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

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 24 November 2014**

**Hardware development
in the West Kowloon Cultural District**

PURPOSE

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns raised by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on issues relating to the hardware development in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD").

BACKGROUND

2. WKCD is planned to be developed by means of a Development Plan ("DP") prepared by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") under section 21 of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601). In March 2011, WKCDA selected the "City Park" conceptual plan designed by Foster + Partners ("F+P") as the preferred option for developing into a DP for WKCD. The WKCD DP was approved by the Chief Executive in Council in January 2013.

3. At its meeting on 3 July 2013, the Joint Subcommittee was advised that WKCDA would adopt a pragmatic approach to implement the WKCD project along the following principles –

- (a) rigorous cost containment of individual facilities to a level as close to the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on the Core

Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District as possible;

- (b) emphasis on content rather than form of these facilities; and
- (c) early delivery of the Park as well as some arts and cultural facilities for public enjoyment.

4. Under the latest implementation approach adopted by WKCDA, the facilities in WKCD will be delivered in three batches, as indicated in **Appendix I**. The first batch of facilities to be delivered include the Xiqu Centre, M+, the Park (including the Arts Pavilion) and Freespace (including an Outdoor Stage and a Black Box), which are planned for completion between 2015 and the first half of 2018.

MEMBERS' CONCERNS

5. Issues relating to the progress of hardware development in WKCD were discussed at various meetings of the Joint Subcommittee between February 2013 and July 2014. Members' major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Development of Batch 1 facilities

Xiqu Centre

Cost containment measures

6. In view of the significant escalation in the estimated cost of the Xiqu Centre, members generally considered that WKCDA should make its best endeavour to contain the construction costs of individual facilities of WKCD without compromising the overall quality and functions of the facilities. Members also urged the Administration to enhance its role in monitoring the expenditure of the WKCD project.

7. The Administration advised that it was fully aware of its monitoring role and would request WKCDA to make every effort to adhere to the target budget of \$2.7 billion for Xiqu Centre (Phase 1) and, where practicable, seek to further reduce the project cost. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 29 November 2013, members were advised that rigorous value engineering

exercises were conducted with the aim of producing a cost-effective design and reducing the total project budget by up to \$100 million. The main areas of savings were attributable to design optimization in structure and façade, efficiency in floor space usage, reduction in the floor area of the retail, dining and entertainment ("RDE") facilities and optimization of the basement car parking arrangement.

8. Some members questioned whether the reduction of the RDE spaces in Xiqu Centre sought mainly to alleviate the over-budget situation of the project. Concern was also expressed that the reduction of RDE area in Xiqu Centre would have the effect of reducing the rental proceeds thus generated, which was a major source of recurrent income for WKCD to meet the operating costs of facilities in WKCD.

9. WKCD clarified that according to a consultancy study, the RDE spaces on the upper floors of Xiqu Centre were generally of less value than those on the ground floor given the lower pedestrian volumes. The proposed reduction of the floor area of RDE facilities in Xiqu Centre sought only to remove the less efficient RDE spaces on the upper floors so as to enhance the overall efficiency of the provision of such spaces in Xiqu Centre.

Design and facilities of Xiqu Centre

10. The Joint Subcommittee was last briefed by WKCD and the design consultant on the progress of the Xiqu Centre building project at its meeting on 28 March 2014. According to the information provided by the Administration in May 2014, the main contract works of Xiqu Centre was scheduled to commence in October 2014, with target completion in 2016/17.

11. In response to Hon Christopher CHUNG's view that the architectural design of Xiqu Centre appeared to be lacking in traditional Xiqu elements, WKCD advised that the current design of Xiqu Centre, including that of the facilities to be provided therein, was the outcome of extensive consultation with the local xiqu community. Eminent representatives of the xiqu community had been engaged as members of the Jury Panel for the Xiqu Centre Design Competition, and the local xiqu community had specifically requested that a more modern design should be adopted for Xiqu Centre so as to enhance the appeal of xiqu to the younger generation. In the view of the design architect appointed by WKCD, while the building of Xiqu Centre would provide a background for the expression of Xiqu, it would be for the Artistic Director and

the users of Xiqu Centre to manifest the true spirit of Xiqu and to bring the building to life after its opening.

12. Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan enquired whether WKCDA would consider increasing the seating capacity of the Main Theatre of Xiqu Centre, which was currently set at 1 100. WKCDA was also called on to make available appropriate set-ups in the Main Theatre and other theatres of Xiqu Centre to achieve the best acoustic effects. According to WKCDA, the seating capacity of the Main Theatre was proposed with reference to that of other Cantonese opera performance venues in Hong Kong (e.g. the Sunbeam Theatre), and was considered ideal by the local Xiqu community. The Main Theatre was designed specifically for the staging of Xiqu performances, where performers would be able to perform without microphones and speakers. The curved structures in the theatre would allow the sound to come through and be scattered and dispersed naturally.

13. Dr Helena WONG suggested that a multi-media library be set up to facilitate access to collections of Xiqu performances and Xiqu-related educational software by students and members of the public. WKCDA advised that while it had no plans to set up a new Xiqu archive, it had been in discussion with various Xiqu groups, educational institutes and museums in Hong Kong to explore the possibility of loaning their Xiqu-related information and records for display at exhibitions and educational activities to be held in Xiqu Centre.

14. In response to members' view that appropriate barrier-free facilities should be provided in Xiqu Centre to meet the needs of persons with a disability and the elderly, WKCDA advised that as it was expected that Xiqu Centre would appeal to elderly people in particular, the building had been designed with a focus on facilitating universal access and escalators, lifts, as well as staircases and ramps with handrails would be provided to satisfy all public access requirements.

M+

Construction cost

15. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 3 July 2013, members noted that Herzog & de Meuron + TFP Farrells ("HdM") had been selected as the winning design team of the M+ Design Competition, the conceptual design of which came with the lowest estimated construction cost at \$5,413 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices. Members were also advised that WKCDA

had already started rigorous negotiations with HdM to further contain the cost to be incurred by WKCD to within a target budget of \$5 billion (MOD prices) inclusive of fees. WKCD assured members that it would attach importance to cost control and endeavour to ensure value for money in implementing the M+ project.

16. When the Joint Subcommittee was updated on the development of M+ at its meeting on 23 July 2014, members were advised that as the Finance Committee had not been able to consider the funding application of the advance public infrastructure works in the M+ portion of the integrated basement as scheduled for July 2014, it was anticipated that the completion date for M+ would be revised from end 2017 to the first half of 2018. In response to some members' concern that the deferred completion date would lead to an increase in the construction cost of M+, WKCD advised that it would continue to closely monitor the construction cost and progress of the funding application to be submitted in the 2014-2015 legislative session.

Design and facilities of M+

17. Some members were of the view that the architectural design of M+ was too simple and lacked character. WKCD was requested to further explain the concept and characteristics of, as well as meaning to be conveyed by, the architectural design of M+. WKCD was also requested to provide more information on the details of such design, including the material(s) and colour(s) to be used for the external walls of the museum building, which featured a semi-transparent appearance.

18. WKCD pointed out that the current architectural design of M+ was selected unanimously by the Jury Panel of the M+ Design Competition as the best design reflecting the core values of M+. The Jury Panel considered that it had the merits of a memorable design that drew its raw power from simplicity and clarity of its "parti", and was the most cost effective amongst all the submitted designs for the competition. It comprised four main parts: (i) the Found Space which embraced the constraint of the Airport Express tunnels that run beneath the WKCD site and provided a new space for large-scale installations; (ii) the platform above the Found Space which was like a central public plaza having multiple entrances on multiple levels providing direct access to the entire exhibition area, to the park and other WKCD facilities; (iii) the horizontal slab above the central plaza which offered a diversity of exhibition rooms and galleries; and (iv) the vertical building which housed different facilities including education facilities, curatorial centre, research centre as well as RDE facilities. Unlike most other conventional museums where the conservation and storage facilities were hidden from the public, M+ would be a museum where visitors could see part of the conservation process

through the facilities.

19. WKCDA further explained that due to the simplicity and transparency of the design, the M+ Building would be a building that on the one hand could take its location and work well with the backdrop of the International Commerce Centre Complex, and on the other hand comprised a slim, semi-transparent vertical plane rising atop a horizontal slab which fused into the shape of an upside down T to create an iconic presence for M+ and Hong Kong. The simple design and generous access of the building also conveyed the message that M+ was a place where the public could interact with the art, design and other aspects of visual culture in a friendly and welcoming ambience.

20. Members also sought information on whether WKCDA had any plans to make use of the external walls of M+ as a display screen for promotion or other purposes. WKCDA advised that given that M+ was a museum of visual culture, consideration would be given during the design process to whether and how the museum building itself could be used as a screen for display of images of artistic works or dissemination of other information as appropriate, having regard to the fundamental purpose of the building as a museum, practice of other buildings in the vicinity and other relevant factors.

