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23 June 2017

Clerk to Public Works Subcommittee
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Mr Raymond CHOW)

Dear Mr CHOW,

**Reprovisioning of Shanghai Street refuse collection point and
street sleepers' services units to the site on Hau Cheung Street,
Yau Ma Tei for the phase II development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre project**

I refer to the various parts in the letter from Hon SHIU Ka-chun dated 20 June 2017. Upon consultation with relevant Government departments, I am authorised to reply as follows –

Improvement of the environment of the street sleepers' shelter on Shanghai Street

- (1) The Street Sleepers' Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated (SSSSTI) operates the street sleepers' shelter on Shanghai Street on a self-financing basis. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) all along respects the autonomy of self-financing service organisations. The SSSSTI expressed that it is necessary to explore the feasibility of electricity load should an air-conditioning system be installed at the street sleepers' shelter on Shanghai Street. In addition, as the installation of an air-conditioning system takes time, and such system may not be suitable for use at the reprovisioned street sleepers' shelter on Hau Cheung Street, installing an air-conditioning system at the current street sleepers' shelter may cause unnecessary waste of resources.

The SSSSTI thus recommends putting in place large-scale dehumidifying air ventilators at the street sleepers' shelter on Shanghai Street, so as to enhance air ventilation at the shelter and keep the indoor environment dry. The SWD would follow the established mechanism to assist the SSSSTI in applying for the Lotteries Fund to purchase the large-scale dehumidifying air ventilators as soon as practicable.

Design of the reprovisioned building

- (2) Regarding the additional operating expenses incurred from the air-conditioning system at the reprovisioned street sleepers' shelter on Hau Cheung Street, the SSSSTI has made various considerations, including following other street sleepers' shelters to charge for the use of air-conditioning. However, such charging arrangements would contravene the SSSSTI's long-upheld principle to not impose any charges on its shelter seekers.

In view of the genuine difficulties for the SSSSTI to absorb the additional recurrent expenses incurred, and taking into account the special circumstances that the shelter concerned will be the only shelter of its kind in the territory being co-located with a refuse collection point (RCP), the SWD has made a special arrangement to provide special subsidies by way of reimbursement for the SSSSTI to cover the electricity bill as well as the repair and maintenance costs of the air-conditioning system.

- (3) Under the latest design of the reprovisioned building, two additional floors will be built between the RCP on the ground floor and the street sleepers' services units (SSSUs) on the top two floors to increase their vertical distance apart as far as practicable. Separate entrances will also be provided for different facilities in the building to widen the horizontal distances of their entrances.

RCPs newly built by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in recent years (including the reprovisioned RCP on Hau Cheung Street) are equipped with modern deodorisation systems, including water scrubber systems and / or active-ions generator and refuse collection vehicle exhaust extraction systems.

The deodorising effect of these systems is proven to be effective. The air inside the reprovisioned RCP on Hau Cheung Street will be treated by the systems before it is extracted to outdoor environment via an exhaust air outlet at the highest point of the roof located far away from the windows of the SSSUs. In view of the unique circumstances of this reprovisioning project and given the space availability and technical feasibility, the FEHD will spare some space inside the RCP for installing an additional roller shutter to provide a “double shutters” setting. In addition, an air-conditioning system will be installed inside the street sleepers’ shelter to further reduce the possible odour impact of the RCP. We have also reserved space along the side of the windows to plant greenery so as to beautify the environment and freshen the air.

- (4) Under the reprovisioning project, other than the refuse collection vehicle, there will not be sufficient space to provide parking spaces for other private vehicles and motorcycles. The two operators of the SSSUs (viz. the SSSSTI and the Salvation Army) have advised that their operations would not require frequent vehicle use. They have been informed that no parking spaces would be provided under the reprovisioning project. If the operation of the organisations concerned needs any short-term parking space in the future, the FEHD would accommodate such requests as far as practicable provided that the operation of the RCP would not be affected.
- (5) The proposed building will be situated in the proximity of the Yau Ma Tei MTR Station, as well as a number of bus stops and minibus stops on Nathan Road, Shanghai Street or Waterloo Road. Users of the proposed building can take the routes along the existing pedestrian crossings or covered footbridges, as well as barrier-free access to take a range of transportation. The walking time is around 10 minutes.
- (6) As we have mentioned in **Para. 14 of the LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/16-17(05)** (extracted at **Enclosure 1**), as compared with the existing facilities of the SSSUs, the building design which has been revised several times (including separate lifts, windows on two opposite sides, air-conditioning system, greening, etc.) would substantially improve the dormitory environment and the hygiene condition of the SSSUs.

- (7) The maintenance works for the lift at the proposed building will be conducted by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. As for the separate lift used by the SSSUs, its maintenance expenses will be borne by the SWD.

Road conditions around Hau Cheung Street

- (8) According to the Transport Department (TD), the length of the pedestrian crossing across the Ferry Street southbound carriageway is approximately 17 metres. In general, it takes 14 seconds for pedestrians to cross the road. At present the “green man” signal time (including the flashing time) is sufficient for pedestrians to cross the road safely. The TD will pay attention to the traffic conditions at that crossing from time to time, and suitably extend the pedestrian signal time when necessary so as to enhance road safety.

