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**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of  
the West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 25 February 2013**

**Development Plan of the West Kowloon Cultural District**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the Development Plan ("DP") of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and highlights the main views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fourth Legislative Council ("the former Joint Subcommittee") on the subject.

**Background**

2. By virtue of section 21(1) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) ("WKCDAO"), the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") is responsible for preparing a DP for WKCD, the main purpose of which is to lay out the WKCD area and set apart the land for various arts and cultural facilities; for other land uses such as commercial, hotel, retail and public open spaces; and for internal infrastructural projects. Under sections 21(3) and (4) of WKCDAO, in preparing DP, WKCDA has to consult the public and the Secretary for Home Affairs who may impose such requirements or conditions as he thinks necessary or expedient for the development of WKCD. In this connection, WKCDA conducted a three-stage Public Engagement ("PE") exercise between October 2009 and October 2011 for its preparation of DP.

3. Stage 1 PE exercise sought to gauge the community's expectation on the planning of WKCD, and Stage 2 PE exercise was to collect public's views on the three proposed Conceptual Plan Options ("CPO")<sup>1</sup> for WKCD. In

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<sup>1</sup> The three proposed CPOs were "City Park" designed by F+P, "Cultural Connect: Key to Sustained

March 2011, the Board of WKCD selected "City Park" designed by Foster + Partners ("F+P") as the preferred CPO for the development of WKCD. Based on the preferred CPO, WKCD prepared a detailed DP for consultation in Stage 3 PE exercise conducted from September to October 2011. According to WKCD, it had taken note of the public preferences on individual features of the other two CPOs as reflected in Stage 2 PE exercise and had incorporated those technically feasible and financially viable features into DP with due regard to the integrity of the preferred CPO.

4. The former Joint Subcommittee received a briefing from the Administration and WKCD on the proposed DP at its meeting on 29 November 2011. Members noted the key features of the proposed DP and the proposed phasing plan for WKCD as detailed in **Appendices I and II** respectively. Members were advised that in drawing up the proposed phasing plan, WKCD had taken into consideration public preference for organic growth, aspirations expressed by arts and cultural stakeholders during the PE exercises, site availability, clustering effect to create vibrancy, financial implications and accessibility to and from surrounding areas.

5. WKCD finalized the proposed DP and submitted it to the Town Planning Board ("TPB") for consideration on 30 December 2011. According to WKCD, it had given due regard to the public views and suggestions received during Stage 3 PE exercise and minor refinements to DP had been made before its submission to TPB.

### **Members' concerns**

6. The main concerns raised by members of the former Joint Subcommittee on the proposed DP at the meeting on 29 November 2011 are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### Phasing of facilities

7. Concern was expressed about whether WKCD had obtained support from the local arts community for the proposed DP. Members were advised that the Administration and WKCD had all along maintained communication with arts groups irrespective of their size and scale. WKCD had taken into consideration their views and aspirations in deciding the phasing of the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD. The Administration and WKCD would continue to discuss with the arts community the future mode of operation of such facilities and the artistic programming.

8. Some members considered that the arts and cultural facilities to be built in Phase 1 of WKCD, such as Arts Pavilion, the Park and Blackboxes, would not be distinct from those currently available outside WKCD. They also noted that some costly landmark facilities, such as M+ and Great Theatre, would not be completed until after 2017. They were concerned whether this phasing arrangement was related to WKCDA's financial consideration and whether Phase 1 of WKCD from 2012 to 2017 would be attractive enough to audience. WKCDA stressed that WKCD was a big site that had to be developed phase by phase. The construction of some venues, such as M+, would take time, given their scale. The timetables for some other venues, such as the Mega Performance Venue and Exhibition Centre, were subject to alternative funding options separate from the \$21.6 billion upfront endowment.

9. Some members expressed disappointment at the slow progress of the WKCD project and questioned whether the slow progress of the project was owing to insufficient funding or arts talents. The Administration and WKCDA were called on to complete the project as soon as possible. As explained by WKCDA, the implementation timetable of the WKCD project was not a question of money. Given the scale and complexity of the WKCD project and the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL") being built under part of the WKCD site, WKCDA needed to ensure that there was sufficient time for TPB to consider DP.

#### Accessibility and connectivity

10. Members expressed concern about the pedestrian and vehicular accessibility to WKCD and its connectivity with the surrounding areas. There was a view that visitors should be encouraged to use public transport to visit WKCD to avoid adding pressure on the already heavy traffic in areas such as Tsim Sha Tsui and Yau Ma Tei. Noting that part of the underground space of WKCD was currently occupied by the works of the Hong Kong Section of XRL and the vehicle traffic would mainly be below ground level of the WKCD site, members were also concerned about whether WKCD would have sufficient underground space for underground traffic and the underground air quality in WKCD.