21. Hon Cyd HO considered that as compared with the architectural design of the exterior of the building, the interior design of the museum was even more important as it should allow flexibility for the staging of different types of exhibitions and enable audience to have an interactive experience in viewing the exhibitions. She called on WKCDA to brief the Joint Subcommittee on the interior design of M+ as soon as practicable.

22. In response to members' enquiry on the amount of exhibition space in M+, WKCDA advised that the area designated for display galleries was between one-fourth to one-third of the total gross floor area of M+, which would be roughly 15 000 square metres. Apart from display galleries, artworks and design and architecture installations would also be displayed in the general public spaces of M+.

The Park

Alternative development approach

23. At the meeting of Joint Subcommittee on 3 July 2013, members were advised of WKCDA's plan to turn the fully landscaped Park envisaged in F+P's "City Park" conceptual plan into quality open space with a simple and functional design, to facilitate early delivery of the Park and related facilities in

a cost effective manner. The Administration and WKCD assured members that under the proposed alternative development approach, the facilities to be accommodated in the Park would remain largely the same as those proposed in the original scope of the Park development on the basis of F+P's conceptual plan, except that simpler designs for the Park and the facilities therein would be adopted. WKCD would expedite the development of the Park under the revised approach based on a reduced budget of \$1.0 billion (MOD prices)^{Note 1} including fees, etc.

Design and facilities of the Park

24. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the latest concept design as well as the use and management of the Park at its meeting on 23 July 2014, concern was raised as to why the design of the north-western part of WKCD, which should form part of the Park, was not conducted in parallel with that of the other parts of the Park. WKCD was requested to provide a physical model of the Park to facilitate the Joint Subcommittee's understanding of the Park design and configuration.

25. WKCD explained that the north-western end of WKCD was currently being occupied mainly by a tree nursery which would become a temporary Park facility scheduled to be open to the public starting from 2015. It was also the site reserved for the Mega Performance Venue/Exhibition Centre ("MPV/EC"), the development programme of which had yet to be confirmed. WKCD would look into extending the Park into the north-western end of WKCD after the construction of the other parts of the Park was completed and a decision had been made on the development programme for MPV/EC.

26. Noting WKCD's plan to adopt a high proportion of soft landscape coverage in developing the Park, some members enquired whether the area of the sites currently occupied by the Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") ventilation building and the MTR ventilation building had been reduced to a minimum, and how WKCD would ensure that the two buildings would be properly integrated with the surrounding green environment. WKCD's design consultant advised that given the prominent appearance of the WHC ventilation building and the MTR ventilation building, the Park design team would put more trees and plants around them to make them less noticeable in the Park and better integrate with the surrounding landscape setting. WKCD and the design team were in discussion with the owners of the two buildings on ways to minimize the impact of the buildings and their associated facilities/structures on the overall appearance of the Park.

^{Note 1} According to the Administration and WKCD, in November 2012, the ballpark project cost for developing the Park (Phase 1) was \$1,865 million (MOD) including fees, etc..

27. Members considered that in preparing the detailed design of the Park, WKCD should seek to enhance pedestrian accessibility to and within the Park taking account of, among others, the construction works being/to be conducted in the Park throughout the development process of WKCD. WKCD was also urged to make available sufficient emergency accesses in different parts of the Park. WKCD advised that accessibility had all along been one of the key planning and design principles underpinning the WKCD project. The current concept design for the Park would enable provision of appropriate forms of transport for, among others, people who were mobility-challenged to get to every part of the Park, and due regard would be given to the need to enhance the accessibility of the Park for all in the detailed design stage.

28. Some members were concerned that certain species of trees might not be suitable for planting in the Park on the reclaimed WKCD site, and that the future landscape maintenance costs might be considerably high given the windy and exposed location of the Park. They called on WKCD to consider the appropriate species of trees to be planted having regard to the climate of Hong Kong and the location of WKCD. WKCD advised that some 1 000 trees had been planted in the tree nursery in WKCD which sought to test, among others, the resistance of different species of trees to the exposure to wind, rain, salt water and typhoons. According to its consultant, most of the trees in the tree nursery would be able to be used and planted on the WKCD site as the Park developed.

