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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 23 March 2015**

Park development in the West Kowloon Cultural District

Purpose

This paper provides updated information on the Park development in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") in terms of its design and facilities¹, and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the WKCD Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on the subject.

Background

2. According to the approved Development Plan for WKCD, the Park is an integral part of the 23-hectare public open space to be provided in WKCD. The Park, located at the western end of WKCD, is among the first batch of the WKCD facilities to be delivered. It will house a number of arts and cultural venues, including the Arts Pavilion and Freespace (with a Black Box and an Outdoor Stage). Other planned provisions of the Park include retail, dining and entertainment facilities; cycling tracks and bicycle rental points; waterfront promenade and walks; marine landing facilities (subject to compliance with Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531) and agreement of the relevant government departments); and other recreational and leisure facilities.

3. In July 2013, members were advised of the plan of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") to turn the fully landscaped Park

¹ For issues relating to the use and management of the Park in WKCD, please refer to the background brief entitled "Public Open Space Bylaw of the West Kowloon Cultural District" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1066/14-15(03)) prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the same meeting of the Joint Subcommittee.

envisaged in Foster + Partners' "City Park" conceptual plan into quality open space with a simple and functional design, with a view to facilitating early delivery of the Park and related facilities in a cost effective manner. Under the revised approach, the cost for developing the Park is \$1 billion (money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices) including fees, etc.

4. In February 2014, WKCDA announced the appointment of a design team led by Dennis Lau & Ng Chun Man Architects & Engineers (Hong Kong) Ltd. and supported by landscape architects, West 8 (Netherlands) and ACAL (Hong Kong), as the design consultant for the Park. The Joint Subcommittee was subsequently briefed on the concept design of the Park in July 2014. According to WKCDA, the design team plans to maintain partial opening of the Park area for public enjoyment throughout the development period with the construction works of a temporary tree nursery park to be completed in the second half of 2015 followed by the Arts Pavilion in 2016 and a major portion of the Park with the Freespace Black Box and Outdoor Stage in 2017.

Members' deliberations

5. The major views and concerns raised by members of the Joint Subcommittee on matters relating to the design and facilities of the Park at the meetings on 23 April 2013, 3 July 2013, 29 November 2013, 23 July 2014 and 24 November 2014 are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Positioning and design of the Park

6. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the concept design of the Park at its meeting on 23 July 2014, members were advised that the vision of the Park was "to create a quality green open space that would make Hong Kong proud", while its mission was to be "a waterfront park to inspire, promote and encourage cultural pursuits for all". Hon Alan LEONG was of the view that WKCDA should conduct public engagement to refine and enrich the proposed vision and mission of the Park before they were finalized. Hon Cyd HO suggested that the Park should seek to distinguish itself from other public parks in Hong Kong and undertake a mission to promote and encourage cultural pursuits for all. She also opined that the layout and management approach of the Park should be formulated in such a way that would help create an open and welcoming atmosphere and enable harmonious co-existence of different activities in the Park. WKCDA advised that arrangement would be made for the Park design team to meet with arts and cultural organizations to solicit their views and suggestions on the design, use and management of the Park.

7. 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. WKCDA 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. WKCDA 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.

8. Noting WKCDA'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 WKCDA would ensure that the two buildings would be properly integrated with the surrounding green environment. WKCDA'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. WKCDA 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.

9. 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 WKCDA to consider the appropriate species of trees to be planted having regard to the climate of Hong Kong and the location of WKCD. WKCDA 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.

Accessibility of and cycling facilities in the Park

10. Members considered that in preparing the detailed design of the Park, WKCDA 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. WKCDA was also urged to make available sufficient emergency accesses in different parts of the Park. WKCDA 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.

11. The Joint Subcommittee had been following up on the provision of cycling facilities in WKCD. Members considered that as WKCD would be a popular leisure spot for families, WKCD should provide both bikes for adults and those for children (e.g. tricycles) in WKCD. Members were advised that following the launch of a pilot scheme, two SmartBike stations providing automated bike 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. Both bicycles and tricycles were currently being provided in WKCD. 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.

Naming of the Park

12. Some members enquired whether the public would be consulted on the naming of the Park. Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan suggested that WKCD might consider naming the Park as "Cultural Park". WKCD advised that consideration would be given to conducting an open competition to solicit the community's suggestions and views on the name of the Park.

Arts Pavilion

13. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 24 January 2014, members were advised that VPANG architects Ltd + JET Architecture Inc + Lisa Cheung, the winning design team of the Arts Pavilion Design Competition, would be appointed by WKCD 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.

14. 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. WKCD 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.

Latest development

15. The Administration and WKCDA will brief members on the progress of the Park design, Arts Pavilion and Freespace as well as the development of the temporary tree nursery park at the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 23 March 2015. In response to the request of the Joint Subcommittee, WKCDA will show a physical model of the Park at the meeting to facilitate members' understanding of the Park design and configuration.

Relevant papers

16. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council Website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
17 March 2015

**Relevant papers on
Park 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	23.4.2013 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	3.7.2013 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	29.11.2013 (Item III)	Agenda Minutes
	23.7.2014 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	24.11.2014 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes