

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Economic Development

Minutes of special meeting
held on Wednesday, 4 July 2018, at 8:45 am
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Alvin YEUNG (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

Members attending : Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon HUI Chi-fung

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda item I

Mr WONG Kam-sing, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Environment

Mr Donald TONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Environment

Mr Vincent LIU, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Environment

Ms Esther WANG, JP
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment
(Financial Monitoring)

Mr Alan CHOW
Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (Electricity
Team)
Environment Bureau

Related organizations : Agenda item I

The Hongkong Electric Company Limited

Mr C T WAN
Managing Director

Mr Dominic CHAN
Executive Director

Mr T C YEE
General Manager (Corporate Development)

Ms Mimi YEUNG
General Manager (Public Affairs)

Mr K M WONG
Chief Financial Officer

CLP Power Hong Kong Limited

Mr CHIANG Tung-keung
Managing Director

Ms Quince CHONG
Chief Corporate Development Officer

Mr Joseph LAW
Senior Director - Planning and Development

Mr Stephen CHAN
Director - Strategic Planning and Regulatory Affairs

Mr Sam LAW
Senior Project Manager - Strategic Development

Clerk in attendance : Ms Shirley CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (4)5

Staff in attendance : Ms Shirley TAM
Senior Council Secretary (4)5

Ms Lauren LI
Council Secretary (4)5

Ms Zoe TONG
Legislative Assistant (4)5

Miss Mandy LUI
Clerical Assistant (4)5

I. 2018-2023 Development Plans and 2019 Tariff Review of the two power companies

(File Ref: — Legislative Council Brief on
ENB CR 1/4576/08 (18) Pt.28 2018-2023 Development Plans
ENB CR 2/4576/08 (18) Pt.27 and 2019 Tariff Review of the
two power companies provided
by the Environment Bureau

LC Paper No. CB(4)1333/17-18(01) — Powerpoint presentation
materials provided by The
Hongkong Electric Company
Ltd.

LC Paper No. CB(4)1333/17-18(02) — Powerpoint presentation
materials provided by CLP
Power Hong Kong Ltd.

LC Paper No. CB(4)1333/17-18(03) — Supplementary information
provided by The Hongkong
Electric Company Ltd. on
2018-2023 Development Plans
and 2019 Tariff Review

LC Paper No. CB(4)1333/17-18(04) — Supplementary information
provided by CLP Power Hong
Kong Ltd. on 2018-2023
Development Plans and
2019 Tariff Review)

Presentation by the Administration and the power companies

At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for the Environment ("SEN") briefed Panel members that the Executive Council ("ExCo") had approved the 2018-2023 Development Plans ("new DPs") proposed by CLP Power Hong Kong Limited and Castle Peak Power Company Limited (collectively known as "CLP") and The Hongkong Electric Company, Limited ("HEC") respectively, as well as the new average tariff rates for the power companies, covering the period from 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019 for CLP and from 1 January to 31 December 2019 for HEC. The new DPs included essential capital

projects of the power companies to change the fuel mix for electricity generation which would help combat climate change, and provide an opportunity for Hong Kong to advance its achievement of the carbon intensity reduction target for 2030 and further improve the local air quality.

2. SEN further said that to help alleviate the impact of tariff increase on households during the transition to a lower carbon future, the Administration proposed to grant an electricity charges relief ("ECR") of \$3,000 over 60 months (i.e. \$50 per month) to each residential electricity account. The ECR was expected to roughly cover the projected cumulative tariff increase over the five-year period for about half of the households in Hong Kong. The Government planned to seek funding of about \$8.7 billion from the Finance Committee ("FC") of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") before the summer recess.

(Post-meeting note: The funding proposal was not dealt with by FC in the 2017-2018 legislative session due to insufficient time.)

3. With the aid of power-point presentation material, Deputy Secretary for the Environment ("DSEN") introduced the key projects under the new DPs, including enhancement of Clean Energy Transmission System ("CETS") by CLP, and development of advanced metering infrastructure ("AMI"), construction of new gas generating units, and construction of an offshore liquefied natural gas ("LNG") terminal by both power companies. The details of their presentation were set out in the LegCo Brief (File ref: ENB CR 1/4576/08 (18) Pt.28, ENB CR 2/4576/08 (18) Pt.27) and power-point presentation material.

