Yuen Village in Shek Kong
- LC Paper No. CB(1)718/12-13(02) -- Letter dated 14 March 2013 from Hon James TO Kun-sun on the regulation of use of land in the rural areas in connection with a recent case involving the construction of two New Territories Small Houses in Shan Pui Village, Yuen Long
- LC Paper No. CB(1)751/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 18 March 2013 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, Hon Starry LEE, Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Hon LEUNG Che-cheung and Hon Christopher CHUNG dated 18 March 2013 on the redevelopment of civil servants' quarters developed under the Civil Servants Co-operative Building Society Scheme
- LC Paper No. CB(1)762/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to the letter dated 26 February 2013 from Hon Claudia MO expressing concerns about the impact of conversion of land use on the provision of public car parks and related issues (LC Paper No. CB(1)649/12-13(01)))

2. Members noted that the above information papers had been issued since the last meeting on 26 February 2013.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed that the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 23 April 2013 at 2:30 pm would be extended to end at 5:30 pm to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration --

- (a) PWP Item No. 259RS - Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories – Tuen Mun to Sheung Shui section (Stage 1);
- (b) Regrading of directorate posts in Development Bureau and its group of departments;
- (c) Enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation and rock cavern development - Stage 2 public engagement; and
- (d) Planning and Engineering Study for housing sites in Yuen Long South – Stage 1 Community Engagement.

4. On item 3(c) above, Dr Kenneth CHAN suggested that a hearing should be held for the public to express views to the Panel on the five potential near-shore reclamation sites and the schemes for rock cavern development as proposed in the Stage 2 Public Engagement on Enhancing Land Supply Strategy. The Chairman proposed and members agreed that a public hearing would be held after the Administration's briefing on the subject at the next meeting.

(Post-meeting note: A special meeting to receive public views on enhancing land supply strategy - reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development was scheduled for 9 am to 6 pm, 1 June 2013. Members were informed about the meeting arrangements on 3 May 2013 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)968/12-13.)

IV Planning Study on Future Land Use at Anderson Road Quarry -- Final Recommended Outline Development Plan

(LC Paper No. CB(1)580/12-13(07) -- Administration's paper on Planning Study on Future Land Use at Anderson Road Quarry -- Final Recommended Outline Development Plan

LC Paper No. CB(1)580/12-13(08) -- Paper on future land use at the Anderson Road Quarry site prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief))

5. Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands)¹ ("DS/DEV(P&L)1") briefed members on the background of the Planning Study on Future Land Use at Anderson Road Quarry -- Feasibility Study ("the Study"), which had been commissioned by the Planning Department ("PlanD") in January 2011 to examine the future land use of the Anderson Road Quarry ("the Study Site"), including its potential for housing developments. DS/DEV(P&L)1 advised that the Study Site had a total area of about 86 hectares ("ha"), in which a platform of about 40 ha would be formed for development upon the cessation of operation of the Anderson Road Quarry and the completion of the rehabilitation works by 2016. The Administration had conducted two stages of community engagement ("CE") for the Study from August to November 2011 and from June to September 2012 respectively. Having regard to the public views on the draft Recommended Outline Development Plan ("RODP") for the Study Site collected during the Stage 2 CE as well as the results of various supplementary technical assessments subsequently undertaken, the Administration had formulated the final RODP. DS/DEV(P&L)1 highlighted the main proposals under the final RODP as follows:

- (a) Taking into account the pressing demand for housing land, the Administration proposed to increase the planned population by 2 000 from 23 000, proposed under the draft RODP, to 25 000.
- (b) The Administration estimated that about 9 410 residential units, including 7 530 private flats and 1 880 subsidized housing units, could be provided at the Study Site. The private-to-subsidized housing ratio of 80:20, which had been proposed under the draft RODP, would be retained. The site for subsidized housing was considered suitable for Home

Ownership Scheme ("HOS") development.

- (c) The findings of the Supplementary Traffic Assessment conducted based on the increased planned population of 25 000 concluded that subject to appropriate mitigation measures such as road/junction improvement measures and provision of pedestrian linkage facilities, the proposed developments under the final RODP with the increased planned population would not significantly affect the traffic conditions in the area. The Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") would continue to examine the possibility of expediting the implementation of the road/junction improvement measures and the pedestrian linkage facilities.

6. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Acting Assistant Director/Special Duties, PlanD ("AD(SD)/PlanD") briefed members on the views collected at the Stage 2 CE, major refinements to the draft RODP, the supplementary technical assessments conducted, including the assessments on the visual and traffic impacts of the proposed developments at the Study Site, as well as the key land use proposals of the final RODP with respect to the residential sites, the Quarry Park, the Rock Face and the Civic Core.

(Post-meeting note: A soft copy of the powerpoint presentation materials was circulated to members by email vide LC Paper No. CB(1)779/12-13(01) on 27 March 2013.)

Development intensity at the Anderson Road Quarry site

7. The Panel noted that the Administration had proposed as part of the refinements to the draft RODP a slight increase in both the land area and plot ratio for the site for subsidized housing from 1.44 ha to 1.49 ha and from 6.0 to 6.3 respectively in order to accommodate the planned population increase. As regards the private housing developments, the plot ratios of five sites were increased by 0.2 to 1.0, mostly through an increase in the maximum building height by 5 metres compared with that proposed in the draft RODP. Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that consideration should be given to further relaxing the plot ratio and the building height restriction with a view to accommodating a higher population.

8. AD(SD)/PlanD replied that when examining the possibility of increasing the proposed development intensity of the Study Site, the Administration considered it important to have regard to the planning and

design principles that had been drawn up having regard to public views collected during the two stages of CE. He asserted that the capacity of planned population was proposed at 25 000 for the Study Site and not higher mainly due to constraints in traffic and sewerage capacities. Moreover, to further increase the planned population, the Administration might need to provide an additional school at the Study Site, which would reduce the land area to be earmarked for housing developments.

9. Noting that the proposed plot ratio for a site for private housing developments was 3.0, which was much lower than the proposed plot ratio of 6.3 for subsidized housing developments at the Study Site, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan considered that the Administration should further relax the plot ratio and the building height restriction for the private housing developments in order to address the problem of housing shortage in Hong Kong

10. DS/DEV(P&L)1 clarified that the proposed plot ratios for the private housing developments at the Study Site varied from 3.0 to 5.5. The ratios had been worked out with reference to a set of factors including site location, size, the surrounding environment as well as the overall planning and design principles under the final RODPs. The maximum building heights were imposed in light of the public views proposing to respect the Tai Sheung Tok ridgeline and to preserve the visual corridors as well as the ventilation breezeways at the Study Site. AD(SD)/PlanD added that the site designated for private residential use with a plot ratio of 3.0 was originally a school site. A lower plot ratio was proposed for the site in view of its location, its surrounding landscape and the developments in its vicinity, etc.

11. In response to Ms Claudia MO's concern on whether the proposed developments at the Study Site would give rise to a "walled effect", AD(SD)/PlanD advised that according to the relevant technical assessments, the proposed developments and the land use proposals would not result in any adverse impact on air ventilation. He supplemented that to preserve the existing visual permeability at the Study Site, most high-rise blocks would be located closest to the Rock Face backdrop.

12. Mr Gary FAN and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that since the future private housing developments at the Study Site would provide spectacular harbour views, they would most likely be luxurious low-density developments beyond the affordability of the general public. They enquired whether the Administration would consider applying the measure of Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People ("HKPHKP") to the sites for private housing developments. With reference to the relatively low plot ratios for

the sites designated for private housing developments, Mr CHAN Kin-por expressed similar concern about the affordability of these developments. He asked whether the Administration would specify the minimum number of flats to be built on these sites and impose restrictions on the flat size with a view to ensuring an adequate supply of small- and medium-sized flats.

13. In reply, DS/DEV(P&L)1 said that the Administration attached great importance to increasing housing supply and hence would not rule out the possibility of applying the HKPHKP requirements to the land lots that permitted private housing developments at the Study Site. Whether or not the HKPHKP requirements or restrictions on the size and number of flats should be included in the land sale conditions would be determined with reference to the prevailing market situations at the time of land disposal. AD(SD)/PlanD added that the residential sites were proposed for medium- to high-density rather than low-density developments.

Housing mix

14. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung considered that more subsidized housing units should be provided at the Study Site. He suggested that the Administration should consider adjusting the proposed private-to-subsidized housing ratio from 80:20 to 60:40 or 50:50.

15. Noting that a considerable number of public rental housing ("PRH") units would be provided at the Development at Anderson Road ("DAR") to the immediate southwest of the Study Site but the proposed quantity of subsidized housing units at the Study Site remained relatively small, the Deputy Chairman held the view that the Administration should consider providing more subsidized housing units at the Study Site.

16. Mr Gary FAN suggested that, in view of the great demand for public and subsidized housing units, the 610 additional private residential units proposed under the final RODP's should be changed to HOS units. Moreover, a reduction on the number of private flats, of which the occupants might tend to use private cars, would relieve the additional traffic burdens on the road network. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that members had advocated a higher proportion of subsidized housing at the Study Site at the previous meetings of the Panel. He queried the Administration on the reason for making no change to the proposed private-to-subsidized housing ratio, i.e. 80:20.

17. DS/DEV(P&L)1 explained that in working out the proposed ratio, the Administration had taken into account the housing mix in the Sau Mau Ping area, where the Study Site was located. Given that the Sau Mau Ping area was predominantly occupied by subsidized housing, the proposed private-to-subsidized housing ratio of 80:20 at the Study Site would redress the currently imbalanced housing mix in the area. Under the present proposal, the subsidized-to-private housing ratio in the Sau Mau Ping area, which covered the Study Site, would only change slightly from 90:10 in 2011 to about 84:16, keeping subsidized housing the majority.

18. While showing appreciation on the proposals to create a green and pleasant living environment for the future developments at the Study Site, Ms Claudia MO pointed out that more public housing units should be provided at the Site to address the housing shortage problem, in particular the urgent need of some 200 000 applicants who were on the PRH Waiting List. Furthermore, she did not subscribe to the view that in an area where subsidized housing was predominant, more supply of such housing was to be avoided. She called on the Administration to consider adjusting the private-to-subsidized housing ratio at the Study Site to 60:40 or 50:50.

19. DS/DEV(P&L)1 responded that in planning the land use of an area, it was essential to make reference to past planning experience. Since the predominance of PRH developments in Tin Shui Wai had given rise to social problems and attracted much criticism, the Administration considered it necessary to achieve a balanced housing mix in the planning of new development areas. The ratio of 80:20 was proposed after careful deliberation and had taken into account the views of the local community, including the Kwun Tong District Council. He supplemented that the land use proposals of the final RODP would be reflected in the zoning amendments to the Kwun Tong (North) Outline Zoning Plan, on which the public representations and comments would be considered by the Town Planning Board under the statutory procedures.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG held the view that unlike Tin Shui Wai or Tung Chung, the Study Site was part of the urban area in Hong Kong. To help maintain a balanced housing mix across the urban area in the territory, the Administration should provide more public housing units at the Study Site. Besides, Dr CHEUNG had reservation about the proposal to provide at the Study Site subsidized housing units for sale only, on the consideration that most people at the grassroot level might not be able to afford the ownership of these properties. He suggested that the Administration should provide PRH units instead of HOS units at the Study Site.

21. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that since the Study Site had a total area of about 86 ha, the Administration should take the opportunity to provide more PRH units at the Site to cater for the housing needs of grassroot people, especially those living in sub-divided flats. He considered it a waste of land resources if only a total of 25 000 people would be accommodated at the Site. As regards the Administration's view that a larger population at the Site would give rise to more severe traffic congestion nearby, Dr KWOK suggested that the Administration should allow only a small number of car parking spaces in the housing developments and promote the use of green public transport. He asked whether the Administration would review the proposed private-to-subsidized housing ratio in the light of members' views and revert to the Panel on the result of the review.

22. Ms Cyd HO considered that providing a certain proportion of private housing was important in a remote district like Tin Shui Wai because the middle-income families residing in private residential units would help generate job opportunities for the PRH tenants living in the same district. In this way, some of the PRH tenants would not need to travel a long distance to work in the urban area. However, unlike Tin Shui Wai, the Study Site was in close proximity to fast-developing Kowloon East, which, according to the Administration, would offer lots of job opportunities following its transformation into a business district. She believed the future PRH tenants who lived at the Site would not need to spend a long time on travelling to their workplaces. Ms HO recalled that in its initial plan to develop the North East New Territories New Development Areas ("NENT NDAs"), the Administration had also proposed a higher proportion of private housing in the area, but it had recently indicated that the proportion would be adjusted downward. Emphasizing that there had been a shortage of supply of PRH units in the past few years, resulting in an accumulation of almost 200 000 applications on the PRH Waiting List, and it would take at least five years for the Administration to provide 75 000 new PRH units, Ms HO said that more PRH or HOS units, rather than private flats, should be provided at the Study Site.

23. DS/DEV(P&L)1 noted members' views. He reiterated that in proposing the private-to-subsidized housing ratio at the Study Site, the Administration had taken into account public views as well as the housing mix in the surrounding areas. He continued that DAR, wholly for developing public rental housing, would provide about 18 000 PRH units to cater for a planned population of about 48 300. During the past CE exercise, members of the public had raised concerns about the possible adverse impact

of a high proportion of public housing developments on the overall community development at the Sau Mau Ping area. Moreover, public demand for private housing units should not be ignored. The Administration considered it appropriate to retain the planned ratio of 80:20. As regards members' concern on the adequacy of supply of public housing units in the territory, DS/DEV(P&L)1 stressed that the Administration had put in place an established mechanism to identify and allocate suitable sites for public housing developments, with a view to achieving the set target for public housing production. Ms Cyd HO remained of the view that the Administration should actively increase the proportion of public housing in new development areas.

24. Dr Kenneth CHAN asked whether the Administration had made during the Study an estimation of the potential demand of the existing PRH tenants residing in the neighbouring areas for the private or subsidized housing units at the Study Site. AD(SD)/PlanD replied that according to the outcomes of the two stages of CE, there should be potential demand from existing PRH tenants in nearby areas for the proposed private or subsidized housing units at the Study Site. Dr CHAN requested that the Administration provide detailed information about the estimated demand.

(Post-meeting note: Supplementary information from the Administration was circulated to members on 18 April 2013 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)886/12-13(01).)