11. According to WKCDA, there would be efficient vehicular and pedestrian links within WKCD and between WKCD and its neighbouring areas, such as at-grade pedestrian zones, footbridges and pedestrian subways. To provide a green environment in WKCD, WKCDA would encourage visitors to use public transport to visit WKCD. As regards the number of parking spaces in WKCD, it was expected that some 2 000 parking spaces would be available. WKCDA was considering the feasibility of sharing the parking facilities with users in the nearby residential and commercial areas. WKCDA also assured

members that it would attach importance to the underground air quality of WKCD and would encourage the use of electric and eco-friendly cars.

#### Space for literary activities

12. Another concern was raised about whether a permanent venue in WKCD would be provided to the literary community. There was a view that the promotion of literary activities would enhance the cultural literacy of the community, which would in turn help develop a wider audience base for WKCD. It was also suggested that cluster of facilities for literary and publishing activities in WKCD would create a synergy effect on the promotion of the arts and culture.

13. WKCDA advised that subject to the requirements of the literary community, a site would be reserved for literary activities. WKCDA was considering using a number of other venues for specific literary activities rather than isolating them in just one literary space.

#### Hotel, office and residential ("HOR") developments

14. Concern was expressed about whether WKCDA would have control over the disposal of the sites for HOR developments in WKCD. Members were advised that the disposal of such sites was under the Government's control. The Government would take into account the timetable for phased completion of the facilities in WKCD in deciding its land disposal programme, given that a key feature of F+P's City Park was the balanced mix of land uses integrating arts and cultural venues with other facilities in WKCD. The Home Affairs Bureau would continue to communicate closely with the Lands Department on the matter.

#### Financial arrangements

15. Noting from the proposed DP that the Mega Performance Venue, Exhibition Centre and Musical Theatre were subject to alternative funding options, members had sought clarification on whether a Build-Operate-Transfer ("BOT") mode would be adopted for such facilities. Members pointed out that the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development formed in the Third Legislative Council ("LegCo") considered BOT inappropriate for the WKCD development, as WKCDA could neither exercise effective monitoring over the arts and cultural programmes in WKCD nor put in place an artistic accountability system.

16. WKCDA clarified that the Board of WKCDA did not have any specific discussion on BOT. It would look into the issue of alternative funding options and revert to LegCo on the issue. WKCDA also stressed that the exercise of

artistic control would be its paramount consideration in its discussions about funding options.

### **Latest development**

17. The draft WKCD DP was gazetted under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) on 30 March 2012 for public inspection. The Chief Executive-in-Council approved the draft WKCD DP on 8 January 2013. A LegCo Brief on the Approved WKCD DP No. S/K20/WKCD/2 was issued on 17 January 2013. Following completion of the statutory planning process, WKCD would proceed with the construction stage of WKCD.

18. The Administration and WKCD will brief the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project on the approved DP at the meeting on 25 February 2013.

### **Relevant papers**

19. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks at LegCo's website is in **Appendix III**.

### **Key features of the proposed Development Plan ("DP") of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD")**

#### **Statutory Planning**

The proposed DP strictly complies with the statutory requirements as stipulated in the South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan No. S/K20/26. The key planning parameters include a maximum plot ratio of 1.81, provision of not less than 23 hectares of public open space (including 3 hectares of piazza areas and a waterfront promenade of not less than 20 metres in width), residential development of not more than 20% of total plot ratio, as well as building height restrictions of 50, 70 and 100 metres PD (principal datum) under 3 sub-zones.

#### **Integration of Facilities**

Taking into account stakeholders' views on the artistic positioning and priority of the core arts and cultural facilities, these facilities are suitably clustered in WKCD to facilitate the exchange and synergy among different art forms. WKCD will also host a rich mix of retail-dining-entertainment facilities and hotel, office and residential developments, which will be integrated with the arts and cultural facilities. Integration of land uses along both the vertical and horizontal dimensions would increase people flow and create vibrancy in WKCD during the day and night, while improving visitors' experience with diverse activities.

#### **The Great Park**

WKCD will provide 23 hectares of public open space which will bring Hong Kong's countryside to the urban centre for public enjoyment. Together with arts pavilions scattered in the Great Park, outdoor performances and artwork displays will add an artistic touch to the Great Park fronting the world-renowned Victoria Harbour. There will also be water features and spaces for cycling, running and viewing the Victoria Harbour and magnificent skyline. Traffic noise from the Western Harbour Crossing will be screened by the proposed u-shape hotel along the entrance of the tunnel.

#### **Underground Traffic Network**

Traffic and car parks in WKCD will be put in an integrated basement underground, which frees up ground floor space of the WKCD site for public enjoyment and cultural use. This arrangement also allows direct connections among major performing arts venues and the corresponding loading/unloading facilities at stage level, which are considered essential in operation terms. Pollution could be substantially reduced as vehicle emissions will be contained

at the basement level with effective ventilation.

## **Connectivity**

Connected to the city. A web of at grade connections, footbridges and subways are proposed to link WKCD with Jordon and Tsim Sha Tsui areas to enhance the connection with the neighbourhood. Public transport interchanges/laybys, as well as at grade connections, footbridges and subways are also proposed to link WKCD with the MTR Kowloon Station and Austin Station, connecting WKCD with other parts of Hong Kong.

Connected to other districts and beyond. With its strategic location, WKCD will serve as a natural gateway for visitors from the Mainland and overseas arriving via the Express Rail Link, Airport Express, and cross-boundary ferry and coach. Direct pedestrian linkages are proposed to connect WKCD to these public transport nodes.

Connected to the Harbour. A 20m wide waterfront promenade is proposed to enhance connectivity to the harbourfront. Two piers and a floating arts pontoon are proposed, the provision of which is subject to technical feasibility and compliance with the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531).

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is one of the planning design principles of WKCD. Sustainable planning and design are adopted to turn WKCD into a social, economic and environmentally dynamic model for Hong Kong and the region and to show our commitment to contribute to a sustainable future for our future generations. Subject to financial and technical feasibility, district-wide green initiatives, such as a district cooling system, are proposed to reduce waste, energy consumption and operational costs and to maximize WKCD's longevity and social impact.

## **Proposed Other Arts and Cultural Facilities**

A number of Other Arts and Cultural Facilities have been proposed to support the arts and cultural venues in WKCD. In response to the community's demand, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") has proposed additional education facilities in the DP. In the Centre for Contemporary Performance, Music Centre and Xiqu Centre, there will be arts education facilities for enhancing students' arts appreciation capability and forging close collaboration with schools and institutions. There will also be creative learning spaces integrated with various arts and cultural facilities.

There will also be Resident Company Centres to provide administration and rehearsal spaces for the art groups. The Arts Pavilions are flexible structures which will provide opportunities to present different forms of art in intimate and informal settings. The Arts and Craft studio will allow visual artists to produce art works in the district and Literary Arts Space will help the development of literary arts by facilitating literary arts activities and programmes.

### **Facilities for Rehearsals by Artists and Other Support Purposes**

The stakeholders have been engaged on an on-going basis when developing the Schedules of Accommodation of the arts and cultural facilities and WKCDA will continue to do so in the coming design stage of individual venues. All performing arts venues will have rehearsal spaces and artist support spaces of international standard. The rehearsal spaces can also be used for education and training.

*Source: Information extracted from the Administration's paper entitled "Proposed Development Plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District and Related Matters" (LC Paper No. CB(2)385/11-12(05))*



**Proposed Timetable for WKCD Facilities Completion**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Target Completion Year</b>	<b>Key Facilities and Venues</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	Arts Pavilion
		Great Park (Early portion of the Park)
	<b>2015-2017</b>	Xiqu Centre (Main Theatre, Tea House and Arts Education Facility)
		Free Space (with Music Box) and Outdoor Theatre
		Centre for Contemporary Performance (3 Blackboxes and Arts Education Facility)
	<b>2017-2020</b>	M+ (Phase I)
		Lyric Theatre
		Medium Theatre I
		Music Centre (Concert Hall, Recital Hall and Arts Education Facility)
		Mega Performance Venue **
Exhibition Centre **		
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Beyond 2020</b>	Musical Theatre **
		M+ (Phase II)
		Great Theatre
		Medium Theatre II
		Xiqu Small Theatre

\*\* Subject to alternative funding options.

Source : Information extracted from the Administration's paper entitled "Proposed Development Plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District and Related Matters" (LC Paper No. CB(2)385/11-12(05))

**Relevant papers on  
Development Plan of the West Kowloon Cultural District**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	13.1.2009 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)612/08-09(01)</a>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	19.6.2009 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1869/08-09(01)</a>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	16.4.2010 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1283/09-10(02)</a>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	14.1.2011 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)795/10-11(02)</a>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.3.2011 (Item II)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)1330/10-11(04)</a>
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	29.11.2011 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">CB(2)385/11-12(05)</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>