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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 21 June 2016**

Development of Lyric Theatre Complex

Purpose

This paper provides background information and summarizes the deliberations of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on the development of Lyric Theatre Complex ("LTC").

Background

2. The Administration and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") announced in June 2013 that to address the funding gap of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") project, WKCDA would adopt a pragmatic approach to implement the project with the planned facilities to be delivered in three batches. Lyric Theatre is among the Batch 2 facilities and the second major performing arts ("PA") venue to be provided in WKCD after Xiqu Centre. In March 2014, WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that each of the PA venues in WKCD would have a clear and focused art form and Lyric Theatre would be a 1200-seat venue for use by a wide variety of PA events including drama and musical performances, with a focus on dance as its artistic positioning.

3. WKCDA subsequently informed the Joint Subcommittee in March 2015 that following a review of the PA venues in WKCD, WKCDA proposed to combine two other PA venues with Lyric Theatre to form LTC. The proposed LTC would comprise Lyric Theatre (with its seat capacity to be increased from 1 200 to 1 450), a 600-seat Medium Theatre (previously Medium Theatre II

("MT II")), a Studio Theatre with 200+ seats (previously a 250-seat black box theatre in the Centre for Contemporary Performance ("CCP")), as well as a resident company centre. As advised by WKCD, the modified facility framework for LTC would help achieve design efficiency and synergy in future operation, and advance the delivery of MT II and one of the black box theatres in CCP for early public enjoyment.

4. According to the latest completion timeframe of the WKCD facilities provided by WKCD in May 2016, LTC is targeted for completion by around 2020. Under the current planning of WKCD, LTC, together with M+, other arts and cultural facilities, retail, dining, and entertainment facilities as well as office/residential developments in the land parcels around the Artist Square will be developed into a mini-WKCD referred to as Artist Square Development Area by around 2020, so as to facilitate "destination building" in the early phase development of WKCD and enhance vibrancy in the vicinity of M+.

Deliberations of the Joint Subcommittee

Artistic positioning

5. Noting that the proposed LTC would comprise a dance-focused theatre (i.e. Lyric Theatre) and two theatre-focused units and that Lyric Theatre could also be used for film screening and a wide variety of PA events in addition to dance performances, some members queried whether such arrangements ran counter to the original plan of WKCD that each of the PA venues in WKCD should have a clear and focused art form so as to create a strong identity for the venue concerned. Members also enquired how the artistic positioning of Lyric Theatre with its focus on dance would be reflected in its programming policy and venue hiring policy.

6. WKCD explained that the proposed LTC, comprising the dance-focused Lyric Theatre and theatre-focused Medium Theatre (previously MT II) and Studio Theatre (previously a black box theatre in CCP), would provide more options for both dance performance groups and other PA groups to organize events of different scales. The model of a "shared theatre" (i.e. theatre-units for different art forms sharing the same complex) was well-established and had been adopted in many parts of the world. Such a model could maximize the venue functionally, achieve more efficient use of space and resources, and provide the audience with a wider range of choices in PA events. Besides, the proposed LTC could also advance the delivery of MT II and one of the black box theatres of CCP, which were originally planned to be built in the eastern part of the WKCD site above the West Kowloon Terminus ("WKT") of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link,

from after 2022 to around 2020.

7. WKCDA further advised that Lyric Theatre would remain to be dance-focused in that the design of the venue would create a strong identity for that art form and its facilities would cater mainly for the needs of dance performances. In addition, priority would be given to dance performances in its venue hiring policy and more resources would be allocated for dance-related programmes and activities.

8. Enquiries had been raised as to whether the proposed reconfiguration of PA venues was attributable to the delay in releasing the relevant works areas on the WKCD site by the MTR Corporation Limited for the construction of CCP and MT II, and whether the PA community had been consulted on the proposed LTC. According to WKCDA, the proposed reconfiguration of PA venues sought to deliver as many arts and cultural facilities as possible for public enjoyment by 2020 within the available budget and planning constraints. Extensive consultation had been conducted with the relevant major PA groups on the proposed three-theatre model for LTC and no objection had been raised by the groups. WKCDA would continue to solicit the views of stakeholders on the design of LTC.

Construction cost and facility framework for LTC

9. While appreciating the rationale behind WKCDA's proposal to combine MT II and one of the black box theatres previously planned for CCP with Lyric Theatre, Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about the additional costs to be incurred for the construction of the proposed LTC and requested WKCDA to provide a comparison between the construction cost for the original Lyric Theatre and the proposed LTC.

10. According to WKCDA, the indicative cost for the original Lyric Theatre was \$2.4 billion. Given that back-of-house facilities could be shared among theatres housed in the same complex, the proposal to combine two other PA venues with the Lyric Theatre could achieve design efficiency and cost savings in the construction of the three venues. However, information on the estimated amount of cost savings would only be available after the completion of the detailed design of the proposed LTC. As advised by WKCDA in November 2015, the detailed design of LTC was on target for completion in 2016.

11. Noting the proposed integration of some of the facilities in CCP and MT II with Lyric Theatre, some members sought clarification whether the three black box theatres originally planned to be built in CCP would be scaled down and whether there was any plan for the land parcel originally planned for CCP. WKCDA clarified that there would be no reduction in the total seat capacity of

the theatres in CCP and MT II. The previously 600-seat MT II and 250-seat black box theatre in CCP would be moved to the proposed LTC, while the land parcel originally planned for MT II would be used for providing the other two black box theatres (with 400 and 150 seats respectively) originally planned to be built on the CCP site. Consideration was being given to the future use of the CCP site for other arts and cultural facilities and other uses.

Crowd dispersal arrangement

12. Pointing out that LTC could altogether house an audience of 2 250, Mr Christopher CHUNG expressed concern about the crowd dispersal arrangements in the event that performances at the three theatres ended at the same time. WKCDA advised that according to the technical assessment on traffic and pedestrian flow conducted by its consultant and taking into account the experience of local PA venues with similar audience size, WKCDA was confident that the crowds could be dispersed efficiently from LTC even if events in the three theatres ended at the same time. Besides, the start and end times of events staged in the three theatres in LTC could be staggered to facilitate crowd dispersal.

Latest development

13. Members were advised at the meeting on 30 May 2016 that following the Finance Committee's funding approval for the first and second stages of design, site investigation and construction works of the integrated basement in July 2015, the foundation works for LTC commenced in January 2016 for target completion in August 2017.

14. The Administration and WKCDA will update members on the development of LTC at the meeting on 21 June 2016.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks on the Legislative Council Website is in **Appendix**.

Appendix

Relevant papers on Development of Lyric Theatre Complex

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	23.3.2015 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	7.7.2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes
	24.11.2015 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
	30.5.2016 (Item II)	Agenda

Council Business Division 2
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