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Panel on Home Affairs

Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 27 March 2017

Reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point and Street Sleepers' Services Units for the Phase II Development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre Project

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point ("RCP") and Street Sleepers' Services Units ("SSSU") to a site on Hau Cheung Street, Yau Ma Tei to facilitate the Phase II development of Yau Ma Tei Theatre ("YMTT") project. This paper also summarizes the major concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

Background

2. In December 2008, the Administration briefed the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on its proposal to convert two graded historic buildings in Yau Ma Tei, namely YMTT (Grade II) and Red Brick Building (Grade I), into a Xiqu activity centre. Panel members supported the proposal and urged for its early implementation. The Administration was also urged to reprovision the public toilet and RCP beside YMTT, and turn the area into a tourist attraction. The Administration's proposal was subsequently endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and the Finance Committee ("FC") on 21 January 2009 and 13 February 2009 respectively. YMTT phase I was opened for public use in July 2012.

3. In order to release space for the implementation of YMTT phase II, the Administration further submitted a proposal to reprovision Shanghai Street RCP and SSSU to a site on Hau Cheung Street in Yau Ma Tei for consultation with the Panel at its meeting on 15 April 2013. While some members expressed support for the Administration's proposal, some other members held a strong view that the co-location arrangement of RCP and SSSU at the same site was a form of discrimination against street sleepers. These members strongly

requested that the two facilities should be reprovisioned to separate sites. The Panel passed a motion urging the Government to respect the dignity of street sleepers in the course of redeveloping the YMTT and relocating the nearby street sleepers' shelter and RCP, and to uphold the people-oriented principle by reprovisioning RCP and SSSU to separate sites as well as facilitating the access by street sleepers.

4. The Administration subsequently refined its proposal taking into account members' views and re-submitted its project proposal to the Panel for discussion at its meeting on 13 December 2013. While some members expressed concerns on the design of the reprovisioning project, most members did not raise objection to the submission of the project proposal to PWSC. However, when PWSC deliberated on the reprovisioning project on 29 January 2014, the project proposal was negated.

5. After further revisions, the Administration consulted the Panel on its revised proposal of the reprovisioning project at its meeting on 24 March 2016. Details of the modifications in the revised proposal submitted to the Panel are in **Appendix I**. The Panel supported the submission of the revised proposal to PWSC for consideration.¹ The revised proposal was endorsed by PWSC at its meeting on 11 June 2016. However, when FC deliberated on the revised proposal at its meeting on 11 July 2016, the proposal was negated.

Concerns expressed by Members on the reprovisioning project

Co-location of Refuse Collection Point and Street Sleepers' Services Units

6. Some Members held a strong view that the co-location arrangement of RCP and SSSU at the same site was a form of discrimination against street sleepers. They pointed out that the Shanghai Street SSSU was currently suffering from serious bed bugs problems caused by the humid environment of RCP in the same building and urged the Administration to take the opportunity to separate the two facilities.

7. The Administration explained that the reprovisioning proposal was drawn up in response to Members' previous request for the relocation of the existing RCP and SSSU to improve the overall environment of YMTT. It had reviewed all the sites in the district and reaffirmed that there was no other site suitable for reprovisioning the RCP or SSSU.

¹ Apart from the modifications in Appendix I, members may wish to note that at the request of PWSC members, the Administration further agreed to include in the design of RCP installing an additional roller shutter to provide a double-door setting.

8. In response to Members' enquiry on precedents of accommodating RCPs in residential buildings in the territory, the Administration advised that eight RCPs under the management of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department were located on the ground floors of private residential buildings, and there was only one floor between the RCPs and the upper residential floors. Some Members held the view that given the scarcity of land and the high population density in Hong Kong, it was unavoidable that some residential buildings were in close proximity to waste facilities.

9. There was a view that if the Administration was unable to identify another site for SSSU, the existing SSSU could be reprovisioned in-situ and incorporated in the phase II development of YMTT. The Administration should explore relaxing the plot ratio and height limit of the new building for the expansion of YMTT, so as to maximize the gross floor area to accommodate the temporary shelter for street sleepers as well as the necessary performance and rehearsal venues. The Administration explained that the proposal was technically infeasible as the site adjacent to YMTT, with an area of just 500 sq m, was relatively small. The ancillary facilities of SSSU (including lifts, staircases, entrance lobby and circulation spaces) would take up the central portion of the site and seriously affect the basic features, including the proposed expansion of the foyer, backstage facilities and access linkage, of YMTT phase II project.

Constructing two separate buildings on Hau Cheung Street

10. Some Members suggested that if another site could not be identified for reprovisioning SSSU, the Administration should examine the feasibility of constructing two separate building blocks on the site on Hau Cheung Street to accommodate the reprovisioned RCP and SSSU.