4. Mr C T WAN, Managing Director of HEC remarked that the net tariff of HEC would increase by 6.8% to 120.1 cents/kWh in 2019 after counting a special rent and rates rebate of 2.3 cents/kWh and a special fuel rebate of 2.3 cents/kWh. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung, Managing Director of CLP advised that from 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2019, CLP's net tariff would increase by 2.0% to 117.7 cents/kWh after counting a special rent and rates rebate of 1.1 cents/kWh. Mr T C YEE, General Manager (Corporate Development) of HEC and Mr Joseph LAW, Senior Director - Planning and Development of CLP also gave an account on their companies' respective new DPs and new tariffs, with details set out in the power-point presentation materials (LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1333/17-18(01) and (02)).

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information of the two power companies and the power-point presentation material of the Administration were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos.

CB(4)1333/17-18(03), (04) and CB(4)1359/17-18(01) on 4 and 5 July 2018 respectively.)

Discussion

New development plans and 2019 tariff reviews

5. Ms Tanya CHAN noted that over the new DP period, the fuel clause charges ("FCCs") of CLP and HEC would increase by 70.0% and 54.7% respectively, while their net tariffs would increase by 20.7% and 35.0% respectively. She sought more information about the large differences on FCC and net tariffs between the power companies.

6. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP explained that FCC of CLP was currently less than the actual fuel cost incurred by the company. Hence, it would increase by a greater extent in the new DP period to reflect the use of more natural gas which led to higher fuel cost.

7. Mr C T WAN of HEC said that the higher net tariff increase of HEC in 2019 was mainly attributed to the substantial reduction in special rebates in 2017 and 2018. In fact, the basic tariff would only increase by 6% during the new DP period. On the other hand, the fuel cost increase was driven by the fact that HEC was required to increase the proportion of gas-fired generation from the current about 30% of total generation to 50% in 2020, rising further to about 70% in 2023.

8. Mr SHIU Ka-chun was disappointed to note the drastic increase in electricity tariff during the new DP period. He considered that the Scheme of Control Agreements ("SCAs") had in fact protected the returns of the power companies rather than exercising suitable control on the companies. Pointing out that the salaries of the senior management staff of the power companies had kept on surging, he urged the power companies to review the salary levels of their senior management staff so as to reduce the companies' operating costs.

9. Mr LUK Chung-hung pointed out with dissatisfaction that the electricity market was monopolized by the two power companies under a protective policy and wondered if the Administration had played a gate-keeping role in monitoring the tariff increase. He considered that the Administration should devise measures to prevent the power companies from earning the maximum return of 8% under the new SCAs when the tariff increase was significant. He was also dissatisfied with the high pay rise of the senior management staff of the power

companies which further pushed up the companies' operating expenditures.

10. SEN pointed out that the 6.8% tariff increase of HEC in 2019 was mainly attributed to the substantial reduction in special rebates. If the impact of the rebates was taken out, the net tariff for 2019 would be lower than that of 2018 by 5.9%. DSEN supplemented that in addition to the DP assessment, the Government also conducted annual tariff reviews and auditing reviews on the power companies to examine their capital and operating expenditures.

11. Mr Frankie YICK considered that using more cleaner yet expensive natural gas for power generation would inevitably drive up the future tariffs. It was also reasonable that with the provision of fewer rebates to offset the increase, the future tariffs would be higher than that in previous years. He supported the provision of ECR to alleviate the impact of tariff increase on the public and considered that such arrangement would not bring additional benefits to the power companies.

12. Although the permitted rate of return under the new SCAs had been lowered to 8%, Mr Steven HO suggested that the Government should consider reviewing the rate further having regard to the public affordability and provision of a reasonable return to incentivize the power companies to make investments.

Construction of an offshore liquefied natural gas terminal

13. Mr YIU Si-wing considered that sourcing cheaper gas supplies would help reduce fuel cost and electricity tariff. He asked about the strategies adopted by the power companies and the Administration's monitoring measures in this regard. Mr Holden CHOW shared a similar view.

14. The Chairman called on the Administration and the power companies to explore ways to diversify the fuel sources, so as to help sustain the development of the electricity and economic market of Hong Kong.

15. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP advised that CLP sourced LNG supplies through global tendering exercises taking into account the reliability of the suppliers which was of utmost importance.

16. Mr C T WAN of HEC replied that since HEC only had a single source of natural gas, i.e. the Dapeng LNG terminal, the construction of the offshore LNG terminal would provide a channel for the company to access to the international LNG market and strengthen its bargaining power in negotiating competitive gas

prices.

