

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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seen by the Administration)

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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex**  
**on Wednesday, 14 July 2021 at 8:30 am**

**Members present:**

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon YIU Si-wing, SBS (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, GBS, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

**Member absent:**

Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP

**Public Officers attending:**

Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Mrs Angelina CHEUNG FUNG Wing-ping, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1
Mr José YAM Ho-san	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Energy)
Mr PANG Yiu-hung, JP	Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services
Mr Raymond POON Kwok-ying, JP	Deputy Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Regulatory Services)
Mr Barry CHU Kei-ming	Assistant Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Electricity and Energy Efficiency)
Mrs Sharon YIP LEE Hang-ye, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 1
Miss Gillian LAM Yuk-ting	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) 5
Mr Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming, JP	Director of Highways
Mr NG Wai-keung, JP	Deputy Director of Highways
Mr Frankie CHOU Wing-ping	Regional Highway Engineer (New Territories) Highways Department
Mr CHAN Wai-tak	Chief Highway Engineer (Special Maintenance) (Urban) Highways Department

**Clerk in attendance:**

Ms Connie SZETO	Chief Council Secretary (1)4
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**Staff in attendance:**

Mr Patrick CHOI	Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Ms Sharon CHAN	Legislative Assistant (1)4
Ms Haley CHEUNG	Legislative Assistant (1)10

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The Deputy Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2021-22)7, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 and the changes to the directorate establishment in relation to the three items on the agenda. He then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest relating to the items under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the items. He also drew members' attention to RoP 84 on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

**EC(2021-22)9                      Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Chief Building Services Engineer (D1) in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department for five years with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee to head a new division in order to strengthen the planning and implementation of district cooling system projects**

2.        The Deputy Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create one supernumerary post of Chief Building Services Engineer ("CBSE") (D1) in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department ("EMSD"), to be designated as Chief Engineer/Energy Efficiency C ("CE/EEC"), for five years with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") to head a new division (i.e. Energy Efficiency Division C ("EE Div. C") to be created in the Energy Efficiency Office ("EEO"), an office in the Electricity and Energy Efficiency Branch of the EMSD) to strengthen the planning and implementation of district cooling system ("DCS") projects.

3.        The Deputy Chairman pointed out that the Panel on Environmental Affairs ("EA Panel") had discussed the proposals for creation of one permanent post of CBSE in EMSD and reorganization of EEO under EMSD at its meeting on 22 January 2020. The Panel had raised no objection to the Administration's submission of the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC"). Members had opined that the proposed post should be created on a time-limited basis and expressed their views and concerns about other related matters, including the effectiveness of EEO's work and the actual energy saving performance of the DCS at the Kai Tak Development ("KTD") ("the Kai Tak DCS"). The Panel had also requested supplementary information from the Administration on the respective numbers of posts in EEO as at present and after reorganization, the estimated

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operation and maintenance costs of DCSs and the effectiveness of EEO's work in reducing Hong Kong's energy intensity and carbon intensity. The supplementary information (LC Paper No. CB(1)930/19-20(02)) addressing members' concerns provided by the authorities after the meeting had been circulated to all Members on 7 August 2020.

Deliberations

*District cooling systems under implementation and planning*

4. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for the staffing proposal and the Government's efforts to provide DCSs in new development areas ("NDAs") such as the Kwu Tung North ("KTN") NDA, the Tung Chung New Town Extension (East) ("TCE") and the Hung Shui Kiu ("HSK") NDA. He believed it was necessary for the Administration to have additional staff to cope with the expected increase in workload.

5. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support for the staffing proposal in principle. Mr POON and Mr YIU Si-wing enquired whether the Administration would consider introducing DCSs in the neighbouring areas of KTD like Kowloon City and Kwun Tong, new towns like Tseung Kwan O, or even in large old residential developments in all districts across Hong Kong.

6. Mr Tony TSE requested the Administration to elaborate the expected number of DCS projects (including those being planned or under construction) to be overseen by CE/EEC in the next five years; and whether the Administration would consider setting up DCSs for the projects in Lok Ma Chau Loop ("the Loop").

7. Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Energy) ("PAS(EG)") advised that the Administration would continue to identify suitable sites for more DCS projects. He explained that as DCSs needed an underground distribution piping network to distribute the chilled water produced by a centralized air-conditioning system to user buildings for air conditioning purposes, it would be a rather challenging task to lay the relevant systems in developed areas. Besides it might not be cost effective to do so. Moreover, compared to industrial and commercial users, the pattern of air-conditioning consumption of residential users was not as stable and the cost effectiveness so achieved was thus lower. Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services ("DEMS") added that in considering whether more commercial buildings could be included in a given DCS, the maximum cooling capacity of the DCS, coverage of distribution piping networks and financial viability were important factors that must be taken into account.

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8. Regarding the progress of DCS projects being planned or under construction, PAS(EG) advised that it was expected that the remaining works of the existing DCS and the works of an additional DCS at KTD and the main works of DCSs in TCE and KTN NDA would be completed substantially by the end of 2025, the end of 2028, 2030 and 2031 respectively. Currently, EMSD was also conducting preliminary planning and feasibility studies for DCS projects in HSK NDA. As for the DCSs to be provided in the Loop, as they formed part of the projects in Batch 1 development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park Limited would be vested with the implementation responsibilities, whilst EMSD would offer professional advice on the projects.

9. PAS(EG) and DEMS added that in future, the relevant implementation work of DCSs in other NDAs, such as the artificial islands in the Central Waters under study, would be taken over by EE Div. C under the leadership of CE/EEC. EMSD would assess the continued need for the post before its term lapsed in five years.

*Economic benefits of district cooling systems*

10. Mr WONG Ting-kwong was concerned whether the progress and costs of the Kai Tak DCS project met the Administration's expectation.

11. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed reservations about implementing more DCS projects. Using the Kai Tak DCS project as an example, she pointed out that the construction and maintenance cost of a DCS was exorbitantly high. Whilst the project estimate approved by FC back in June 2009 was around \$1.6 million, the latest estimated cost had raised significantly to nearly \$5 billion after a number of revisions. However, as Kai Tak DCS had only 11 user buildings in the region, the energy efficiency so achieved was seemingly insignificant.

12. Mr CHAN Hak-kan asked whether the duties of the proposed directorate post would include looking into the energy efficiency and cost effectiveness of the commissioned DCS facilities and extending the serviceable scope of DCSs to cover private buildings.

13. DEMS advised that the Kai Tak DCS project was progressing well as 65% of the civil works of the project and 55% of the construction works of the mechanical and electrical facilities had been completed. It was anticipated that the project would be completed substantially by the end of 2025. Regarding the project estimate of the Kai Tak DCS, PAS(EG) clarified that as the system was first of its kind in Hong Kong, the

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Government had decided to submit funding applications to FC in phases for taking forward the project, having regard to the progress of KTD. He stressed that according to the information submitted to FC in 2013, the total funding approved for all phases of the Kai Tak DCS was \$4,945.5 million, and so far no cost overrun had been recorded for the project.

14. DEMS advised that to maximize cost effectiveness, the Administration would ensure that DCSs in NDAs be developed and commissioned for operation in phases, whilst the construction and installation schedules of the component equipment and distribution networks would be timely adjusted to suit the actual development schedules of respective developments of NDAs. As regards the use of district cooling service in private non-residential developments, the Administration would enforce the District Cooling Services Ordinance (Cap. 624) and add appropriate conditions in the sale of land by public auction to stipulate which buildings or facilities in the development areas concerned should provide the necessary connections to DCSs, with a view to boosting the subscription rate of DCSs.

15. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired how DCSs, as compared with traditional air-conditioning systems in individual buildings, helped user buildings to save air-conditioning cost.

16. Mr CHAN Hak-kan remarked that while he supported the provision of DCSs to save energy, the high construction and operating costs were causes of public concern over the cost effectiveness of DCSs. He pointed out that as the Kai Tak DCS had been in operation for only eight years and the number of users was on the low side in the early stage, the Administration still could not gather sufficient data at the moment to prove that the costs could be fully recovered in the DCS's service life of 30 years as expected. He was concerned that in the absence of the aforesaid data, it might not be desirable to roll out DCS projects in a large scale. He requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the data-based assessment of the cost effectiveness of the Kai Tak DCS, including its operating data over the past eight years, and conduct a pro rata assessment of the expected full recoverability of the costs in 30 years of operation.