Traffic and transport improvement measures

25. Noting that road/junction improvement measures had been proposed under the final RODP, Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired whether they had taken into account the transport needs of the population in the vicinity of the Study site, namely Shun Lee Estate, Shun On Estate, Shun Tin Estate and Shun Chi Court.

26. Mr CHAN Kam-lam and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung were concerned about the traffic impact arising from DAR together with the proposed developments at the Study Site on the transport network in Kwun Tong and Tseung Kwan O. Mr CHAN opined that the Administration should address in a timely manner the existing severe traffic congestion along certain roads around the Study Site such as New Clear Water Bay Road, Clear Water Bay Road and Lin Tak Road. In anticipation of the large traffic volume to be generated by DAR and the developments at the Study Site, he considered that the proposed road/junction improvement measures should be finalized

and implemented well before the actual occupancy of these future developments.

27. AD(SD)/PlanD replied that according to the findings of the traffic assessments undertaken by the Administration, subject to the road/junction improvement measures, the transport network should be capable of handling the cumulative traffic to be generated by DAR and the proposed developments at the Study Site, while all improvement measures proposed would be completed before population intake of the Study Site. He further advised that in formulating the traffic and transport improvement measures, consideration had also been given to the transport needs of the residents of Shun Lee Estate, Shun On Estate, Shun Tin Estate and Shun Chi Court.

28. Mr CHAN Kin-por cast doubt on whether the proposed mitigation measures could address the anticipated traffic congestion around the Study Site and cautioned that the Administration might have under-estimated the traffic pressure to be generated from the planned population of 25 000 on the existing main roads as well as the public transport services. Taking into account that some projects to redevelop Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay were underway and the traffic demand in these districts would continue to grow, Mr CHAN considered that opportunities should be seized in a timely manner to resolve the traffic congestion problems in East Kowloon in a holistic approach.

29. Chief Engineer/New Territories East 1, CEDD explained that to handle the cumulative traffic generated by the proposed developments, the Administration had proposed multi-pronged measures including the provision of pedestrian linkages to connect the Study Site with the Kwun Tong town centre and a package of road/junction improvement measures. The works projects to implement these measures were large in scale and it would take time to conduct the relevant technical assessments and go through the relevant statutory procedures. Nonetheless, it was the plan of the Administration to complete the projects before the population intake of the housing developments at the Study Site. In view of the public concerns about potential traffic congestion in the areas around the Study Site, the Administration would strive to implement the measures as early as possible. He continued that Route 6, comprising Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel, Trunk Road T2 and Central Kowloon Route, was expected to be completed before the population intake at the Study Site and would divert part of the traffic from the existing road network in the area, which would then have spare capacity to cater for future traffic growth.

30. The Deputy Chairman held the view that the future residents of the Study Site would mostly need to travel to other areas to work or for leisure and would probably use the Kwun Tong MTR Station heavily. He suggested that the Administration should on the one hand, arrange public transport for residents to commute between the Study Site and the Kwun Tong MTR Station, and on the other hand, adopt appropriate measures to address possible traffic congestion problems near the Kwun Tong town centre. AD(SD)/PlanD replied that the Administration fully understood members' concerns about the current traffic and transport problems in Kwun Tong. He said that similar concerns had been raised by members of the Kwun Tong District Council as well as the local residents. Based on the findings of the Supplementary Traffic Assessment, the Administration had proposed the provision of a public transport terminus at and a public transport lay-by near the Study Site. To serve the future residents, feeder services would be provided between the Study Site and the MTR Stations in Lam Tin/Yau Tong/Tseung Kwan O. DS/DEV(P&L)1 added that the Administration would endeavour to provide the planned public transport facilities in tandem with the population intake.

Pedestrian connectivity

31. The Panel noted that four external footbridges with lift towers had been planned for connecting the Study Site with Shun Lee Estate, Shun Tin Estate, Sau Mau Ping Estate and Po Tat Estate via DAR. Some other routes for the footbridges had also been proposed in the Stage 2 CE to further extend the planned pedestrian network from the Study Site to the Kwun Tong town centre. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung stressed the need to provide barrier-free access to the proposed pedestrian linkages. Miss CHAN Yuen-han emphasized that these linkages should be provided in good time to tie in with the population intake of the housing developments at the Study Site.

32. In reply, AD(SD)/PlanD advised that the pedestrian connectivity proposals including the additional and alternative routes received in the Stage 2 CE would be further examined in the engineering feasibility study being undertaken by CEDD. He assured members that it was the plan of the Administration to complete the construction of the pedestrian linkages found effective and essential in the feasibility study before the population intake.

33. Mr IP Kwok-him considered it important for the Administration to enhance the pedestrian connectivity between the Study Site and the Kwun Tong town centre given that the former was located on the slope of Tai

Sheung Tok Hill and some future residents might be aged people. Dr KWOK Ka-ki held the view that to enhance pedestrian mobility, the Administration should consider providing footbridges with escalators to link the Study Site with the surrounding areas such as Po Tat Estate, Shun Tin Estate and the areas downhill, hence reducing residents' reliance on vehicular transport. DS/DEV(P&L)1 replied that according to the current plan, the proposed pedestrian linkages comprised footbridges, lift towers as well as escalators. He assured members that all pedestrian connectively proposals, including their impact on traffic and pedestrian flows, would be further examined in the engineering feasibility study being conducted. PlanD would also closely liaise with the Transport Department to ensure that public transport services would be provided in a timely manner to serve the future residents at the Study Site.

Provision of community facilities

34. Taking into account that the Study Site was previously a quarry, Mr IP Kwok-him pointed out that it was important to improve the environment of the future developments at the Site by providing sufficient green belt areas and open space. DS/DEV(P&L)1 advised that apart from the housing developments, it was the planning objective of the Administration to create a green residential community at the Study Site and to provide recreational facilities for the residents of both the Study Site and the wider Sau Ma Ping area including DAR. Furthermore, it was proposed in the final RODP that the Rock Face be mainly zoned 'Green Belt' with a network of hiking trails.

35. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung stressed the importance of providing sufficient community facilities in a new development area. In particular, he was concerned about the planning of medical and sports facilities at the Study Site. AD(SD)/PlanD advised that the Administration had proposed the provision of an indoor sport complex at the Civic Core of the Study Site. Furthermore, an array of sports and recreational facilities would be provided at the proposed Quarry Park with an area of about 17 ha. As regards Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's concern on whether day care centres for children would be provided at the Study Site to cater for the need of working parents, AD(SD)/PlanD replied that such facilities, if necessary, could be provided at the proposed Government, Institution or Community sites within the Civic Core, or in the two residential communities of the Study Site.

Preservation of the Tai Sheung Tok ridgeline

36. In response to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's concern on whether the proposed developments at the Study Site would screen off the Tai Sheung Tok ridgeline, AD(SD)/PlanD said that as most of the views to the developments would be blocked by the tall buildings of DAR, the developments would not create significant adverse visual impact on the Tai Sheung Tok ridgeline.

37. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman urged the Administration to consider members' views on the future land use of the Study Site.

