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**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of
the West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

Meeting on 20 December 2017

**Updated background brief on the development of
the Art Park and Freespace**

Purpose

This paper provides updated information on the Art Park and Freespace in the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"). It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members on the related issues at meetings of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") and relevant committees of the Legislative Council ("LegCo").

Background

2. According to the approved Development Plan for WKCD,¹ the Art Park is an integral part of the 23-hectare public open space ("POS") to be provided in WKCD. The Art Park, located at the western end of WKCD, will house a number of arts and cultural venues/facilities, including M+ Pavilion and Freespace (the locations of the Art Park and the related facilities are shown on the schematic plan in **Appendix I**):

- M+ Pavilion was already opened in September 2016. It serves as the primary site for M+ exhibitions in the run-up to the completion of the M+ building. After M+ opens, M+ Pavilion will become a new space for artists, designers and organizations to stage independent small-scale exhibitions and events in the Art Park; and

¹ The Development Plan was submitted to the Town Planning Board in December 2011 and approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council in January 2013.

- Freespace is situated in the centre of the Art Park. There will be a black box theatre with an audience capacity of 450 if seated or 900 if standing; a foyer for local live music to be presented in a bar/café environment; and a multi-purpose function hall. An outdoor stage can also be set up at the great lawn next to Freespace for holding large-scale events and festivals for up to 10 000 standing audience.

3. Other planned provisions of the Art Park include retail, dining and entertainment ("RDE") facilities; cycling tracks and bicycle rental points; waterfront promenade and walks; marine landing facilities (subject to compliance with the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531) and agreement of the relevant government departments); and other recreational and leisure facilities.

4. As part of the pragmatic approach to implement the WKCD project through rigorous cost containment, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCD") announced in mid-2013 that it would commit to the early delivery of the Art Park and the related facilities, and the adoption of a simple and functional design in a cost effective manner. Under this approach, the project estimate for developing the Art Park (including M+ Pavilion and Freespace) is \$1 billion (in money-of-the-day prices).²

5. Subsequently, WKCD announced the appointment of the design consultant of the Art Park in February 2014, and briefed the Joint Subcommittee on its concept design in July 2014. The construction works of the Art Park then commenced in July 2016. In November 2017, WKCD advised the Joint Subcommittee that the construction works were on track with Phase 1 expected to be completed by end-2017 and planned to be open for visitors in the second quarter of 2018. Phase 2 including the RDE buildings was expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2018 while the final phase with Freespace by end-2018. Freespace was officially topped out in July 2017 while works would continue inside the building for its planned opening in 2019.

6. In preparation for the opening of the Art Park, WKCD has made the West Kowloon Cultural District (Public Open Spaces) Bylaw ("the Bylaw") (Cap. 601A) under section 37(1) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) to provide for the management, operation and use of POS within WKCD in order to ensure public safety, order and health; protect the environment; ensure that enjoyment of POS by some visitors does

² The said project estimate was reported to the Joint Subcommittee on 28 May 2014 ([LC Paper No. CB\(2\)1591/13-14\(01\)](#)).

not unduly disturb others; and allow the conduct of outdoor events from time to time.³ It empowers WKCDA and its authorized persons to give permission for POS users to perform an act or activity which is otherwise prohibited under the Bylaw and to enforce the Bylaw. Prosecution of criminal offences under the Bylaw may be brought in the name of WKCDA.

Major views and concerns expressed by Members

7. The major views of members of the Joint Subcommittee in respect of the development of the Art Park and the related facilities, and the concerns of the members of the subcommittee formed to study the proposed resolution on the Bylaw are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Positioning and design of the Art Park

8. Some members of the Joint Subcommittee considered that the Art Park should seek to distinguish itself from other public parks in Hong Kong. Members 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. WKCDA advised that the design consultant of the Art Park would meet with arts and cultural organizations to solicit their views and suggestions on the design, use and management of the Art Park.

9. Some members of the Joint Subcommittee were concerned about how WKCDA would ensure that the nearby Western Harbour Crossing ventilation building and the MTR ventilation building would be properly integrated with the surrounding green environment of the Art Park. They also asked if the area occupied by the two buildings had been reduced to a minimum. WKCDA's design consultant advised that in view of the prominent appearance of the two buildings, the design team would put more trees and plants around them to make them less noticeable in the Art Park and integrate better with the surrounding landscape. The design team would endeavour to minimize the visual impact on the Art Park.

³ Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") gave notice to move a proposed resolution at the Council meeting of 16 March 2016 to seek LegCo's approval of the Bylaw. A subcommittee was formed to study the proposed resolution; and according to the established practice, SHA then withdrew the proposed resolution to allow time for the subcommittee to study it in detail. The proposed resolution, with amendments proposed by WKCDA to address the concerns of some subcommittee members, was subsequently moved and approved at the Council meeting of 22 June 2016.

