

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. FC217/20-21
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : FC/1/1(25)

Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 26th meeting
held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 28 May 2021, from 2:45 pm to 5:11 pm

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, 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-kiwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

Members absent:

Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP

Public officers attending:

Ms Alice LAU Yim, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mr Raistlin LAU Chun, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Miss Jennie CHAN Cheuk-yin	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr HO Kai-ming, JP	Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr KOK Che-leung	Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)
Ms Barbara CHU Wing-chee	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Planning and Development)
Dr Bernard CHAN Pak-li, JP	Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
Miss Wendy CHUNG	Deputy Commissioner for Tourism
Miss Maggie CHOW Wan-kam	Assistant Commissioner for Tourism 3

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP	Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
Mr Simon CHAN Kin-fung	Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Conservation)
Dr TAM Tze-wai	Executive Director (Hong Kong Wetland Park), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Miss Bowie LAM	Council Secretary (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

The Chairman reminded members of the requirements under Rule 83A and Rule 84 of the Rules of Procedure.

Item 1 — FCR(2021-22)20

HEAD 184 — TRANSFERS TO FUNDS
New subhead "Payment to the Lotteries Fund"

The Finance Committee continued with the deliberation on item FCR(2021-22)20

2. The Finance Committee ("FC") continued with the deliberation on item FCR(2021-22)20.

3. The Chairman advised that this item sought the approval of FC for the creation of a new subhead "Payment to the Lotteries Fund" under Head 184 Transfers to Funds and a supplementary provision of \$1.1 billion under the new subhead to enable an injection to be made into the Lotteries Fund ("LF"). The Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") had consulted the Panel

on Welfare Services on the proposal on 19 April 2021. The Panel had spent around 28 minutes on the scrutiny of the proposal. FC had spent around 54 minutes on the discussion of this item at the last meeting. The Administration had also provided an information paper.

Revenue and expenditure of the Lotteries Fund

Revenue

4. The Deputy Chairman referred to LC Paper No. FC159/20-21(01) and pointed out that the estimated revenue of LF for 2021-2022 might reach \$2.87 billion, higher than the revenues of previous years and the estimate for 2022-2023. He enquired how the Administration worked out the estimated revenue of LF for 2021-2022.

5. Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") responded that the Government would initiate a one-off clawback of a portion of the Housing Reserve to LF in 2021-2022, resulting in a higher estimated revenue of LF for 2021-2022.

6. Mrs Regina IP and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired whether the Administration would consider increasing the number of Mark Six lottery draws to generate more revenue for LF. USLW responded that LWB would discuss the question with the Home Affairs Bureau. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired about the estimated investment income of LF for 2022-2023 and whether the supplementary provision of \$1.1 billion was necessary.

7. USLW responded that LF's total estimated revenue of around \$4.9 billion for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 already included investment income, and these revenues, together with the uncommitted fund balance as at end of 2020-2021, were all expected to be granted to various projects in 2022-2023.

Expenditure

8. The Deputy Chairman, Mr Michael TIEN and Mr YIU Si-wing were concerned about the continuous increase in expenditure of LF. The Deputy Chairman referred to LC Paper No. FC159/20-21(01) and pointed out that the increases in estimated expenditure of LF in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 were much higher than that of the previous years. He enquired about the department responsible for vetting the expenditure of LF and the relevant procedures. Mr TIEN and Mr YIU pointed out that the expenditure of LF increased from around \$1.3 billion in 2016-2017 to around \$3.4 billion in 2020-2021, and that the estimated expenditure increased from around

\$4.5 billion in 2021-2022 to around \$6.5 billion in 2022-2023. Mr YIU was concerned that the supplementary provision of \$1.1 billion would not be sufficient to deal with LF's expenditure in the future, and the fund's balance might not be able to cover its commitments from 2022-2023 onwards. He enquired about the Administration's projection of LF's position in 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

9. USLW responded that the major expenditure items of LF in the coming two years involved funding for construction of various matured works projects pertaining to welfare, which included welfare projects planned and spearheaded by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and projects undertaken by non-governmental organizations under the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses. Without injection, it was expected that LF would not be able to undertake any commitment for new projects from 2022-2023 onwards.

10. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) ("DDSW(A)") added that Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee ("LFAC") was set up to advise the Director of Social Welfare on applications for allocations from LF. Approval from the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau was required for projects with a proposed commitment exceeding \$15 million.

Uncommitted fund balance and outstanding commitment as at end of the year

11. Mrs Regina IP was concerned about the application made by the Administration for FC funding to enable an injection to LF when LF still had a surplus in the form of uncommitted fund balance of around \$8.7 billion as at end of year 2020-2021.

12. Dr Junius HO spoke in support of the item and suggested the Administration list LF's previous achievements in the paper when applying for FC funding in the future, so as to enhance members' confidence in endorsing the funding.

13. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan pointed out that the funding for 43 development projects of social welfare services premises which were expected to benefit from the \$1.1 billion injection would be spent on pre-construction consultancy services; LF's balance would be depleted upon payment for such consultancy services. She asked the Administration whether those development projects should not be commenced.