V Quality of Dongjiang Water and water quality monitoring by the Water Supplies Department

(LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(03) -- Administration's paper on Quality of Dongjiang Water and water quality monitoring by the Water Supplies Department

LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(04) -- Paper on the supply and quality of Dongjiang water prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)646/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 8 February 2013 from Hon Dennis KWOK)

38. With reference to the Administration's paper on "Quality of Dongjiang Water and water quality monitoring by the Water Supplies Department" (LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(03)), Principal Assistant Secretary (Works)3, Development Bureau ("PAS/DEV(Works)3") briefed members on the series of measures implemented by the Guangdong ("GD") Authorities on the prevention and control of water pollution to Dongjiang ("DJ") water as well as the Water Safety Plan of the Water Supplies Department ("WSD") to monitor the water quality against the World Health Organization ("WHO") standards. He stressed that DJ water supplied to Hong Kong conformed to the "Environmental Quality Standards for Surface Water GB3838-2002", which was the highest national standard applicable for water abstraction for human consumption, and a notification mechanism between WSD and the relevant GD counterparts was in place for quick communication on any major contamination incidents affecting the quality of DJ water delivered to Hong Kong.

Supply of Dongjiang water

39. Mr Dennis KWOK said it had been reported that between 1998 and 2003 about \$3 billion worth of DJ water had been discharged into the sea, and the value of the discharged water was \$300 million in 2005, \$1.4 billion in the three years from 2008 to 2011. He expressed grave concern about the wastage of public funds and precious water resources given that many places in China, including GD, suffered from water shortage due to pollution in some big rivers. He opined that a mechanism to ensure a more efficient supply and use of DJ water should be devised. Sharing Mr KWOK's concern, Mr Gary FAN sought clarification from the Administration on whether excess DJ water had been discharged into the sea.

40. PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that under the existing DJ water supply agreement between GD and Hong Kong ("the Agreement"), the Administration would inform the GD side of the estimated demand of Hong Kong on a monthly basis, thereby enabling better control of the storage level, saving pumping costs and avoiding wastage. He explained that the excess fresh water overflowed from reservoirs was rain water but not DJ water. The overflow was caused by the relatively small capacities of some reservoirs, which were not able to contain a large amount of rainfall over a short time when there were sudden rainstorms. DJ water supplied to Hong Kong was however stored in larger reservoirs and had not been discharged to the sea. In response to Mr Dennis KWOK's enquiry, PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that in the past year, the overflow was around 10 million cubic metres ("mcm").

41. Ms Claudia MO held the view that DJ water was quite a politically sensitive issue as the arrangement was seen as a favour of the Mainland for Hong Kong. She queried the "package deal lump sum approach" under the Agreement in which a fixed annual payment amount was made regardless of the actual needs and consumption. She also sought the Administration's explanation for Hong Kong paying a higher unit cost than other GD cities for using DJ water.

42. Citing the water supply agreement between Singapore and Malaysia as an example, Mr Gary FAN pointed out that it was not a common international practice to fix a lump sum payment regardless of the actual consumption. Public funds would be wasted when the actual consumption was less than the annual supply ceiling stated in the Agreement. Moreover, in view of the fact that the unit cost of DJ water supplied to Hong Kong was several times higher than that supplied to other GD cities, he was concerned

about the excessive profits that the GD Authorities reaped from the supply of DJ water to Hong Kong. He urged the Administration to negotiate with the GD Authorities for a payment arrangement according to the actual annual consumption of DJ water based on a unit water price to be agreed by the two sides. Sharing the concern about over-spending on the purchase of DJ water, Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that the package deal lump sum approach would not provide any incentive for the public and the Administration to minimize consumption of water. He asked the Administration to review the existing arrangement before entering into the next Agreement.

43. PAS/DEV(Works)3 explained that the annual DJ water supply ceiling of 820 mcm, which was applied in the agreement period from 2012 to 2014, had taken into account the actual needs of Hong Kong with 99% reliability in water supply, i.e. to maintain water supply round-the-clock even under an extreme drought condition with a return period of one in 100 years. In times of low rainfall, such as in 2011, the annual consumption of DJ water had almost reached 820 mcm. The Agreement had been concluded after good will discussions between the Administration and the GD Authorities. The unit cost of DJ water delivered to Hong Kong was affected by various factors, including the long and hilly delivery route and requirements for the GD Authorities to ensure good water quality. The adjustment of the water price for the Agreement was based on the changes in operation costs having regard to the exchange rate between Renminbi and Hong Kong Dollars as well as the relevant price indices of both sides. On the view that DJ water should be paid according to the actual annual consumption based on a unit price to be agreed with the GD side, the Administration considered that it was difficult, if not impossible, to confirm with the GD side the actual annual supply quantity which Hong Kong would require. It was likely that the GD side would take into account such uncertainty when fixing the unit water price in order to ensure a stable return.

44. Mr IP Kwok-him and Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that as Hong Kong shared the supply of DJ water with other GD cities, a fixed quantity provision in the Agreement would ensure the reliability of water supply to Hong Kong. They suggested that, to address the concerns of members and the public on the package deal lump sum approach, the Administration should provide more background information on the purchase cost of DJ water. Mr CHAN opined that it was unfair to say that the GD Authorities had reaped excessive profits from Hong Kong through the Agreement.

45. Mr TANG Ka-piu held the view that purchasing DJ water could reduce public expenditures on expanding the local rainfall catchment

network and constructing new reservoirs. Pointing out that GD, in particular the Pearl River Delta area, was a booming economy, he disagreed to the view that the GD Authorities had reaped excessive profits from Hong Kong through the supply of DJ water. While supporting that the package deal lump sum approach would ensure the reliability of water supply to Hong Kong, he shared some members' views that the approach had led to a lack of incentive for conserving water and urged the Administration to consider ways to tackle the issue. Furthermore, he suggested that the Administration could make reference to the framework of the West-East natural gas pipeline agreement when negotiating the next DJ water supply agreement with GD.

46. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 reiterated that the present arrangement for the Administration to inform the GD side about the quantity of DJ water to be delivered to Hong Kong in the next month would ensure that there was no wastage of water resources. It was only under rare circumstances where there were extremely heavy rains that water would overflow from small reservoirs and be discharged to the sea. On water conservation, the Administration promulgated in 2008 a Total Water Management ("TWM") Strategy which mapped out the strategy for a balanced supply and demand of raw water. He emphasized that the Administration spared no efforts in educating the public on water conservation, such as conducting talks at schools, setting up a water resources education centre in Mong Kok and implementing an education campaign on "Let's save 10 litres water" recently. Responding to Mr TANG's enquiry, PAS/DEVB(Works)3 advised that the unit cost of drinking water produced from local catchment and DJ water was about \$4 and \$8 per cubic metre respectively, including treatment and distribution costs, while the unit cost of drinking water produced from desalination, which was being studied, was roughly estimated to be \$12 per cubic metre.

47. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered that it was imperative for the Administration to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the DJ water supply and payment arrangements. At a time when many places in the world were facing acute water shortage problems, Hong Kong definitely had the responsibility to conserve water. As to whether GD was making excessive profits from supplying DJ water to Hong Kong, he asked about the net profits that GD had made from the supply and the cost for GD to maintain the quality of DJ water. He also enquired if the Administration had set a target percentage in respect of water to be supplied from alternative water sources in the long run.