29. Members had been following up on the provision of cycling facilities in WKCD. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 23 July 2014, members were advised that following the launch of a pilot scheme, two SmartBike stations providing automated bicycle rental service had been set up along the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade and a third one was planned to open in the summer of 2014. According to WKCD, the SmartBike service had been well-received by the public with more than 4,200 users in the first two months, and it would continue to evaluate and improve the service leading up to the opening of the Park.

Management of the Park

30. The management of the Park was another major concern of the Joint Subcommittee. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 23 July 2014, members noted that the Consultation Panel ("CP") of WKCD launched a public engagement exercise in May and June 2014 to collect public views on the future use and management of the Park, the results of which would be used as references to inform the drafting of the bylaws for the management of the Park. Members generally considered it important that WKCD should adopt

a relaxed and flexible approach in managing the Park to facilitate public enjoyment of the open space in WKCD.

31. WKCDA advised that while it would endeavour to manage the Park with a light hand and encourage a wide range of cultural and leisure activities in the Park, it would not be prudent or in the best interests of public safety and security to have no rules of conduct in place. The draft bylaws would be drawn up having regard to the results of the public survey conducted by CP and WKCDA would attempt to structure the bylaws such that there were minimum restrictions on most activities. Noting WKCDA's plan to introduce the bylaws into the Legislative Council ("LegCo") in early 2015, members requested the Administration and WKCDA to consult the Joint Subcommittee before the bylaws were submitted to LegCo.

Arts Pavilion

32. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the progress of the Arts Pavilion at its meeting on 24 January 2014, members noted that VPANG architects Ltd + JET Architecture Inc + Lisa Cheung, the winning design team of the Arts Pavilion Design Competition, would be appointed by WKCDA to design and administer the construction of the Arts Pavilion, the budget for which was \$20 million (MOD prices). Members also noted that the Arts Pavilion, which aimed to provide a venue for the staging of independent small-scale exhibitions and events in WKCD, would serve as M+'s primary site for its exhibitions before the completion of the M+ building. Members were subsequently further advised at the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 23 July 2014 that the Arts Pavilion was in the detailed design phase and the construction works were anticipated to complete in early 2016.

33. Members in general expressed appreciation of the architectural design of the Arts Pavilion. Enquiries were raised as to whether the external walls of the Arts Pavilion would be used as a display screen for images of artistic works and whether barrier free access would be provided at the Arts Pavilion which would seemingly be built on a small slope. WKCDA advised that the external walls of the Arts Pavilion would be made of mirror finish stainless steel, reflecting the surrounding expanses of greenery and immersing the building within its Park setting. A ramp and a lift would be installed at the Arts Pavilion to ensure its accessibility for persons with a disability.

Development of Batch 2 and Batch 3 facilities

Planning and development of Batch 2 facilities

34. Members noted with concern that the construction of some of the Batch 2 core arts and cultural facilities (such as Centre for Contemporary Performance and Medium Theatre) and part of the integrated basement would be affected by the delay of the construction of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL"), given that part of the site area where these facilities would be constructed was currently occupied by the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") for construction of the West Kowloon Terminus of XRL and the delay of the XRL project might defer the release of these work sites to WKCD. Members urged the Administration and WKCD to follow up with MTRCL expeditiously to ensure early release of the relevant work sites by MTRCL for the implementation of the WKCD project.

35. The Administration advised that it would request MTRCL to release the XRL work sites as soon as practicable to facilitate commencement of the relevant works for the WKCD project. As there was no contractual agreement between MTRCL and WKCD on the handover dates of the work sites for the XRL project within WKCD, it was, however, doubtful whether WKCD had any right to claim for loss from MTRCL in respect of its late release of the work sites.

36. On members' concern about the delay in the implementation schedule of the WKCD project, the Administration advised that WKCD would accelerate the development of the area around the Artist Square (comprising M+, Lyric Theatre, RDE facilities as well as office/residential developments) into a mini-WKCD, which was targeted for completion by around 2020, to facilitate "destination building" in the early phased development of WKCD and to expedite the provision of RDE facilities to generate income for WKCD.

Implementation programme of Batch 3 facilities

37. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the latest financial situation of the WKCD project at its meeting on 28 May 2014, members were advised that the portion of the endowment fund for the design and construction of the WKCD facilities would be sufficient only to cover the costs of the design and construction of Batch 1 and Batch 2 facilities, while the implementation programme of Batch 3 facilities would be reviewed at a suitable juncture. Some members expressed concern about the absence of a concrete timetable for the delivery of Batch 3 facilities, comprising venues such as Music Centre, Great Theatre and Musical Theatre which were crucial components of the WKCD that had been envisioned. These Members were worried whether with the spiralling cost of the WKCD project, the Government was planning to shelve the development of Batch 3 facilities or cut down on the resources to be allocated for the WKCD development. Some other members, however,

expressed the view that given the huge cost overrun of the WKCD project and the uncertainty about the extent of the cost overrun problem, the Administration and WKCD should critically examine the scope of the project and come to an early decision on which facilities would and would not be taken forward.