10. Some members of the Joint Subcommittee were concerned that certain species of trees might not be suitable for planting in the Art Park on the reclaimed WKCD site, and that the future landscape maintenance costs might be considerably high given its windy and exposed location. They called on WKCDA to identify suitable species of trees to be planted having regard to the climate of Hong Kong and the location of WKCD.

11. WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee in November 2017 that there were 937 trees in the Nursery Park.⁴ 512 of these trees were found suitable for transferring to the permanent Art Park after having tested their resistance to the exposure to wind, rain, salt water and typhoons, etc. It was planned that these trees would start to be transferred to the Art Park towards the end of 2017. In the meantime, around 700 trees were selected from tree nurseries in Mainland China for the Art Park. Trees in the Nursery Park that were not selected for planting in the Art Park would be kept at the north of the Nursery Park while those with unrecoverable damage and in poor conditions would be disposed of.

Accessibility of the Art Park

12. Members considered that WKCDA should enhance pedestrian access to and within the Art Park throughout the development process of WKCD. Members urged WKCDA to provide sufficient emergency accesses in the Art Park.

13. WKCDA advised that accessibility had all along been one of the key planning and design principles underpinning the WKCD project. Due regard had been given at the design stages to ensuring the accessibility of the Park for all, including the provision of appropriate forms of transport for those who were mobility-challenged to get to every part of the Art Park.

14. Some members were concerned that the construction programme of the Art Park did not dovetail with that of M+ Pavilion, thus causing difficulties for the public to access M+ Pavilion after its commissioning and use the adjoining open space during the construction period of the Art Park. WKCDA advised that the site where M+ Pavilion was located would be self-contained with all the necessary supporting infrastructure. The area around M+ Pavilion would be landscaped as part of the existing works for the Park, and it would be accessible to the public after the commissioning of M+ Pavilion and throughout the construction period of the remaining parts of the Park.

⁴ The Nursery Park is a temporary tree nursery situated in the north-western end of WKCD.

Provision of cycling facilities

15. Members considered that WKCDA should provide both bikes for adults and those for children (e.g. tricycles) in WKCD which would become a popular leisure spot for families. WKCDA advised that two SmartBike stations providing automated bike rental service had been set up along the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade. The SmartBike service had been well-received by the public, and WKCDA would continue to evaluate and improve the service leading up to the opening of the Art Park.

Provision of toilet facilities

16. Given that there had been calls for the Government to increase the male-to-female toilet compartment ratio in public places so as to increase the provision of female toilets, some members of the Joint Subcommittee called on WKCDA to ensure that the provision of toilet facilities in the Art Park would be in line with the future enhanced standards for the provision of female toilet facilities in public places. Some members enquired about the availability of unisex toilets in WKCD to cater for the needs of carers and transgender persons and also as a family-friendly facility.

17. WKCDA assured members that it had specifically requested its design consultant to ensure adequate provision of toilet facilities in the Art Park, and disabled toilets would be provided for use by persons with different needs.

Management of the Art Park

18. Members generally considered it important that WKCDA should adopt a relaxed and flexible approach in managing the Art Park to facilitate public enjoyment of the open space, and that the Bylaw should seek to facilitate public enjoyment with minimum restrictions. There was also a view that the vision and mission of WKCDA for POS in WKCD should be incorporated into the proposed Bylaw.

19. WKCDA stressed that while it would endeavour to manage the Art Park with a light hand and encourage a wide range of cultural leisure activities to be held therein, it would not be prudent or in the best interest of public safety and security to have no rules of conduct in place. In the drafting of the Bylaw, it had given due regard to the guiding principle that use of the Art Park in POS should be open and accessible wherever possible, as well as the mission of the Art Park to inspire, promote and encourage cultural pursuits for all. It had also made reference to the management practices adopted by local and overseas parks and cultural areas. WKCDA would exercise discretion and flexibility in

executing the Bylaw. Having considered the views of the relevant subcommittee, WKCDA moved an amendment to the relevant paragraph of the preamble to the Bylaw to state clearly the vision and mission of WKCDA for POS in WKCD.

Latest development

20. At the Joint Subcommittee meeting to be held on 20 December 2017, the Administration and WKCDA will update members on the latest development of the Art Park and Freespace, including the construction progress and opening plan.

Relevant papers

21. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo Website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 December 2017

西九文化區主要設施示意圖
Schematic plan of major WKCD facilities



資料來源：立法會 CB(1)215/17-18(04)號文件的附件一

Source: Annex 1 to [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)215/17-18\(04\)](#)

Development of the Art Park and Freespace

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project (in operation in the Fifth Legislative Council)	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
	23.3.2015 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes The Administration's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting (LC Paper No. CB(2)1467/14-15(01))
Legislative Council	16.3.2016	Proposed Resolution under Section 37 of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance (Cap. 601) Legislative Council Brief Legal Service Division Report (LC Paper No. LS37/15-16)

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
		Report of the Subcommittee (LC Paper No. CB(2)1688/15-16)
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	21.11.2017 (Item V)	Agenda