14. USLW replied that LF's uncommitted fund balance was expected to be fully granted to various projects in 2022-2023. If the item was not

approved by FC, the technical feasibility studies/detailed design for over 40 projects listed in Enclosure 3 to FCR(2021-22)20 would have to be delayed until LF was injected with new funds. Problems resulting from delays in works projects, such as longer waiting time for places for elderly service, would then arise a few years later.

15. Dr CHENG Chung-tai pointed out that, in 2018, the Administration utilized the funding of around \$504 million allocated by LF and rolled out a three-year Pilot Scheme on Social Work Service for Pre-primary Institutions("Pilot Scheme") to offer social work service to children and their families in child care centres and kindergartens. The scheme, expiring at the end of 2021, involved more than 40 social welfare organizations and over 400 social workers. He enquired whether the scheme was included under the outstanding commitment of around \$12.4 billion as at end of 2020-2021, and whether the Administration would regularize the scheme or extend its duration.

16. DDSW(A) responded that the uncommitted fund balance of LF as at end of 2020-2021, together with the estimated future revenue, would be used on areas specified in LF, which included pilot projects. The Government would review the outcome of the pilot projects in due course and consider regularizing the projects.

17. USLW added that the supplementary provision of \$1.1 billion under this item was not intended to cover the Pilot Scheme. The Government would announce the way forward of the scheme when appropriate. The Chairman urged the Administration to make public the way forward of the Pilot Scheme as soon as possible after arriving at a decision.

18. Mr Tony TSE spoke to express his position not to support the item. Mr TSE and Mr YIU Si-wing were concerned that the uncommitted fund balance of LF as at end of 2022-2023 was expected to reach \$-29 million. Mr TSE advised that this indicated LF's overstretched commitments beyond its capacity. He referred to LC Paper No. FC159/20-21(01) and pointed out, of the projects covered by the outstanding commitment as at end of 2020-2021, 1 100 of them involved renovation, repair and maintenance works, etc., and such expenses were incurred annually, and had effectively become recurrent expenditure. The \$1.1 billion supplementary provision was not a solution to the problems faced by LF in the long run, and the Administration should comprehensively review the operation of LF. Mr TSE referred to his comment made at the last meeting about the insufficient information provided by the Administration, and criticized the Administration for its perfunctory response to members' requests as the supplementary document was only submitted shortly before the meeting was

scheduled to start this afternoon, although the supplementary data was indeed readily available.

19. USLW responded that LF aimed at providing funding for non-recurrent expenditures arising from building and providing social welfare facilities and services, including expenditures on new welfare construction projects and purchase and installation of equipment and facilities, etc. Moreover, owing to serious breakdown of facilities or requirements of amended legislation, etc., it was necessary to carry out the 1 100 projects involving renovation, repair and maintenance, etc., which were covered by the outstanding commitment as at end of 2020-2021. He also advised that LF needed to maintain sufficient usable balance, which would enable expeditious approval of funds when space for social welfare facilities could be reserved under new projects (e.g. land sale programmes and public housing projects).

20. The Deputy Chairman advised that, as shown by the data on revenue and expenditure of LF, the Administration would not have to make injection into LF until 2022-2023. However, regardless of whether the injection into LF was made in 2021-2022 or 2022-2023, either the public coffer or LF would benefit from the investment income arising from the injection amount, therefore he could accept making the injection into LF in 2021-2022 in advance.

Operation mode and monitoring mechanism for the Lotteries Fund

21. Ir Dr LO Wai-ki spoke in support of the item. Ir Dr LO, Mr Paul TSE, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Dr CHENG Chung-tai were concerned that works projects funded by LF did not have to be scrutinized by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and FC. Ir Dr LO referred to Enclosure 1 to LC Paper No. FC159/20-21(01) and enquired why the re-development of Wong Chuk Hang Complex Site, which would benefit from LF injection, was not subject to scrutiny by the Legislative Council ("LegCo"). He believed that the Administration should provide details on projects funded by LF before seeking FC funding for injection into LF. Mr TSE considered that the Administration should seek FC funding for construction of social welfare facilities in accordance with normal procedures, to enable more appropriate monitoring of the projects concerned. Mr LEUNG enquired whether it meant that the application for the supplementary provision of \$1.1 billion for injection into LF was no longer necessary if the relevant social welfare projects were scrutinized by PWSC instead. Dr CHENG was concerned whether it would violate the principle that public works

projects had to be monitored, if projects such as re-development or construction of premises and acquisition of private land were funded by LF.

22. Dr Junius HO said that the option of LF funding for provision of social welfare facilities was more flexible to promptly respond to society's needs.

23. USLW responded that the funding of LF would only be used for social welfare purpose. As regards the construction of non-social welfare facilities, the Government was required to submit proposals to PWSC. As scrutiny by a relevant LegCo committee was not required for projects applying funding from LF, LegCo would not repeatedly scrutinize projects which had secured funding from LF, and projects funded by LF would not overlap with public works projects under the Capital Works Reserve Fund. He added that the practice of applying LF funding for construction or repair of social welfare facilities had been effective. It would take longer time to seek funding approval if these projects were to be scrutinized by PWSC and FC instead.