38. According to the Administration and WKCD, the public and relevant stakeholders were in support of adopting an organic growth approach to the development of WKCD under which facilities would be implemented in phases having regard to actual situations. Given the various challenges being faced by the WKCD project, the Administration considered it a pragmatic arrangement for WKCD to make efficient use of the endowment fund and the associated investment return to complete Batch 1 and Batch 2 facilities for early public enjoyment, and critically review the implementation programme of Batch 3 facilities at a suitable juncture taking account of the public's feedback on the first two batches of facilities and the overall position of the arts and cultural development in Hong Kong. The Administration stressed that although a phased approach was adopted, the WKCD site would be developed into an integrated arts and cultural district as planned.

Implementation of the integrated basement

Cost estimate

39. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the Administration's proposal for the implementation of the integrated basement at its meeting on 28 May 2014, members generally expressed grave concern that the cost estimate of the integrated basement had increased from more than \$10 billion as advised by the Administration in July 2013 to around \$23 billion. The Administration was requested to explain the basis upon which the current cost estimate of the integrated basement was drawn up, and whether it would ensure that there would not be any further increase in the project estimate in future other than that caused by escalation of material and staffing costs.

40. The Administration explained that the current rough cost estimate of the main integrated basement, which was derived on the assumption that the construction of the whole integrated basement would start in 2014 for completion in one go by 2020, included about \$19 billion being the cost of the foundations and substructure of the basement and about \$4 billion being the cost of the public infrastructure works in the basement which served to support the whole WKCD. Given that the implementation programme of certain portions of the basement had yet to be confirmed, the Administration considered it premature to conclude whether the final cost of the main integrated basement would be about \$23 billion as currently estimated.

41. Some members enquired whether the Administration had examined the viability of not implementing/implementing partially the integrated basement and considered putting all or some of the vehicular traffic at ground level with provision of appropriate environmental facilities, so as to reduce the costs of the WKCD project while achieving the original aim of providing a green environment in WKCD. Some other members, however, expressed the view that as the integrated basement was an integral part of the design of WKCD which was drawn up after years of consultations, they were opposed to scrapping the basement which would result in further delay of the WKCD project.

42. The Administration advised that the integrated basement was a key facility in F+P's "City Park" conceptual plan for WKCD which served to free up space for arts and cultural use and create a pedestrian-friendly environment at ground level. The basement concept had received public support during the public engagement exercise conducted by WKCD for the WKCD DP from 2009-2011. Given that the integrated basement was an essential feature to meet the statutory minimum requirement for 23 hectares of public open space in WKCD and an integral part of DP which had undergone the statutory planning process, the Administration considered it not appropriate to scrap the basement design.

Implementation approach and management issues

43. Noting the Administration's plan to implement the integrated basement in phases, some members expressed concern about whether the proposed phased implementation approach would result in delivery of the basement and WKCD facilities in a fragmented manner and lack of connections among different zones of the integrated basement. The Administration assured members that the phased implementation approach was commonly adopted in major public works projects. While the WKCD project would be implemented in phases, a holistic WKCD would be developed for the benefit of the community. The Civil Engineering and Development Department would conduct a technical study to examine the feasibility and cost implications of the proposed phased implementation arrangement for the integrated basement. Issues to be studied would include the exact boundaries between zones and the connectivity and integration of different zones of the basement.

44. In response to members' concern about the air quality and temperature as well as the future management of the integrated basement, the Administration and WKCD stressed that due regard would be given to the underground air quality and temperature in formulating the detailed design of the integrated basement. The Administration also advised that while it was preliminarily planned to entrust the management of the entire basement to WKCD to enhance the overall management efficiency, the issue of whether separate

funding would be provided to WKCDA to subsidize the management costs would require further study.

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

45. The Administration and WKCDA will update the Joint Subcommittee on the progress of the hardware development in WKCD at its meeting on 24 November 2014.