17. PAS(EG) advised that as far as user buildings were concerned, air-conditioning charges for DCSs and traditional individual air-conditioning systems using cooling towers were more or less the same, but DCSs had a higher energy efficiency. DEMS added that in setting the tariff of every DCS project, the Government strived to recover the capital and operating costs of DCSs within the said 30 years and ensure that the tariff was set at a competitive level, i.e. comparable to the cost of using individual air-conditioning systems using cooling towers. Also, the Administration

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would review the tariff level of DCSs once every five years, ensuring the aforesaid target could be achieved. Current data indicated that it was expected that the payback period of less than 30 years could be achieved for the Kai Tak DCS. DEMS undertook to provide information requested by Mr CHAN Hak-kan after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 29 July 2021 vide LC Paper No. ESC87/20-21(01).)*

18. Mr Holden CHOW asked whether the Administration had assessed how many jobs could be directly created in the course of taking forward DCSs. He also asked whether, in addition to providing the existing support for various energy efficiency and conservation ("EE&C") and renewable energy ("RE") initiatives, the reorganized EEO would take on new functions such as assessing and promoting the economic benefits and job opportunities such initiatives could bring about.

19. PAS(EG) advised that the Administration had all along assessed the economic benefits of various EE&C and RE initiatives. According to the estimate of the Administration, the implementation of the additional DCS at KTD and the DCS projects at TCE and KTN NDA could create 335, 250 and 215 job opportunities respectively. Furthermore, among the other initiatives implemented by EEO, three of them, namely "Green Schools 2.0 – Energy Smart", "Green Welfare NGOs", and provision of small-scale RE installations at government buildings and infrastructure, could create 250, 50 and 200 job opportunities respectively.

*Energy saving performance and other benefits of district cooling systems*

20. Ir Dr LO Wai-kiwok enquired whether the expected energy efficiency target of the Kai Tak DCS project was met, and whether the Administration had estimated the cost to be saved by user buildings of DCSs as compared to those buildings installed with individual air-conditioning systems.

21. DEMS answered that the Kai Tak DCS had been commissioned in phases since 2013, servicing a number of buildings in the area; as for 2019-2020 it was estimated that the total saving in electricity consumption amounted to approximately 20 million kWh. The Administration estimated that the annual saving in electricity consumption would be around 85 million kWh after the entire Kai Tak DCS project was completed and commissioned.

22. DEMS added that in general the use of DCSs could enable user buildings to save on building cost, up to about 5% to 10% of the total building cost. Apart from considerable energy saving, DCS would also

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bring about other important benefits, including more flexibility in building designs for user buildings, decrease in noise and vibration arising from the operation of chillers of air-conditioning plants and heat rejection equipment in user buildings, as well as reduction of heat island effects. All these benefits might not necessarily be quantifiable.

23. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the details of the maintenance work for DCSs and whether the service life of DCSs was around 30 years.

24. PAS(EG) advised that the as indicated in the paper concerned, the estimated service life of DCSs was 30 years, and this was an assumption made for the purpose of financial estimation. In reality, with proper maintenance, the estimated life of DCSs could exceed 30 years. DEMS added that DCS projects would be tendered under a "Design, Build and Operate" ("DBO") model contract. In addition to offering incentives to induce contractors to compress the construction period, this model could also encourage contractors to give thorough consideration to the operating costs during the design stage, with a view to lowering the DCS tariffs.

25. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan pointed out that energy saving technologies and carbon reduction measures developed rapidly. District cooling was a technology developed 10-odd years ago, and its demerit was that the construction period took a very long time. She opined that the Administration should conduct a review of the benefits of the Kai Tak DCS project upon its full completion and commission before considering rolling out more similar projects. Dr CHIANG also pointed out that quite a number of more advanced energy saving solutions had emerged in recent years, such as photovoltaic glazings and green roofs, and she enquired about the energy saving performance of the RE technology in the Kai Tak DCS.

26. DEMS remarked that DCSs were infrastructure projects which, similar to water and electricity infrastructure projects, had to be completed before the DNAs concerned embark on other subsequent construction works and before the completion of the relevant buildings therein. If DCSs in other NDAs were to be considered pending a review of the benefits of the Kai Tak DCS project, it would be impossible for the DCSs to cope with the planning and development schedules of NDAs, and the target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as set out in the 2020 Policy Address would also be affected.

27. DEMS pointed out that DCSs were one of the most energy-efficient air-conditioning technologies nowadays. As the Administration had included in construction contracts requirements regarding energy saving performance, in addition to adopting the state-of-the-art technology in designing the project, contractors would also explore from time to time the



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introduction of new technologies to further enhance the energy saving performance of the DCSs. Furthermore, the Administration would, in light of technological advances, call on government departments and various sectors to make use of all kinds of RE more actively.