17. DSEN added that the Government had close liaison with the power companies to ensure a stable and sufficient gas supply. The construction of the offshore LNG terminal was an important project aiming to provide a long-term alternative gas supply source to meet the fuel supply needs of the power companies and enhance the diversity and security of gas supply. It would also enable the power companies to have direct access to the international LNG market, thus strengthening their power in negotiating competitive gas prices and help reduce the tariff pressure.

18. Mr Frankie YICK pointed out that the current gas price in the international market was lower than the contract prices for the supply of gas under the power companies' existing contracts. To allow the power companies to secure new contracts at a lower price as early as possible, he enquired about the progress of the construction of the offshore LNG terminal and its completion date.

19. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP said that the project was currently under the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") process. The relevant EIA report had been submitted to the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") and was currently available for public inspection. EPD would take into consideration the comments of the public and the Advisory Council on the Environment as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) in determining whether to issue the Environmental Permit ("EP"). The construction work for the terminal would commence once the EP was granted. It was expected that the work would commence by the fourth quarter of 2018. In the meantime, CLP had been exploring new gas supplies in the international market with a view to negotiating the contract terms in advance. Mr C T WAN of HEC supplemented that it was hoped that the terminal could be completed by the end of 2021.

20. The Deputy Chairman sought further information about the respective share of funding/ownership of CLP and HEC for the construction of the offshore LNG terminal.

21. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP said that CLP was expected to share a larger funding for the project while the detailed arrangement was still under discussion with HEC. They would submit a financial arrangement plan to the Administration in due course. The power companies were requested to provide further information on this matter.

(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1387/17-18(01) on 16 July 2018.)

22. Mr Steven HO expressed dissatisfaction that the fishing grounds in Hong Kong had been minimizing gradually due to various infrastructural projects. As the proposed construction of the offshore LNG terminal would pose further impact on the fishing trade, he could not agree with the project unless further information could be provided to justify the need for the construction of the terminal and the Administration could formulate a sustainable development plan for the fishing trade. He was doubtful if the terminal could serve its purpose of sourcing competitive gas prices and help reduce the tariff pressure, given the volatile nature of international gas prices. To this end, he asked HEC to provide information on the previous contract prices for supply of gas.

23. Mr C T WAN of HEC said that HEC currently had two gas contracts with the Dapeng LNG terminal. Since both contracts were entered at different times with different terms, the contract prices for supply of gas were varied. He added that gas prices were correlated with international oil prices.

24. SEN said that the construction of the offshore LNG terminal proposed by the two power companies was currently under the EIA process. The Environment Bureau was only in the position to give views on technical and financial aspects of the project.

Enhancement of Clean Energy Transmission System

25. Concerning the safety of using nuclear power for power generation, Mr CHU Hoi-dick asked if CLP had any plans to increase the import of nuclear energy from the Mainland and whether the enhancement of CETS would pave way for this purpose. He also enquired if the Administration was in support of using more nuclear energy for power generation, even though there was a wide public concern about the safety of nuclear plants.

26. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP explained that CETS had already been built in place for a long time, connecting Hong Kong and both the China Southern Power Grid and Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station. This project would involve the replacement of some 160 km of overhead lines by 2025, so as to provide CLP with greater flexibility to use more zero carbon energy to manage local fuel mix. Given the fast development of the electricity market in the Mainland, CLP had yet to decide the sources of energy for CETS.

27. DSEN added that CETS could in fact import power generated from various sources (e.g. hydro, wind, solar energy, nuclear energy) in the Mainland. While the sources of such clean energy for the enhanced system had yet to be decided, CLP would seek prior approval from the Administration on the ultimate decision. Possible options of utilizing more zero carbon energy would be covered by the Public Engagement exercise on Long-term Decarbonization Strategy ("Public Engagement exercise") to be conducted by the Council for Sustainable Development at the end of 2018.

28. Ms Tanya CHAN requested the Administration to provide after the meeting the planning details of the CLP's proposed enhancement of CETS network with the China Southern Power Grid and Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station including the relevant safety consideration and capital expenditure, together with measures to promote energy saving and reduce the demand for electricity consumption.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1387/17-18(01) on 16 July 2018.)

Development of advanced metering infrastructure

29. Mr CHAN Chun-ying noted that in order to develop AMI, the power companies would replace its electromechanical meters by smart meters with backend facilities under a seven-year programme to be completed by 2025. Concerning the proportion of the project cost to be incurred during the new DP period which would have implication on future tariffs, he asked about the number of meters expected to be replaced by the end of 2023.

30. Mr C T WAN of HEC said that a majority of the project expenditure would be incurred on the development of the supporting system during the new DP period, while individual meters would be replaced on a gradual basis.

31. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP advised that the total cost of CLP's AMI project was about \$3 billion, two-thirds of which would be incurred during the new DP period. This investment amount was only a small portion out of its total investment of \$52.9 billion during the new DP period.

32. SEN said that the Government attached great importance to promote energy saving. The development of AMI would help energy saving by providing instant power consumption information to customers, and achieve operational cost savings through remote meter reading and implementation of

demand response schemes.

Electricity Charges Relief

33. Mr Holden CHOW was worried that the proposed ECR could not offset the continuous rise in electricity tariff as a result of using more natural gas for power generation. He asked about the Administration's measures to address the impact of tariff increase in the long run.

34. Mr LUK Chung-hung cast doubt if the proposed ECR amounting to \$50 per month would be sufficient to offset the future tariff increase.

35. DSEN said that ECR of \$3,000 to be distributed over 60 months (i.e. \$50 per month) was expected to roughly cover the projected cumulative tariff increase over the new DP period for about half of the residential accounts in Hong Kong. The current monthly average net tariff covering both basic tariff and FCC for a 3-member household consuming 275kWh per month was about \$300 in total. Even if it increased by 10% during the new DP period, the proposed ECR was still sufficient to cover the difference. SEN added that to alleviate the tariff impact on consumers, the power companies had been exploring ways to source cheaper gas supplies.

36. The Deputy Chairman raised concern about the short notice given by the Administration in the announcement of the new DPs and submission of the ECR funding proposal to FC, given that LegCo was going to be in summer recess shortly. He considered the arrangement unsatisfactory as LegCo Members might not have sufficient time to scrutinize the funding proposal. He also asked about the contingency plan if the ECR funding proposal was not discussed or approved before the LegCo's recess.

37. DSEN said that the announcement of the new DPs was in fact made well in advance of their commencements respectively in October 2018 for CLP and January 2019 for HEC. The arrangement aimed to allow the Administration to seek funding from FC as soon as possible with a view to distributing ECR to residential electricity accounts when the new SCA for CLP commenced in October 2018. SEN added that the Administration had been striving to take forward various initiatives timely having regard to the need of achieving the carbon reduction target and assisting the households to tide over the drastic increase in fuel cost. The Administration would be willing to provide more information on the ECR proposal to address Members' concerns if necessary.

38. Ms Tanya CHAN shared the concern of the Deputy Chairman. To facilitate Members' consideration on the ECR funding proposal, she requested the Administration to provide more information about the proposal, including the assumptions and basis for the Administration's remark that the proposed ECR could cover the projected cumulative tariff increase over the new DP period for about half of the residential accounts in Hong Kong.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1387/17-18(01) on 16 July 2018.)

39. While supporting the provision of ECR, Mr YIU Si-wing raised concern about the continuous tariff increase as a result of a more stringent carbon reduction target in future. He asked whether the Government would continue to provide ECR to alleviate the impact of tariff increase after 2023.

40. Instead of providing ECR to address tariff rise when necessary, the Chairman urged the Administration to formulate a more effective long-term measure to tackle the problem, having regard to the current enormous fiscal reserve of the Government and the uncertainties of the global economy.

41. SEN said that the provision of ECR was a one-off measure aiming to help residential customers transit to a lower carbon future and assist households to tide over the drastic increase in fuel costs owing to the fuel mix change in 2020. The future arrangement on fuel mix would be determined in due course. DSEN added that to help stabilize the future tariffs, FCC of the power companies would be adjusted more frequently to once a month under the new SCAs, so that the fuel costs borne by the power companies would be reflected in the tariffs in a more timely manner.

42. Mr CHAN Chun-ying noted that among the 10 retiring coal-fired generating units of the power companies which would reach their scheduled retirement life between 2020 and 2030, the new DPs only covered the replacement of five of them. He enquired whether the Administration would continue to provide ECR to alleviate the impact of tariff increase during the next DP period.

43. DSEN said that in addition to those 10 generating units, some more coal units would also retire after 2030. The replacement plan for all these retiring units after 2023 had yet to be confirmed. Possible options could be replacing them by new gas units, or importing more low-carbon energy from the Mainland. The Administration would solicit public views on the long-term carbon intensity

reduction target and fuel mix during the forthcoming Public Engagement exercise.

44. Mr WU Chi-wai suggested that instead of providing \$8.7 billion for implementing the proposed ECR, the Administration should provide direct investment in the development of AMI and construction of an offshore LNG terminal for use by the two power companies so as to reduce the capital expenditure of the two power companies and the resultant increase in tariffs in the long run. He also suggested the development of a unified smart metering system for both electricity and water consumption so as to help turn Hong Kong into a smart city.