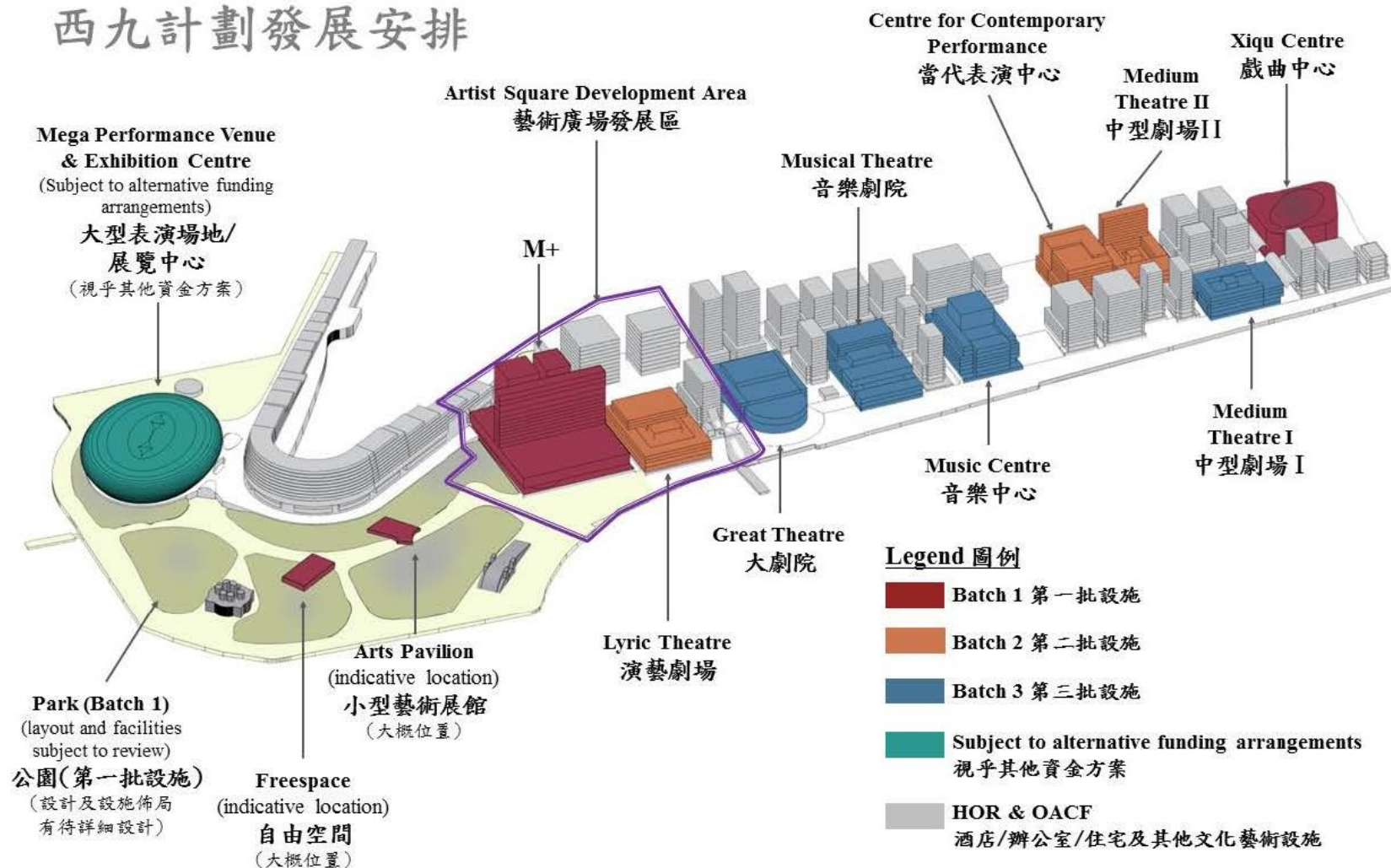
RELEVANT PAPERS

46. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks on the LegCo Website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 November 2014

WKCD Development Arrangement

西九計劃發展安排



Source: Annex A to Administration's paper entitled "Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Integrated Basement" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1591/13-14(03)) for the Joint Subcommittee meeting held on 28 May 2014.

**Relevant papers on
Hardware development in the West Kowloon Cultural District**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	25.2.2013 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	8.4.2013 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	23.4.2013 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	3.7.2013 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	29.11.2013 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	24.1.2014 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	28.3.2014 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	28.5.2014 Items I & II	Agenda Minutes
	23.7.2014 Items I & II	Agenda Minutes Supplementary information provided by the Administration in November 2014 CB(2)316/14-15(01)