*Duties of the proposed Chief Engineer/ Energy Efficiency C*

28. Mr WONG Ting-kwong asked about the purpose of adding the supernumerary post of CE/EEC to the existing establishment of EEO and how the proposed post would contribute to strengthening of the planning of DCS projects.

29. Mr Tony TSE asked whether the operation and management of commissioned DCS facilities would still be the responsibility of EEDC headed by CE/EEC.

30. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired whether the duties of CE/EEC would include helping Hong Kong achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as set out in the 2020 Policy Address and supporting a number of new initiatives to be taken forward by EEO which were announced in the 2019 Policy Address and 2021-2022 Budget.

31. PAS(EG) advised that the development of DCS projects in NDAs would be implemented in phases to tie in with the related development programmes. Given the complexity of the work in setting up DCSs and the very long construction period involved, CE/EEC would, in addition to leading and overseeing the planning, design and construction of DCS projects in NDAs, be also responsible for maintaining constant and close liaison and coordination with different works agents in NDAs, government bureaux/departments and stakeholders (e.g. utility companies and users of DCSs) to ensure effective implementation of related projects. Furthermore, as DCS projects were tendered under a DBO model contract, CE/EEC's responsibilities would also include managing commissioned DCSs whose operation was undertaken by the contractors concerned.

32. DEMS advised that apart from taking forward the DCSs in KTN NDA and TCE the funding for which had been granted in February 2021, EMSD would also conduct preliminary planning and feasibility studies for DCS projects in HSK NDA. Given the extensive scale of the new projects, the Department needed to create the proposed new post to strengthen the planning of various DCS projects.

33. PAS(EG) added that with the creation of the proposed supernumerary post of CE/EEC dedicated for the planning and implementation of DCSs at NDAs, the duties of EEO could be restructured in such a way that the other

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two CEs at the Office could devote more attention to the implementation of EE&C and RE initiatives and works.

*Reorganization of the Energy Efficiency Office*

34. Mr POON Siu-ping asked for the details about the current establishment of EEO and the 17 time-limited posts of professional grade in EEDC proposed to be created after the reorganization of EEO.

35. Highlighting the fact that 22 out of 42 non-directorate posts supporting the new EE Div. C to be established would be deployed from other subdivisions, Mr YIU Si-wing expressed concern about the possible impact of such an arrangement on the work of other subdivisions.

36. PAS(EG) and DEMS advised that in order to address the keen public demand for green construction, the number of non-directorate posts in EEO had increased from 40 in 2000 to 141 as at present. The Administration hoped that upon the creation of the CE/EEC post, it would adjust the span of direct control of each CE to enhance the quality of management; besides, restructuring the duties of EEO would also achieve greater overall operational efficiency and effectiveness.

37. DEMS added that some posts were on time-limited basis because temporary posts had to be created in light of the different stages of implementation of the related initiatives taken forward by EEO, such as "Green Schools 2.0 – Energy Smart" and "Green Welfare NGOs". The staff members to be deployed to EE Div. C were at present under EE Div. A or EE Div. B, and no addition or removal of non-directorate posts in EEO would be involved in the creation of EE Div. C.

38. Pointing out that the Administration had consulted EA Panel about the proposed creation of one permanent post of CBSE in as early as the start of 2020, Mr Tony TSE enquired about the reasons why it took almost a year and a half for the Administration to submit the relevant staffing proposal, and the rationale for changing the relevant permanent post into a supernumerary post of five years. He was concerned that the construction period of the relevant projects had already been delayed for approximately one and a half years.

39. PAS(EG) explained that further to the consultation with EA Panel in January 2020, the Administration already provided Panel members with supplementary information in July 2020. The Chief Executive announced in the 2020 Policy Address that noting some Members' views on the proposed creation of directorate posts, the Government would review all such staffing proposals. Following the review, the Administration had revised the

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proposed creation of the aforesaid one permanent post by turning it into a supernumerary post of five years. DEMS added that in the past one and a half years, EMSD had conducted internal redeployment of resources and work reprioritization to ensure that the progress of DCS projects and related infrastructure projects was not affected.