(Post-meeting note: The Government's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1387/17-18(01) on 16 July 2018.)

45. Mr Michael TIEN expressed support for the use of more natural gas. In view of the fluctuation of natural gas prices, he suggested that the Administration should explore ways to maintain the annual tariff increase to less than 2% in the long run by controlling the fuel costs of the two power companies and/or providing ECR to offset the difference so as to stabilize the future tariffs. SEN agreed to provide a response after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)1387/17-18(01) on 16 July 2018.)

Assistance for tenants of sub-divided flat units

46. Supporting the provision of ECR, Mr Christopher CHEUNG raised concern that tenants of sub-divided flat units ("SDU") who had no individual meters would not be benefitted from this initiative. He pointed out that SDU households were in most need of assistance and urged the Administration to explore measures to help these people, such as requiring the power companies to install individual meters for SDU households.

47. Mr LUK Chung-hung pointed out that although the Supply Rules of the two power companies prohibited their customers from reselling electricity, some SDU households were still being overcharged on electricity supply by their landlords given that they had no individual meters. Given that the Administration did not support his private Member's bill to amend the Electricity Ordinance (Cap. 406) to address the problem, he called on the Administration to formulate effective measures to ensure that SDU households would receive ECR or other financial subsidies through non-governmental organizations ("NGOs")'s assistance.

48. SEN pointed out that the Government had formulated measures to help SDU households through the new SCAs. For example, part of the funds to be established by the power companies would be used to support the disadvantaged groups, including SDU households. In addition, the power companies would install individual meters for SDU tenants as far as possible, subject to, inter alia, the consensus of the SDU tenants, landlords and building owners' corporations involved, as well as the fulfillment of the relevant technical and safety requirements. In fact, relevant Government bureaux were considering strategies to address the problem at the root.

49. Mr C T WAN of HEC added that in response to the provision of ECR, HEC would provide an annual financial subsidy of \$500 to each qualified SDU household during the new DP period. HEC would also provide financial and technical support to assist SDU households in installing individual meters subject to the consensus from relevant parties. If this could not be done, HEC would help such families to replace their electrical appliances with higher energy saving ones, so as to help them reduce spending on electricity.

50. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP advised that CLP attached great importance to help the underprivileged and achieve energy savings. It had launched a new CLP Community Energy Saving Fund to carry out various initiatives including the CLP Power Connect and Support for Subdivided Units Household Scheme which altogether would provide a subsidy of \$500 to 40 000 eligible households. CLP also strived to help SDU households install individual meters if the situation permitted, and would give out energy efficient electrical appliances to those in need.

(At 10:30 am, the Chairman directed that the meeting be extended for 10 minutes.)

51. Concerning the installation of individual meters for SDU households, Mr SHIU Ka-chun asked about the number of successful installations by the power companies in the past years.

52. Mr CHIANG Tung-keung of CLP said that CLP had so far installed 13 individual meters for SDU households in the past two years and would continue to collaborate with NGOs to provide assistance to SDU households. Mr C T WAN of HEC said that HEC also relied on NGO's assistance in providing subsidies to SDU families. Nevertheless, the company had no successful case on meter installation in the past.

Development of renewable energy

53. Mr Junius HO said that the transition to use more cleaner fuel was a global trend and thus the resultant impact on tariff increase was unavoidable. He considered that public participation in the development of renewable energy ("RE") would highly depend on the availability of grid connecting infrastructure and support provided by the power companies. Noting that HEC would spend some \$9 billion on its project on transmission and distribution system during the new DP period, he enquired about the amount of investment to be made on enhancing grid connection so as to drive the development of distributed RE. He also requested the power companies to strengthen the promotion of RE.

54. Mr C T WAN of HEC replied that HEC had so far received some 100 enquiries for connecting solar systems to the grids and the company was assisting the enquirers to implement their plans. There was no need to enhance HEC's transmission and distribution system at this stage. The company would review this matter when the need arose.

Conclusion

55. The Chairman concluded that the Panel was generally supportive of the proposal on ECR. He requested the Administration to take note of members' views, including the concerns raised on the construction of the offshore LNG terminal.

II. Any other business

56. At the end of the meeting, Mr HUI Chi-fung expressed dissatisfaction about the overlap between this special meeting and the meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee. He said that clashes of meetings should be avoided as far as practicable in future.

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:42 am.