48. PAS/DEV(Works)3 reiterated that under the Agreement, Hong Kong was able to have a reliable supply of water for daily use. The price level was fixed after many discussions and negotiations between the Hong Kong and GD sides. He advised that the unit cost of DJ water was about \$8 per cubic metre, including treatment, monitoring and distribution costs. As surface water collected locally from water gathering grounds could only provide 20% to 30% of water supply to Hong Kong, importation of DJ water remained to be the only financially viable option available at the moment. The Administration was studying the technical feasibility and financial viability of setting up a seawater desalination plant at Tseung Kwan O. More information would be available after the completion of the study.

49. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok pointed out that in the long term, the global trend was that water resources would become scarce and the Administration had to prepare for the future. Showing appreciation on the efforts made by the Hong Kong and GD sides in improving the quality of DJ water, he said that regional cooperation was essential to meeting the demand for water in Hong Kong. He suggested that the Administration should provide a comparison of the unit costs of water supply in Hong Kong and neighboring cities to facilitate members to form a view on whether the cost of DJ water was too high.

50. PAS/DEV(Works)3 shared Ir Dr LO's view that regional cooperation was pivotal to addressing water shortage problems. He added that in fact the supply of DJ water was a regional cooperation initiative in that it was shared by Hong Kong and other six cities such as Shenzhen, Dongguan, Huizhou and Guangzhou. To ensure that scarce natural resources were used effectively, the GD Authorities had promulgated the "Water Resources Distribution Plan in the Dongjiang River Basin of Guangdong Province" setting out the amount of water that relevant cities in GD and Hong Kong could draw from DJ. Concurring with the view that the Administration had to prepare for the future on water supply, he pointed out that the TWM Strategy was implemented as a response.

Water quality

51. On WSD's water quality monitoring, Mr CHAN Hak-kan enquired whether the parameters being monitored and measured included the presence of heavy metals in the water. He also asked whether there was any difference between the standards of water quality applicable to DJ water and surface

water collected locally. Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked whether the parameters included organic solvents which were carcinogenic.

52. In reply, PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that the Administration's paper only highlighted a selection of parameters measured by WSD for water quality monitoring purposes. The full list of water monitoring data was available on WSD's website. According to WSD's routine water quality monitoring results, the quality of DJ water delivered to Hong Kong had remained stable and of good quality. While DJ water had to comply with the Environmental Quality Standards for Surface Water GB3838-2002, raw water delivered to Hong Kong had to undergo a series of treatment processes. Water quality would be monitored at each section of the water delivery network by taking samples for testing against international standards. Chief Chemist, WSD ("CC/WSD") added that WSD monitored 89 health-related chemical parameters including heavy metals and organic solvents; as well as parameters of radioactivity and bacterial indicator under the water quality monitoring scheme in accordance with the WHO 2011 standards.

53. Referring to paragraph 15 of the Administration's paper about the notification mechanism between Hong Kong and its GD counterparts, Mr IP Kwok-him asked about the operation of the mechanism and the details of previous incidents where the Administration had received information from the GD side on pollution to DJ water.

54. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that at Muk Wu Pumping Station, the quality of DJ water delivered to Hong Kong was monitored 24 hours a day through on-line systems for real-time measurement of various parameters including ammoniacal nitrogen, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, salinity, chlorophyll, turbidity etc. Assistant Director/Development, WSD added that under the existing notification arrangements, the GD side would notify WSD if there was any major contamination incident in DJ affecting the quality of the water supplied to Hong Kong, or WSD would liaise with the GD side if any abnormality in the quality of DJ water was revealed in the water quality monitoring process. To ensure the safety of drinking water, where necessary, WSD would coordinate with the parties concerned and take corresponding actions. So far, there had been no major contamination incident in DJ.

55. Mr CHAN kam-lam said that as far as he knew, many highly polluting industries operating along DJ had been closed down to minimize pollution to DJ water. If there was still some abnormality in the quality of DJ water from time to time, he opined that the Administration should make enquiries with

the GD Authorities to find out the causes. He asked about the Administration's efforts in this respect. In reply, CC/WSD explained that variations in the water quality might be caused by changes in the natural factors rather than contamination incidents. For instance, a drop in air temperature would increase the density of water in Shenzhen Reservoir at the surface and the water of lower density at the bottom would bring up manganese released from the soil at the bottom of the reservoir to the surface, resulting in an elevation of manganese level in the water. In these circumstances, the GD Authorities would keep WSD informed about these types of water quality changes. Accordingly, WSD would adjust the water treatment processes to remove the manganese present in DJ water to ensure the quality of drinking water supplied in Hong Kong.

56. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired about the contingency measures to be taken by the Administration in the event of major water contamination incidents in DJ. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that in case of such incidents, the Administration would take appropriate control measures such as reducing or suspending the supply of DJ water, discharging all incoming DJ water at Muk Wu Pumping Station, etc. The water supply in Hong Kong would then rely on local reservoirs, the total storage capacity of which would be able to meet the water demand of Hong Kong for four to six months.

New water sources

Seawater desalination

57. On developing alternative water resources to reduce Hong Kong's dependency on DJ water, Mr Gary FAN urged the Administration to expeditiously take forward the study on the feasibility and cost-effectiveness for the construction of a desalination plant at Tseung Kwan O so as to increase the bargaining power of the Administration when negotiating the next Agreement with GD. Taking in view that the public expenditure on the purchase of DJ water was huge, Dr KWOK Ka-ki also urged the Administration to expedite the study on seawater desalination. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen supported pursuing the proposal on seawater desalination and considered that the cost in the long term would decrease upon the advancement of technologies.

58. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 responded that under the TWM Strategy, the Administration was in the process of exploring alternative water sources. The scope of the study on constructing a desalination plant at Area 137, Tseung Kwan O included, amongst others, an environmental impact study

and examining the technical feasibility and cost effectiveness of a desalination plant in the local context. The study was expected to be completed by end-2014. He undertook to provide the report of the pilot study on the development of desalination facilities in Hong Kong completed in 2007 for members' reference.

(Post-meeting note: The report of the pilot study was circulated to members on 15 April 2013 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)858/12-13(01).)

59. Citing that the unit cost of desalinated water in Singapore was \$3.5 per cubic metre, in contrast to the local desalination cost estimated by the Administration to be \$12 per cubic metre, Ms Claudia MO called on the Administration to make reference to Singapore's experience in seawater desalination.

60. On the desalinated water in Singapore, Mr CHAN Kam-lam asked the Administration to provide information on the unit cost, including the cost components. If the cost of seawater desalination in Hong Kong could be reduced to an acceptable level, he would support desalination as an alternative water source.

61. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that a pilot study in 2007 confirmed the technical feasibility of desalination in Hong Kong using the reverse osmosis technology. In 2012, the Finance Committee had approved a funding proposal on a planning and investigation study for a desalination plant at Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and the associated fresh water distribution facilities. The study would make reference to overseas experience, including that of Singapore, in the planning of new desalination plants in Hong Kong. Chief Engineer/Development 2, WSD ("CE/WSD") added that the desalination process consumed a large quantity of energy. For the process in Singapore, the production of one cubic metre of water required about four kilowatt-hour of electricity. It was understood that the unit cost of desalinated water in Singapore was reported to be around US Dollar 0.5. However, the estimated unit cost of \$12 in Hong Kong's case covered operation, maintenance, distribution and customer service costs as well as capital depreciation. He stressed that in order to make a meaningful comparison of the unit costs of desalinated water between the two places, it was important to ensure that the costs contained the same components.