40. Ms Starry LEE opined that in face of new social situations that kept changing rapidly and people's rising demand and expectation of the Government, the Administration could not address the increase in workload solely by creating new posts. She enquired about EMSD's main direction of consideration in the reorganization of EEO and whether consideration had been given to making use of new technology or other resources to re-engineer and streamline the Department's internal work process, with a view to enhancing work efficiency. Ms LEE further pointed out that EMSD had recorded an increase of nearly 13% in its establishment for regulatory services in the past two years, a rate higher than that of other government departments.

41. DEMS remarked that with the rising public expectation of the energy saving and carbon reduction initiatives rolled out by the Government in recent years, the workload of EEO had been on the increase, and the number of subdivisions under EEO had also been increased from 9 to 29 over the past 20 years. The Department had sought to enhance efficiency by reengineering its work process and introducing advanced technologies including an electronic registration system, and allocated the resources so saved to other tasks with higher priorities. Nevertheless, given the heavy workload, particularly that arising from multiple large-scale DCS projects which would run in parallel, EMSD considered that there was an urgent need to create the proposed post to ensure that the implementation of all projects would proceed as scheduled, thereby avoiding inflicting impact on other construction projects in the NDAs.

42. Regarding the concerns over the increase in the establishment size of EMSD in recent years, DEMS explained that in addition to creating new posts in EEO, manpower had also been increased to provide regulatory services with regard to the safety of railway, gas and electricity. EMSD did not have on hand the relevant establishment data of other government departments. As one of the Government's Innovation Facilitators, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund would continue to make every endeavour to assist the Government in adopting innovative electrical and mechanical and energy technologies to provide members of the public and other government departments with further enhanced services.

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Voting on the item

43. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. All the members present were in favour of the proposal. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval.

44. Mr CHAN Hak-kan requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

**EC(2021-22)7            Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of Chief Engineer (D1) in the Highways Department with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee for three years to cope with the rapidly increasing workload relating to the maintenance of cross-boundary highway infrastructures, other major highway infrastructures as well as ageing public highway structures, and to take part in various tasks relating to land supply and land use planning strategies**

45. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create two supernumerary posts of Chief Engineer ("CE") (D1) in the Highways Department ("HyD") with immediate effect upon approval of FC for three years to cope with the rapidly increasing workload relating to the maintenance of cross-boundary highway infrastructures, other major highway infrastructures as well as ageing public highway structures, and to take part in various tasks relating to land supply and land use planning strategies.

46. The Chairman pointed out that at its meeting on 20 November 2020, the Panel on Transport discussed the Government's proposal to create six permanent directorate posts in HyD, including four directorate posts to take forward related projects under the policy of "Walk in Hong Kong"; and one CE (D1) post each in the New Territories Regional Office and the Urban Regional Office to strengthen road maintenance and district administration work. Members generally had reservation over the creation of the aforesaid six permanent directorate posts and enquired if the Administration had considered meeting the manpower requirement through internal redeployment. The Panel requested the Administration to give an account of the benefits to be brought about by the proposal in quantified terms in respect of cost-effectiveness and project delivery, and the feasibility of creating the proposed posts on a supernumerary basis when submitting the staffing proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for deliberation. The

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Administration had provided the relevant information and responded to the Panel's views. The Administration also advised that it would reduce the number of permanent directorate posts proposed to be created from six to five, which were converted into supernumerary posts. The relevant paper had been circulated to all Members on 18 March 2021 vide LC Paper No. CB(4)657/20-21(01).

47. The Chairman further remarked that regarding the staffing proposal, i.e. adding one CE each in the New Territories Regional Office and the Urban Regional Office of HyD, Panel members had noted at the meeting in November 2020 that the existing public highway structures in Hong Kong were ageing gradually, so there was a pressing need to create the posts to study and formulate strategically long-term maintenance schemes with a view to ensuring structural safety and enhancing the durability of those public highway structures.

Deliberations

*Work related to maintenance of ageing public highway structures*

48. Mr Martin LIAO expressed support for the staffing proposal in principle. He noted that in the coming three years, the two proposed CEs would review the overall condition of the ageing public highway structures in Hong Kong, including formulating strategies on comprehensive inspection on the main structures and associated components of highway structures and prioritizing the rehabilitation works for those structures. However, he noticed that HyD would perform a detailed inspection for public roads territory-wide at a six-month interval, including inspecting road surfaces and structures as well as planning maintenance works in both medium and long terms using the data collected. He was concerned whether the aforesaid two tasks would overlap with each other.