11. The Administration advised that the site on Hau Cheung Street was too small to be provided with sufficient means of escape and means of access for fire fighting and rescue if RCP and SSSU were to be constructed as two completely separate buildings on the site. Even if a portion of the adjacent site currently used as the Highways Department's material store was included in the reprovisioning project, the two blocks would have to be built adjoining each other and this would not bring any concrete benefits to the service users. In addition, the proposal would necessitate going through the planning process again and that would cause substantial delay to the project for at least 18 months.

Constructing additional storey(s) in the new building

12. At the PWSC meeting on 22 January 2014, some Members urged the Administration to consider construction of additional storey(s) in the future new

building for other uses (e.g. storage). In their view, such a proposal would not only optimize the use of precious land resources, but would also maximize the vertical distance between RCP and SSSU to mitigate the impact of odour nuisance generated by RCP on the service users of SSSU.

13. Noting that two additional floors would be constructed to increase the vertical distance between RCP and SSSU, some Members enquired whether it was possible to erect more than two additional floors to optimize the use of the relevant site on Hau Cheung Street and about the measures to be taken to mitigate the impact of odour nuisance generated by RCP on other users of the new building. The Administration advised that it would not propose to revise the design again to construct more floors, in order not to further delay the reprovisioning project and incur additional costs. The Administration would also implement the mitigating measures as detailed in Appendix I for the treatment of exhaust air in RCP.

Design of Refuse Collection Point

14. At the meeting of PWSC on 11 June 2016, some Members raised concern about the impact of the operation of RCP. In response to Members' enquiry on the deodorization arrangements for the reprovisioned RCP, the Administration advised that the reprovisioned RCP on Hau Cheung Street would be equipped with modern deodorization systems (including water scrubber system and active-ion generator). In addition, the staff at RCP would clean RCP every time after the refuse collection vehicle ("RCV") had left and sanitized RCP thoroughly every night before its closure. The RCV entrance of the reprovisioned RCP would be positioned a further eight metres backward and maintain a certain distance from the windows of SSSU. The entrance of RCP would be fitted with a roller shutter, which would be closed at all times except for the passage of RCVs.

15. According to the Administration, both the water scrubber system and the active-ion generator to be installed at the reprovisioned RCP were those with the most advanced deodorization technologies in Hong Kong, and such technologies had already been adopted in some other RCPs. The exhaust air outlet would be located at the highest central point of the roof of the proposed building, about four metres above the main roof floor and at least nine metres from the windows of the SSSU. Furthermore, the Administration confirmed that the three service units (RCP, offices of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and SSSU) in the proposed building on Hau Cheung Street would each operate a separate ventilation system.

Location of the reprovisioned site on Hau Cheung Street

16. Some Members raised concern about the accessibility to the reprovisioned SSSU as the new site was relatively far away from the existing site which was in the residential areas and the core business areas of Yau Ma Tei and Mongkok. There was a suggestion that the existing SSSU should be reprovisioned to a site easily accessible by users. Concern was also raised that the cleansing workers serving the area around Shanghai Street/Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market might need to take more time to transport refuse to the reprovisioned RCP.

17. As explained by the Administration, the purpose of the proposed reprovisioning project was to make available the existing site for the Phase II development of YMTT. Taking into account the need for maintaining the existing services of RCP and SSSU in the district, the selected site on Hau Cheung Street was not too far away from the existing RCP and SSSU. According to the Administration, the Social Welfare Department had consulted the two operators of the Shanghai Street SSSU on the proposed reprovisioning of SSSU. While the proposal was agreeable to both operators, they had also undertaken to continue the provision of the existing dedicated supportive services for street sleepers on the new premises on Hau Cheung Street. The Administration also considered that the reprovisioning works for RCP would not have a significant impact on the refuse transportation arrangements of the cleansing workers.

Installation of air-conditioning system for Street Sleepers' Services Units

18. Some Members were of the view that the floors housing SSSU should be fitted with a central air conditioning system such that users of such units could be spared from enduring the hot weather in Hong Kong and the odour from the RCP downstairs. They urged the Administration to provide an air-conditioning system for SSSU and bear the costs for the related electricity tariff and maintenance. There was a view that as free air-conditioning would be provided in the temporary night heat shelters when hot weather signals were issued by the Observatory, free air-conditioning should also be provided in the SSSU on Hau Cheung Street.

