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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 28 March 2014**

**Artistic characteristic and partnership framework of performing arts
venues in the West Kowloon Cultural District**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns of members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on issues relating to the artistic characteristic and partnership framework of performing arts ("PA") venues in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

Background

2. At its meeting on 3 July 2013, the Joint Subcommittee was advised that in view of the challenge presented by project cost escalation, the Administration and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") would adopt a pragmatic approach to implement the WKCD project and facilities would be delivered in three batches with completion starting from 2015. The first batch of PA venues expected to be delivered include Xiqu Centre, Freespace (a blackbox and an outdoor stage in the form of an acoustic shell) and one modular performance venue. The second batch of PA venues to be delivered will be those located above the respective west and east ends of the integrated basement which have the opportunity to be constructed ahead of the remaining part of the integrated basement, including Lyric Theatre, Medium Theatre I and Centre for Contemporary Performance. The third batch will be the remaining venues which can only be built after the completion of the integrated basement, estimated to be around 2020.

3. According to WKCDA, to complement the hardware development of WKCD, it is in the course of developing the artistic vision of individual PA venues through continuous engagement with the community. WKCDA will review and make reference to other practices and experiences, and recommend suitable modes of governance and business models for each PA facility that actively supports its artistic vision. Given that different partnership models and residency schemes will be essential to the operation of individual venues and the development of a vibrant cultural district, WKCDA has also been in direct discussion with local arts groups for the development of a partner's framework for individual PA venues in WKCD.

Members' views

4. The artistic characteristic and partnership framework of PA venues in WKCD had not been specifically discussed by the Joint Subcommittee or the former Joint Subcommittee formed in the Fourth Legislative Council ("LegCo"). Nevertheless, members of the Joint Subcommittee and the former Joint Subcommittee had expressed views on issues relating to the management and programming of PA venues in WKCD at various meetings in the context of discussing the development of cultural software, the communication and cooperation between WKCDA and the arts community and the progress of the WKCD development. Members' views are highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs.

Coordination between the Administration and WKCDA in the management and development of performance venues

5. Members had expressed concern about the delineation of responsibility between the Administration and WKCDA in the management of performance venues in Hong Kong. Members had called for closer collaboration between the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") and WKCDA to ensure the re-alignment of the existing public arts and cultural facilities to complement the WKCD project.

6. The Administration advised that given HAB's role in overseeing arts and cultural policy to complement the WKCD project, the Administration was mindful of the need to ensure effective co-ordination between HAB and WKCDA. In the view of the Administration and WKCDA, the relationship between the existing arts and cultural venues in Hong Kong and the new venues to be built in WKCD was complementary rather than competitive, and the new arts and cultural facilities in WKCD should help address the venue shortage

problem currently encountered by the arts and cultural sector. The Administration was committed to building up a solid audience base to complement the expanded capacity of performance venues brought about by the WKCD development.

7. Noting the Administration's plan to develop a new cultural centre in Kwun Tong, members enquired about the coordination between the Administration and WKCDA in the development of new PA venues. The Administration advised that in the light of the long-standing request of the local community for a new performance venue in Kowloon East, which was currently served by Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre only, the Administration planned to seek funding to develop a Cross District Community Cultural Centre ("CDCCC") in Kowloon East. As the proposed CDCCC would be located in Kowloon East and was planned to cater mainly for the needs of the residents in the districts, there would be no direct competition between CDCCC in Kowloon East and the future PA venues in WKCD. WKCDA had also advised that it would maintain liaison with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") on the development of the proposed CDCCC in Kowloon East.

Partnership with arts groups

8. Noting the concern of local arts groups/artists on whether they could access the future PA venues in WKCD and how such venues would be managed, members sought information on WKCDA's strategy for venue management, including whether it would adopt the artistic accountability system and outsource the management of the PA venues in WKCD.

9. According to the Administration, discussions had been initiated among WKCDA, LCSD and different PA groups on issues relating to the future use and management of the PA venues in WKCD, including the feasibility of implementing a partnership framework at individual venues in WKCD, with a view to putting in place appropriate arrangements for such venues before their scheduled completion in phases. WKCDA would maintain dialogue with the PA community and explore with them potential cooperation opportunities to foster the organic growth of WKCD and local arts community at large.

Cultural programming

10. Members considered that the success of WKCD would, to a large extent, hinge on its cultural programming, and raised concern about WKCDA's strategy for programming. They were worried that WKCDA would merely support the production of profitable programmes to cope with its financial pressure or act as an operator to lease venues to artists. According to WKCDA, the Executive Director, Performing Arts of WKCDA had been heavily involved in the

discussion with artists and arts organizations on the programming for WKCD. To make the WKCD project work, WKCDA should play a significant role in the development of an artistic policy and programming. WKCDA stressed that its role was not to create a central command which would produce all programmes but to collect and reflect the aspirations of the arts community.

Latest Development

11. The Administration and WKCDA will brief the Joint Subcommittee on the artistic characteristic and partnership framework of the PA venues in WKCD at the meeting on 28 March 2014.

Relevant papers

12. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo Website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 March 2014

Appendix

Relevant papers on Artistic characteristic and partnership framework of performing arts venues in the West Kowloon Cultural District

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fourth Legislative Council	16.4.2010 Item II(b)	Agenda Minutes
	16.5.2011 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	26.8.2011 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	27.6.2012 Item I	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	10.6.2013 Item III & IV	Agenda Minutes
	29.11.2013 Item III	Agenda Minutes

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