49. Mr Tony TSE expressed support for the staffing proposal. He enquired about the areas of distribution and selection criteria of the about 700 ageing public highway structures included on the list for inspection in the coming three years, and how the Administration would handle the other some 800 ageing structures built for more than 30 years ago and not included on the list.

50. In response, Director of Highways ("DHy") advised that of the approximately 1 500 ageing public highway structures in Hong Kong, HyD would select around 700 older ones for prioritized comprehensive inspection, with around 400 being in the New Territories and around 300 in urban areas. HyD anticipated that after the two proposed CEs had formulated the inspection and rehabilitation strategies for ageing public highway structures,

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they would conduct inspection and rehabilitation on other ageing highway structures with the strategies formulated.

51. Deputy Director of Highways ("DDHy") added that HyD's regular roads inspection performed at a six-month interval consisted of mainly visual inspection of the conditions of roads and associated structures as well as arrangement of appropriate maintenance works as needed. Apart from detailed visual inspection, the inspection of ageing highway structures would also involve a number of different means, including beating the concrete surfaces or on-site sampling, so as to perform in-depth inspection on the specific conditions of ageing structures. DDHy advised that the two tasks of highway structure inspection mentioned by the Member did not overlap with each other in nature.

52. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for the staffing proposal. He pointed out that since the establishment of HyD, road networks in Hong Kong had been expanding rapidly and the number of highway structures in the territory had increased substantially, but only one post at CE rank had been added to the Regional Offices of HyD over the years, so it was difficult to cope with the substantially increased workload arising from the expanded scope of work and ageing of structures. He opined that despite the Government's indication of suspending the creation of permanent directorate posts, the staffing proposal concerned was well justified, and he asked whether the Administration would consider extending the expiry of the two supernumerary CE posts from three years to five.

53. DHy explained that considering the current economic condition, the Administration would create supernumerary directorate posts for handling related matters only if keen and imminent needs were ascertained. After further review of manpower, HyD proposed to first create two supernumerary CE posts for three years to cope with the Regional Offices' most pressing tasks which had to commence immediately. After three years, HyD would review if a new proposal of staffing adjustment was needed, taking into account the implementation progress of the strategies and plans formulated by the two proposed CEs for the inspection and rehabilitation of ageing highway structures.

54. Mr Martin LIAO noted that the two proposed CEs would be responsible for leading the rehabilitation works for public highway structures, overseeing resource allocation and selecting the most resource-efficient rehabilitation scheme. He enquired about the Administration's weighing of various relevant criteria and considerations in tendering for maintenance of ageing public highway structures.

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55. DDHy explained that HyD's usual practice was to evaluate tender documents for term contracts through the adoption of a "two-envelope system", under which tenderers were required to submit separate envelopes for "technical submission" and "tender price submission", whereas a technical score and a price score would be derived in accordance with the various evaluation criteria stipulated in the tender documents, to ensure that the successful tenderers were sufficiently capable in terms of technicality and experience to complete the work under the term contracts concerned. The technical score and price score for a typical term contract accounted for 30% and 70% of the overall score respectively.

*Work related to maintenance of defective roads*

56. Mr Tony TSE pointed out that carriageways in Hong Kong were always littered with gravel on both sides, posing dangers to road users. He urged HyD to step up its road surface cleaning efforts in order to make improvement. Regarding the maintenance of defective road surfaces, Mr TSE opined that temporary patching of pot holes very often could not yield a long-lasting maintenance effect. However, given the impact of large-scale maintenance works on traffic flow, it appeared that HyD would pursue repetitive patching of pot holes instead, and would seldom extend the scale of works to road resurfacing to achieve thorough improvement to the conditions of the roads concerned. Mr TSE expected that the two proposed CEs would formulate more expeditious and effective maintenance schemes for road repair in the future.

57. DHy advised that according to HyD's general established procedures for dealing with pot holes, temporary patching would be immediately arranged for expeditious rehabilitation to enable the safe use of the roads concerned, to be followed by more comprehensive or extensive maintenance works as needed upon evaluation of the impact of the maintenance works schemes on traffic. He pointed out that arranging large-scale maintenance works for roads with heavy traffic would inevitably affect traffic. HyD hoped that upon the creation of the proposed CE posts, more efficient road maintenance strategies and works schemes could be formulated. DHy added that HyD had been conducting trials on a wide range of sturdier road materials to make roads more durable and that in turn would reduce the frequency of road maintenance. DHy advised that the work of regular public highway cleaning was shared by a number of different departments, and safety of road users was top priority for such work. Should there be any miscellaneous articles or bulky waste found on the road posing danger to members of the public, contractors would be arranged immediately for clearing.