19. The Administration advised that natural ventilation would be employed for the dormitory floor of SSSU (located on the fourth floor) in the proposed building. However, the street sleepers' shelter on the fourth floor of the proposed building would be provided with powering facilities (including installation of electrical trunkings and sockets) and suitable space under the reprovisioning project to enable the operators of SSSU to install an appropriate air conditioning system (e.g. split type air conditioners) when necessary in

future. The Administration further advised that as the street sleepers' shelter was operated on a self-financing basis, and the street sleepers using the shelter would not be charged any fees, installation of air conditioners for the street sleepers' dormitory on the fourth floor of the proposed building might result in an increase in service fees. The operator (i.e. Street Sleepers' Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated ("SSSSTI")) had no plan to install air conditioners at this stage, after carefully considering the implications brought about by recurrent expenses (such as electricity tariffs and maintenance fees) on the operating costs as a result of providing air-conditioning in SSSU.

20. Some Members considered that installing an air-conditioning system in SSSU as part of the project would be more cost-effective than installing the air-conditioning system after the building was commissioned. Some other Members, however, considered that a central air conditioning system might not be suitable for the dormitory. They considered it more appropriate for the Administration to provide infrastructure so that the service operators could install air conditioners on their own accord. The Administration advised that under the existing policy, air-conditioning systems were not an essential facility for accommodation services premises. Therefore, not all of these premises were fitted with air-conditioning. Those premises with air-conditioning would normally charge fees from the users concerned. In response to Members' queries on the cost implications of the installation of air-conditioning, the Administration advised that for premises which provided about 70 bed spaces, the expenses in electricity tariff arising from air-conditioning would be about \$7,000 to \$8,000 a month. In general, a self-financing organization might be able to raise the required funds by holding fundraising activities, applying for funding from the Lotteries Fund and so on. If considered necessary, SSSSTI might apply for funding from the Lotteries Fund to purchase facilities like air-conditioning systems.

Latest development

21. The Administration will consult the Panel on the further revised proposal of the reprovisioning project at the next meeting on 27 March 2017.

Relevant papers

22. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo's website is in **Appendix II**.

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

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REVISED PROPOSAL

3. In response to the advice of the members of PWSC, we consulted relevant departments on the usage of the proposed additional floors, drew up building specifications according to the requirements of user departments and conducted another detailed technical feasibility study. With a view to further minimising the impact of the RCP on the SSSU, the new building shall adopt the following design –

Two additional floors in the new building

- (i) 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. The new floors will be used by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) as storage for its Finance Section and Supplies Section on the first floor, and the office accommodation for the staff of its Information Technology Office on the second floor; and

Altering the orientation of the SSSU's main entrance

- (ii) the orientation of the SSSU's main entrance will be changed from facing the west to the north to avoid it directly facing the same direction as the RCP's west-facing entrance.

4. In addition, to ensure the minimal impact of the RCP on other users of the building, the new building is designed with the following features –

Separating the entrance of the RCP from that of other users of the building to the farthest extent

- (i) the individual entrances of the RCP and the SSSU will be located separately at the south and north ends of the site respectively. Also, the entrance of the RCP will be set back from Hau Cheung Street by about eight metres so that the windows of the SSSU facing Hau Cheung Street and the entrance of the RCP will be kept further apart. The entrance to the floors of the LCSD's storage and offices will also be located at the north end of the frontage facing Hau Cheung Street;

Treatment of exhaust air in the RCP

- (ii) there will be no other windows or doors of the RCP facing Hau Cheung Street except the roller shutter at its entrance. To ensure no leakage of untreated air from the RCP, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will keep the roller shutter closed except for the access time of refuse collection vehicles (RCV); and fresh air will also be drawn from Hau Cheung Street during the operation of RCV. Air inside the RCP will be ducted to high level above roof and discharged after being treated by a water scrubber system for odour and disinfection control. The overall layout, in terms of air quality, design of the exhaust system and the distance between the exhaust outlet near the north of the building and the main windows to the east and west of the SSSU, will meet the requirements of the Environmental Protection Department; and

Separate ventilation system in the SSSU

- (iii) a separate ventilation system will be installed in the SSSU where fresh air will be drawn from the east side instead of from the side facing Hau Cheung Street.

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**Relevant papers on
Reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point
and Street Sleepers' Services Units for the Phase II Development
of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre Project**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs ("HA Panel")	12.12.2008 (Item VI)	Agenda CB(2)427/08-09(05) Minutes
Public Works Subcommittee	21.1.2009 (Item 6)	Agenda PWSC(2008-09)60 PWSCI(2008-09)20 Minutes
Finance Committee	13.2.2009 (Item 2)	Agenda Minutes
HA Panel	15.4.2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	13.12.2013 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Public Works Subcommittee	22.1.2014 (Item 5)	Agenda PWSC(2013-14)35 Minutes
	29.1.2014 (Item 1)	Agenda PWSC(2013-14)35 Minutes
HA Panel	24.3.2016 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Public Works Subcommittee	11.6.2016 (Item 7)	Agenda PWSC(2016-17)23 Minutes
Finance Committee	11.7.2016 (Item 5)	Agenda Minutes Minutes