The Highways Department (HyD) provides road lights on public roads in accordance with “The Public Lighting Design Manual” in order to provide drivers and pedestrians with suitable lighting. In accordance with the relevant manual, the HyD considered that the existing 10 road lights at the sections of Hau Cheung Street and Ngo Cheung Road can already provide sufficient lighting in the area. The contractor of the HyD will inspect the road lights regularly and carry out maintenance in a timely manner to maintain good road condition.

In the vicinity of the proposed building (viz. at the junction of Waterloo Road / Ferry Street, Ngo Cheung Road and Hau Cheung Street), there are currently pedestrian crossings and relevant traffic signs and road markings. The TD will review the latest traffic conditions around the proposed building before and after its completion, and adopt traffic measures as appropriate.

- (9) The HyD is responsible for the maintenance of public roads and associated road facilities under its purview, and carries out regular inspections. On 22 June 2017, the HyD inspected matters related to road defects at the junction of Waterloo Road and Ferry Street. The HyD identified some local surface unevenness and defects and immediately required the contractor to arrange repairs. The repair

works are expected to commence in June 2017 for completion as early as practicable. The HyD will continue to monitor the road conditions and arrange repair works if necessary so as to ensure the safety of road users.

Matters related to bed spaces at the street sleepers' shelter

- (10) The subject site on Hau Cheung Street is planned as “Government, Institution or Community (G/IC)” zone in the South West Kowloon Outline Zoning Plan. Taking into consideration the air ventilation impacts, as well as the needs to use such G/IC zone to provide a spatial and visual relief in a densely developed urban area, the design of the proposed reprovisioned building is optimal to achieve the optimisation of land use.

At present, the temporary shelters (including subvented and self-financing ones) can satisfy service demand in general. Taking the street sleepers' shelter on Shanghai Street as an example, the utilisation rate as at the end of December 2016 was 66%. The SWD will continue to monitor the operation of these shelters and review street sleepers' demand for short-term accommodation. The SWD would consider taking appropriate measures when necessary so as to ensure that the services can accommodate the service demand of street sleepers.

- (11) As of May 2017, there were 936 registered street sleepers in Hong Kong, of whom 7% (viz. 66 persons) were female street sleepers. The SSSSTI provides a total of 46 bed spaces for female street sleepers in Sham Shui Po and Wan Chai respectively, and currently has no plan to provide bed spaces for female street sleepers at the reprovisioned street sleepers' shelter on Hau Cheung Street.

In addition, the Christian Concern for the Homeless Association operates the female street sleepers' shelter, “Home of Blessings”, on a self-financing basis in Yau Ma Tei, providing 52 bed spaces for female street sleepers. As at the end of December in 2016, this shelter had an average utilisation rate of 79% and can still meet the demand for bed spaces from female street sleepers.

The reprovisioned street sleepers' shelter on Hau Cheung Street would adopt flexible and open design. If the street sleepers' shelter has the need to increase bed spaces for female street sleepers in the future, the internal partitions of the shelter can be suitably modified subject to different interior design, so as to accommodate the actual operational needs.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Sandy CHEUNG)
for Secretary for Home Affairs

c.c. Director of Architectural Service
(Attn: Ms Jennifer YIP)
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene
(Attn: Ms TANG Siu-chi, Cathy)
Director of Highways
(Attn: Mr LUK Wing-cheong)
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
(Attn: Miss YIP Yee-wah, Eva)
Director of Social Welfare
(Attn: Miss FUNG Hing-sum, Fanny)
Commissioner for Transport
(Attn: Miss TO Wing-sheung, Carrie)

**Discussion Paper for the Meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs on 27 March 2017
(LC Paper No. CB(2)1038/16-17(05))(Extract)**

REVISED PROPOSAL

14. As it is not possible to identify another site to separately relocate the RCP and SSSU, we can only maintain the proposal to co-locate the RCP and the SSSU at the Hau Cheung Street site. That said, as compared with the existing facilities, the building design which has been revised several times would substantially improve the living environment and the hygiene condition of the SSSU –

- (a) two additional floors will be built between the RCP on the ground floor and the SSSU on the top two floors to increase their vertical distance apart, and to provide storage and office space for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department;
- (b) separate entrances will be provided for different facilities in the proposed building to widen their distances and a lift would also be provided to the SSSU (as compared with the accessibility to the second floor of the existing building on Shanghai Street merely via staircases);
- (c) the orientation of the SSSU's main entrance will be altered from West to North to avoid it directly facing the same direction as the entrance of RCP;
- (d) the proposed SSSU will be provided with windows on two opposite sides which will give better lighting and cross ventilation (as compared with the existing SSSU on Shanghai Street which has only one-sided windows);
- (e) the reprovisioned street sleepers' shelter would be equipped with an air-conditioning system to provide a much better dormitory environment for street sleepers. The relevant recurrent expenses on air-conditioning would be subsidised by the SWD;
- (f) the air inside the RCP will be treated by a water scrubber system and an active-ions generator before its extraction to outdoor environment via exhaust air outlet at the highest point of the roof;

- (g) in view of the unique circumstances of this reprovisioning project and given the space availability and the technical feasibility, an area would be spared inside the RCP for installing an additional roller shutter to provide a double shutters setting so as to reduce the odour nuisance of the RCP; and
- (h) the provision of green environment, new building materials, building services installations and toilets will further enhance the facilities of the reprovisioning project. Solid parapet walls will be constructed at the street sleepers' shelter to alleviate noise impact.