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58. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed support for the staffing proposal. She was concerned about the time taken to finish the rehabilitation works after HyD had received reports about defective public carriageways or uneven walkways. Ms YUNG asked whether, upon the creation of the proposed posts, HyD would provide channels other than the one-stop enquiry service of "1823 Citizen's Easy Link" enabling members of the public to make direct enquiries or complaints to HyD about road maintenance matters, and review its current mechanism for handling public complaints so as to expedite complaint case handling. The Chairman enquired whether HyD had any hotline or service pledge for public complaint handling.

59. DHy advised that regular inspections were conducted on roads to make sure they remained in good conditions. The purpose of such inspections was to proactively identify road defects that might pose danger or cause inconvenience to the public and expeditiously take follow-up actions, such as road rehabilitation, after co-ordinating with relevant departments for the necessary temporary traffic arrangements. The creation of the two proposed CE posts by HyD would enrich human resources, helping to boost its work efficiency and put it in a position to consider enhancing current services, such as increasing the frequency of regular road inspections. As for complaint handling, DHy advised that various channels like hotline, mobile apps and email were made available for members of the public to enquire or lodge complaints about the services of HyD. Details of the various means of contact had been uploaded onto HyD's webpage.

*Duties related to the "Walkable City" concept and other duties*

60. The Chairman noted that the Administration had proposed to establish the Walkability Project Management Office and separately create four permanent directorate posts to take forward works relating to the concept of "Walkable City", including the Universal Accessibility Programme as well as the hillside escalator links and elevator systems ("HEL"), etc. Having considered the tight fiscal position, the Administration would now instead propose to first create two supernumerary CE posts, and advised that it would deploy existing resources to continue taking forward "Walkable City" projects as far as practicable. The Chairman was concerned about the Administration's slow implementation progress of HEL and the Universal Accessibility Programme. She enquired about how the various outstanding projects, such as HEL at Saddle Ridge Garden, would be followed up, and why some of the proposed projects were in an extended investigation stage.

61. DHy advised that taking note of Members' views on the creation of directorate posts and after further review, the Administration had revised the



Action

proposal from creating six permanent posts to first creating two supernumerary CE posts to cope with the most urgent current tasks of the Regional Offices. Work related to HEL and the Universal Accessibility Programme would continue to be handled by HyD's existing manpower. As regards the lift and pedestrian walkway system between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road mentioned by the Chairman, DHy explained that the project involved slopes whose maintenance was undertaken by private owners, and the land lease issues involved were not resolved until recently. HyD would expeditiously commence relevant works according to the public works procedures.

62. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the respective numbers of proposals received for HEL and the Universal Accessibility Programme, the numbers of projects passing the assessment, the latest assessment criteria and the latest progress of various projects. DHy undertook to provide relevant information after the meeting. He added that besides the 18 HEL projects which had been assigned scores according to the original assessment mechanism established in 2009, the Administration had also carried out initial screening, shortlisting and prioritization of other proposed HEL projects. Works for some of these projects were anticipated to commence within the next two years.

*(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 10 August 2021 vide LC Paper No. ESC88/20-21(01).)*

63. Mr Tony TSE enquired whether the proposed CEs' scope of work would include reviewing the utilization of footbridges and subways and considering demolition of some footbridges with extremely low utilization in order to release relevant room and land for other purposes.

64. DHy advised that the Administration would adapt to the circumstances having regard to social development and transportation needs in considering whether to retain existing road structures. As an illustration, he pointed out that the Administration had recently decided to demolish a footbridge in Sham Shui Po which was no longer needed actually, and planned to build a public car park there according to the land use demand in the community.

*(At 10:23 am, the Chairman asked if members agreed to extend the meeting by 15 minutes to 10:45 am to conclude consideration of the item. No members raised any objection.)*

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Voting on the item

65. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. All the members present were in favour of the item. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval.

66. The Chairman requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting, but subject to the supplementary information to be provided by the Administration, she would consider whether to withdraw her request.

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:32 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 August 2021