Use of reclaimed water

62. Mr CHAN Hak-kan said that according to a survey conducted by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, more than half of the respondents supported a wider use of reclaimed water as one of the measures for water conservation. Recalling that a pilot scheme on the use of reclaimed water had been launched in the North District but was not further pursued due to lack of resources, he asked about the Administration's plan, if any, on promoting the use of reclaimed water. He pointed out that some buildings in the North District still used fresh water for toilet flushing and it was a waste of precious natural resources. Dr KWOK Ka-ki also enquired about the Administration's work to promote the use of reclaimed water.

63. PAS/DEVB(works)3 replied that under the TWM Strategy, the Administration had explored a number of new water sources, including the use of reclaimed water and installation of rainwater harvesting system in new buildings. The Administration was considering using reclaimed water produced by the expanded Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works for non-potable purposes in Sheung Shui, Fanling and the proposed North East New Territories New Development Areas.

64. In response to Mr WU Chi-wai's enquiry on promoting the use of reclaimed water in new buildings, PAS/DEVB(works)3 said that the Administration was studying the technical aspects of the proposal. He added that the proposal would involve allocating floor spaces for the installation of the water reclamation systems at the buildings' planning stage.

Rainwater collected in stormwater storage tanks

65. Ms Cyd HO pointed out that the Administration had constructed the Hong Kong West Drainage Tunnel to intercept rainwater and a storage tank in Happy Valley to temporarily store stormwater, however, the stored rainwater and stormwater would subsequently be discharged to the sea. She asked if the Administration would consider diverting the stored rainwater/stormwater to the reservoirs. PAS/DEV(Works)3 explained that the underground stormwater storage tank in Happy Valley was part of a scheme to alleviate the flooding problem in the area. At times of heavy rainstorms, part of the stormwater collected would be diverted to the storage tank for temporary storage in order not to overload the drainage network thus preventing flooding at Happy Valley and the vicinity areas. The Administration noted Ms HO's suggestion and would consider whether and how the rainwater and stormwater collected could be used, bearing in mind

the costs to be incurred in providing ancillary storage and pumping facilities for delivering the rainwater to the reservoirs.

66. While agreeing that Hong Kong should purchase DJ water at a reasonable price to meet its demand, Mr WU Chi-wai expressed concern that the supply of DJ water to Hong Kong might not be sustainable in the long run. It was imperative that the Administration should explore alternative water sources. He suggested that consideration might be given to using the water collected in stormwater storage tanks for non-potable use, such as street cleaning, so that the Administration could act as a role model on water conservation.

67. CE/WSD said that as a measure to conserve water, some 27 mcm of seawater (around 22% of annual water consumption in Hong Kong) was used annually in replacement of fresh water for toilet flushing. The Administration planned to extend the use of seawater for this purpose where possible. On Mr WU's suggestion on using the water in the stormwater storage tanks for street cleaning, he advised that the Administration was studying the requirements of water quality for this purpose. Once the requirements had been finalized, the Administration would consider the cost-effectiveness of the proposal and implementation issues.

Water conservation measures

68. Pointing out that the present water main leakage rate in Hong Kong at 18% was much higher than the rates in other countries, such as 7% for Japan, Ms Claudia MO urged the Administration to further reduce the leakage rate. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that due to the hilly terrain in Hong Kong, the flow of water from service reservoirs at upland areas to the water distribution network at lowland areas would result in a high water pressure which might lead to more main bursts and leaks. WSD had started to install flow-modulated pressure reducing systems at strategic locations to help regulate the water pressure with a view to reducing main bursts and leaks. With the completion of the water mains replacement and rehabilitation programme in 2015, coupled with the water pressure management measures, it was envisaged that the main leakage rate could be reduced to 15%.

69. Referring to the water tariff structure, Mr WU Chi-wai asked if the Administration would refine it by imposing a higher rate on large-amount users so as to encourage them to conserve water. In reply, PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that there were practical difficulties in further refining the existing progressive water tariff structure as the Administration

did not have information on the number of households/persons using the same water meter and whether high water consumption was due to wastage or the number of users.

VI Regulatory control over lift and escalator safety and related issues

(LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(05) -- Administration's paper on regulatory control of lift and escalator safety and related issues

LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(06) -- Paper on lift and escalator safety prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)666/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 4 March 2013 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

LC Paper No. CB(1)666/12-13(02) -- Letter dated 4 March 2013 from Hon Alice MAK, Hon TANG Ka-piu and Hon KWOK Wai-keung

LC Paper No. CB(1)666/12-13(03) -- Letter dated 4 March 2013 from Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, Hon LEUNG Che-cheung and Hon Christopher CHUNG

LC Paper No. CB(1)666/12-13(04) -- Letter dated 4 March 2013 from Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun)

70. Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) ("PS/DEV(Works)") briefed members on the regulatory control over lift and escalator safety in Hong Kong and related issues, the details of which were given in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)734/12-13(05)). He highlighted the following salient points:

- (a) Since the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) ("the Ordinance") was enacted in April 2012 and put into full operation in December 2012, the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services ("DEMS") had all along fully exercised the power delegated by the Ordinance to strictly enforce the provisions of the Ordinance.

- (b) In the past five years, there were about 160 lift incidents related to equipment failure, of which eight were related to breakage of suspension ropes. As suspension ropes were essential components of a lift, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD") would require more details about the ropes examination including photos of key parts of the ropes in the annual examination report for each lift.
- (c) EMSD would conduct a comprehensive review of the Registered Lift Contractors' ("RCs") Performance Rating Scheme ("CPR Scheme") with a view to rationalizing the Scheme such that the rating indices could more directly and coherently reflect RCs' performance.
- (d) EMSD would accord more inspections to the lifts maintained by RCs with relatively low performance ratings in the CPR Scheme.
- (e) It had come to the attention of the Administration that the lift/escalator trade faced problems of price competition among RCs. To assist responsible persons ("RPs"), being persons who owned a lift/escalator or any other person who had the management or control of a lift/escalator, in assessing the reasonableness of tender prices of lift/escalator maintenance contracts, EMSD was considering the ways to share with RPs price-related information of maintenance works for the lifts belonging to the Government.
- (f) Arrangements were being made to set up the Lift and Escalator Safety Advisory Committee ("LESAC") to canvass views and expertise of various sectors including the lift/escalator industry, property management companies and the community on lift and escalator safety issues, in particular the subcontracting arrangements in the industry.
- (g) In view of the practical difficulties in attracting new blood, EMSD would liaise with universities and the trade to explore possible means to reduce manpower demand with the application of advance technology.

The North Point lift incident

71. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that it had been reported that the lift plunge incident at 480 King's Road, North Point on 2 March 2013 ("the North Point incident") was a result of the breakage of all the four suspension ropes of the lift. He asked whether the Administration had conducted before the incident any inspection on the lift in question and queried why the problem with the ropes could not have been detected earlier.

72. Mr Michael TIEN also queried why the irregularities of the lift in question had not been identified before the incident occurred. He suggested that the Administration should explore the use of new technology to enhance the effectiveness of its on-site checks.

73. Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("DD(RS)/EMSD") replied that under the Ordinance, every lift must undergo maintenance works by an RC at least once a month and an examination by a registered lift engineer ("RE") at least once a year. EMSD would continue to conduct audit inspections on lifts according to a risk-based approach. In conducting an audit inspection, EMSD staff followed an established set of procedures and employed suitable technology and equipment. He said that EMSD had inspected the lift involved in the North Point incident in 2009 and the lift was found in order. He assured members that EMSD would continue to enhance its audit inspection to lifts and escalators and the works of RCs. Moreover, as mentioned by PS/DEV(Works), the Administration would set up LESAC, comprising members drawn from both inside and outside the lift/escalator industry, and would listen to their views and suggestions on improving the existing regulatory regime.

Assistance to responsible persons affected by the suspension of the registration of Shineford Engineering Limited

74. The Panel noted that following the occurrence of the North Point incident, EMSD had completed the preliminary inspection of all the lifts maintained by Shineford Engineering Limited ("Shineford") which was the RC responsible for providing maintenance services for the lift involved in the incident. Some lifts were found not complying with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Lift Works and Escalator Works ("the Code") and hence suspended from services for necessary repair. DEMS, being the Registrar under the Ordinance, was satisfied that Shineford had failed to ensure that lift works were carried out properly and safely and hence exercised the power to suspend the Shineford's registration for six months.

75. Mr CHAN Hak-kan opined that the Administration's decision to suspend the registration of Shineford as an RC could achieve a deterrent effect on other RCs with low performance scores under the CPR Scheme. Noting that Shineford was an RC maintaining the lifts in more than 90 buildings, he enquired about the Administration's measures to assist the owners of these buildings in switching to other RCs.

76. DD(RS)/EMSD replied that immediately after the Registrar had served a written notice of intention to Shineford on 18 March 2013 informing it that the department would suspend its registration as an RC for six months, EMSD immediately informed all RPs whose lifts were being maintained by Shineford about its decision and liaised with the industry, including more than 30 RCs who were willing to offer assistance to the owners of these buildings. Furthermore, the Administration had set up a team of 13 persons and put in place a dedicated enquiry hotline to provide information on service referrals as well as assistance to those affected, including RPs and Shineford's workers. The hotline had so far handled about 40 enquiries. DD(RS)/EMSD advised that the Administration had liaised with various associations, such as the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and the International Association of Elevator Engineers, on offering assistance to affected RPs in preparing tender documents for procuring lift maintenance services. He said that all affected RPs had commenced the relevant tender procedures. RPs of eleven affected buildings had appointed new RCs to take over the maintenance of the lifts.

77. Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed support for the Administration's proposal to share with lift owners price-related information of maintenance works for the lifts belonging to the Government. He considered that the price information, together with the performance scores of RCs under the CPR Scheme, could help lift owners make informed choices in selecting suitable RCs. He enquired how the Administration would implement the proposal. In reply, PS/DEV(Works) said that the price of maintenance services for a lift might vary according to factors such as brand and model of the lift, age and number of storeys of the building served by the lift, etc. With a view to providing comprehensive and useful information to lift owners in a systematic manner, EMSD was studying the most suitable way to present the price-related information.

Inspection of suspension ropes of lifts

78. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that after the media reported that all the four suspension ropes of the lift involved in the North Point incident had been

found broken and rusty, there were public concerns on whether the suspension ropes of the lifts in the buildings where they lived and worked were up to standard. Noting that EMSD had advised in its press release that it would increase the number of audit inspections on RCs who had obtained low performance scores in the CPR Scheme, he enquired whether EMSD had so far found in these inspections any suspension ropes with similar problems.

79. DD(RS)/EMSD replied that following the North Point incident, EMSD had inspected 147 lifts maintained by RCs with relatively low ranking in performance ratings under the CPR Scheme and had found no irregularities. PS/DEV(Works) said that EMSD was reviewing the monitoring mechanism for lift works. One of the measures under consideration was factoring in flexibility and specific targets to the audit check ratio. The lifts maintained by the contractors with poor performance scores would be subject to more frequent audit checks.

80. Mr KWOK Wai-keung asked whether the Administration had obtained the information about the manufacturer of the suspension ropes of the lift involved in the North Point incident so that safety inspection would be taken on other lifts with suspension ropes from the same manufacturer. DD(RS)/EMSD advised that in the examination reports provided by REs for a lift, information about the lift's suspension ropes, including the details of their certificates, was required. Information about the suspension ropes of the lift involved in the North Point incident was being collected as part of the evidence for the investigation of the incident. He remarked that as the investigation was in progress, he could not disclose further details of any information that was being examined in relation to the lift.

Monitoring of lift maintenance works

81. The Deputy Chairman said that it was important for the Administration to review the existing monitoring mechanism over the repair and maintenance works for lifts. In particular, it should consider whether the risk-based approach adopted for audit inspections of lifts was effective in preventing the occurrence of lift incidents. He suggested that if an inspection by EMSD indicated that certain equipment or machinery of a lift should be replaced after a certain period, the department should schedule a follow-up check on-site to ascertain that the replacement had actually been made. The Administration noted the Deputy Chairman's view.

82. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the basis on which sampling of lifts for audit inspections was made. He cautioned that unless there were

measures with punitive and deterrent effects to prohibit an RC from giving inaccurate information to EMSD about the lifts that it maintained, the Administration should not determine the frequency of inspections on the works of an RC based merely on the information that it provided.

83. Miss Alice MAK said that it had come to her attention that an RC with a performance rating slightly higher than that of Shineford had received warning letters issued by EMSD while Shineford had not received one so far. She pointed out that as this RC was currently maintaining more than 700 lifts, its quality of service would have an impact on the safety of quite a large number of people. Miss MAK was concerned whether the Administration would conduct more inspections on RCs which did not have good performance records and was yet maintaining a large number of lifts.

84. DD(RS)/EMSD advised that EMSD had all along adopted a risk-based approach to conducting audit inspections on the lift maintenance works done by RCs to identify any non-compliance with the requirements of the Ordinance. Under this approach, lifts were selected for inspections taking into account not only the information provided by RCs but also the assessed risks in respect of years of service of the lift, complaints, incidents and past performance of RCs. On average, more than 9 000 audit inspections were conducted by EMSD each year. RCs which maintained more lifts would normally be subject to more inspections. He assured members that EMSD would ensure the effective use of the resources allocated to the department and continue to enhance the existing inspection system.

85. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired whether the Administration had conducted an assessment of the correlation between the number of warning letters issued by EMSD to an RC and the number of incidents involving the lifts/escalators maintained by the RC. He requested the Administration to provide the details about the relevant assessment, if any, including the conclusions drawn from it. With respect to the Administration's advice that EMSD had conducted about 9 000 audit inspections on lifts and escalators annually, Mr LEUNG asked the Administration to provide the details about the number of EMSD staff members required to conduct an inspection; the number of inspections conducted by a team daily; and the average time taken by a team to complete an inspection. He further requested the Administration to provide the number of registered lift/escalator contractors/subcontractors who had been EMSD staff members responsible for the work on lift and escalator safety, and the number of RCs who received subcontracted works from their previous employers who were also RCs.

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Reporting of non-compliances

86. The Panel noted that the Code required that certain work items should be carried out by at least two lift workers working together. Mr TANG Ka-piu and Mr KWOK Wai-keung pointed out that according to the trade associations and some lift workers, many RCs had not met the requirement. One common practice in the industry was that while a working team might normally comprise two members, one of the two would be required to stop the work in hand to attend to an emergency case, leaving only one worker to continue the repair or maintenance works for a lift. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that in general workers would not report non-compliances of their employers to EMSD out of the fear that they would be sacked. He called on the Administration to work out a better mechanism to detect the malpractices in the industry.

87. In response, PS/DEV(Works) advised that consideration was being given by the Administration to conduct a survey, not requiring the respondents to identify themselves, in the industry with a view to collecting accurate information about the existing trade practices. On whether there was any connection between the shortage of manpower in the industry and the non-compliances pointed out by Mr TANG and Mr KWOK, he advised that the requirement under the Code for certain work items to be carried out by at least two lift workers should not cause much pressure on the overall manpower demand in the industry, given that there were about 5 000 lift/escalator workers, each working 250 days annually and carrying out repair and maintenance works for four lifts/escalators daily. PS/DEV(Works) remarked that he had recently met registered lift/escalator contractors and trade associations to gain more understanding of the trade. He assured members that the Administration would keep a closer watch on the operation of the industry through working with LESAC.

88. Dr Kenneth CHAN cast doubt on whether the risk-based approach could effectively identify and deter the non-compliances committed by RCs. He held the view that under the existing monitoring system, unscrupulous RCs were able to minimize the chance of being selected for audit inspection if they so wished. He opined that the Administration should put in place a reporting mechanism for lift/escalator workers to make anonymous complaints against the non-compliances or malpractice committed by RCs, and also for RPs to report the unsatisfactory services of RCs. EMSD should draw reference from the information collected under this mechanism to increase the frequency of audit inspections on the works of an RC, adjust its CPR performance scores and, if warranted, instituted investigation.

89. PS/DEV(Works) replied that the number of complaints lodged against an RC was one of the risk elements to determine the frequency of inspection on the works of the RC. Under the Ordinance, lift/escalator practitioners were required to make certain notifications to DEMS. The Administration would consider whether the requirements should be further enhanced in light of members' suggestions. He supplemented that since the current registration system for lift workers introduced under the Ordinance had replaced the employment-tied competent worker arrangement, the cases in which lift workers refrained from reporting the non-compliances committed by their employers should become uncommon.

Review of the Registered Lift Contractors' Performance Rating Scheme

90. The Deputy Chairman and Dr Kenneth CHAN supported that the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the CPR Scheme to make it meaningful to RPs. The Deputy Chairman cast doubt on whether RPs could obtain useful information about the performance of an RC from its performance rating under the Scheme. PS/DEV(Works) acknowledged the need to critically review the CPR Scheme. He advised that EMSD would examine the Scheme with a view to rationalizing it to the effect that the information given to the public would be easy to understand.

91. In response to Mr KWOK Wai-keung's enquiry on whether EMSD would introduce a change to the existing CPR Scheme such that the performance monitoring ("PM") points of an RC would be deducted if it did not comply with the requirement on the minimum number of lift workers to carry out specified work items, PS/DEV(Works) explained that the CPR Scheme aimed at providing information to the general public by using a point-deduction system to reflect the overall performance of RCs. The Scheme was an administrative measure to supplement the legislation enforcement works. EMSD would take appropriate enforcement action against non-compliances of RCs, irrespective of whether PM points were deducted. DD(RS)/EMSD added that DEMS would take legal or disciplinary action against an RC who had breached the statutory requirements. He assured members that EMSD would review the existing CPR Scheme having regard to the views and suggestions of the industry and relevant stakeholders.

Manpower in the lift/escalator industry

92. Mr TANG Ka-piu and Miss Alice MAK stressed the importance to improve the working conditions and salaries of lift/escalator workers in addressing the manpower shortage problem in the industry. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that according to an employment contract between one of the five major RCs in Hong Kong and a worker who newly joined the lift trade, the wage of the latter was \$212 a day or \$26.5 per hour, which was lower than the statutory minimum wage to be implemented soon. Moreover, it was a general practice of RCs to arrange lift workers to work overtime on Sunday and at late night so that workers' monthly salaries would meet the minimum wage requirement. Taking into consideration that the remuneration for lift/escalator workers was not high enough to attract new entrants to the trade and the workload of a worker had been inflating with the increasing number of storeys of new buildings, he was concerned that the shortage of manpower would persist in the industry, making lift safety a continuous public concern.

93. PS/DEV(Works) admitted that the current wage level of lift/escalator workers was low. He advised that the subject matters to be studied by LESAC would include the structural problems in the industry relating to remuneration packages, manpower supply and work arrangements. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's suggestion that members of LESAC should include the representative from the Hong Kong General Union of Lift and Escalator Employees, PS/DEV(Works) assured members that relevant stakeholders including representatives of employees' associations would be invited to join LESAC.

94. In response to Miss Alice MAK's concern on how the Administration would ensure that the quality of lift works carried out by workers would not be affected by the unreasonable workload imposed on them, DD(RS)/EMSD said that EMSD required RCs to submit relevant workforce information regularly to enable the department to assess whether the contractor had maintained a reasonable level of workforce. Based on the information submitted, investigation might be conducted by EMSD on RCs who were suspected to be under-staffed.

95. Mr KWOK Wai-keung considered that in assessing whether an RC had maintained sufficient workforce to carry out lift maintenance works, the Administration should take into account the number of storeys of the buildings to which the RC provided maintenance services, as the number of storeys made a difference on the workload. PS/DEV(Works) advised that the number of storeys of a building was considered by EMSD as one of the factors affecting the amount of lift works to be handled by the workforce maintained by an RC. To facilitate members to have a better picture of the

Admin ratio between the size of workforce and the number of lifts maintained by each RC, Mr KWOK requested the Administration to provide a list showing the number of lifts maintained by each RC together with the number of personnel and their respective types maintained by the contractor for carrying out lift works.

Registration of lift workers

96. In response to Mr Michael TIEN's concern on whether the existing registration requirements for practitioners engaged in lift works were adequate to ensure satisfactory workmanship, DD(RS)/EMSD stated that the requirements for registration as a registered lift worker under the Ordinance were that the worker either had not less than 8 years' relevant working experience and had passed a recognized trade test, or had met the stipulated academic or apprenticeship requirement and had not less than 4 years' relevant working experience.

Duties of responsible persons

97. The Panel noted that the RP for a lift had the duties under the Ordinance to ensure that the lift and all its associated equipment or machinery were kept in a proper state of repair and in a safe working order. Mr KWOK Wai-keung asked about the liabilities of a lift owner for any non-compliances with regulatory requirements where the owner had conferred on a property management company the management or control of the lift. DD(RS)/EMSD said that apart from the lift owner, any other person who had the management or control of the lift, including the property management company, was regarded as the RP for the lift and should perform the relevant duties of RP as stipulated in the Ordinance and in accordance with the functions conferred on him/her by the owner.

98. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether RPs were provided with any training or guidelines on how to monitor lift maintenance works. DD(RS)/EMSD replied that EMSD had organized over 30 seminars from 2012 up to February 2013 for introducing the Ordinance to RPs and to raise their awareness of the statutory requirements. The seminars had been attended by more than 3 000 people including lift/escalator owners and property management personnel. EMSD would consider organizing similar seminars in future and would continue to strengthen the communication with RPs as well as the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies.

VII Any other business

99. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:15 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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