24. Mr Michael TIEN, Mr Paul TSE, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan and Dr CHENG Chung-tai were of the view that LF should operate on the principle of keeping the expenditure within the limits of revenues. Dr CHENG considered that it was a corrupt practice on the part of the Administration to ask for public money for injection into LF, rather than requiring the Hong Kong Jockey Club to increase its payment to LF when the revenue of LF could not afford more expenditures incurred from projects.

25. USLW responded that the Government had made serious commitment on social welfare projects. He did not agree that it was a corrupt practice to bear the expenditure on social welfare with public money.

26. Mr Michael TIEN and Mr MA Fung-kwok enquired whether the Administration would need to apply for FC funding for making injection into LF again when its balance could not cover its expenditure. Mr MA also enquired if making injections into LF would become a new norm.

27. USLW responded that the Government would handle the situation based on the established mechanism when the balance of LF could not meet its expenditure in the future. The Government would closely monitor the financial position of LF, including its revenue and expenditure, as well as the financial commitments required of various social welfare services projects (including over 40 projects set out in Enclosure 3 to FCR(2021-22)20).

28. Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ("PS(Tsy)") added that, in principle, LF could only apply for funding from FC when its existing balance was unable to cover certain projects. However, the Government would only apply for FC funding after internal procedures to confirm such factors as the projects' conformity with government policies and its financial capacity.

29. Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired whether the Administration would enhance LF's transparency to facilitate public monitoring of its operation. Mr MA Fung-kwok believed that the Administration should explain in detail the criteria for LF funding to allay members' concern.

30. USLW and DDSW(A) responded that LFAC's members included individuals from the social welfare sector, the community and the professional fields, etc. The operation of LF had always been transparent as the Government would submit a report to the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services every year and spell out all the expenditure items in the annual Budget, etc.

31. PS(Tsy) added that expenditures and changes in relevant estimates (if any) of various funds, including LF, were laid out in Volume II of the Budget published annually, while relevant LegCo Panels would deliberate on the use and performance of respective funds; members could monitor the use of various funds through such information.

The costs of building quarantine camps

32. Given that the Administration was granted a funding of \$1.1 billion by LF in February 2020 for building quarantine camps, in which the amount of provision was the same as the supplementary provision under this item, Mr Michael TIEN queried that the \$1.1 billion supplementary provision under this item was sought in fact to make up for the costs funded by LF for building quarantine camps. Mr Paul TSE raised similar queries. Mr TIEN also pointed out that building of quarantine camps was not related to social welfare, and was not within the ambit of LF. He enquired whether the Administration would in the future allow any government departments to apply for LF funding for projects unrelated to welfare facilities, or for any projects concerning public interests, and whether the definition of social welfare adopted when LF was established in 1965 included any projects involving public interests.

33. Mr MA Fung-kwok pointed out that the main point of whether to build quarantine camps should rest on the needs of society, but not whether it was within the definition of social welfare. He had no objection if LF

could enable the Administration to urgently deploy significant resources to deal with problems in society.

34. In response, USLW advised that projects covered by the supplementary provision were set out in Enclosures to LC Paper No. FC159/20-21(01), and were not related to the building of quarantine camps. The Government would approve applications for LF funding with adherence to its specified purposes.

35. PS(Tsy) added that SWD had prepared a list as a guideline for approving applications to LF. While the list might be revised from time to time or in response to changes in the operation mode of LF, LF would still handle all funding applications to LF in accordance with the list and procedures applicable at the time.

Name of the Lotteries Fund

36. Mr LUK Chung-hung, Mr Michael TIEN and Mr MA Fung-kyok advised that the Administration should change the name of LF. Mr LUK pointed out that the portion of commitment of LF borne by the Government had been increasing, yet the name of LF had created an impression among the people that facilities constructed with funds from LF were financed mainly by revenue from Mark Six, instead of from public money. Mr MA raised similar opinions. Mr YIU Si-wing was of the view that LF might change its name to welfare fund, but the Government would then have to make injections into the fund.

37. USLW noted members' suggestions. PS(Tsy) added that LF was established in 1965 by a resolution of LegCo for the purpose of financing social welfare services. Same as other funds established under section 29 of the Public Finance Ordinance (Cap. 2), LF was subject to a LegCo resolution in terms of the use and management of its financial resources.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)20

38. At 4:14 pm, the Chairman put FCR(2021-22)20 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division. The Chairman declared that 13 members voted in favour of the item, 12 members voted against it, and 2 members abstained. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For:

Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan
Mr WONG Kwok-kin

Mr Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung
Mr Frankie YICK Chi-ming

Mr MA Fung-kwok

Mr POON Siu-ping

Dr Junius HO Kwan-yiu

Dr Pierre CHAN

Mr LUK Chung-hung

(13 members)

Mr Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung

Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok

Mr SHIU Ka-fai

Mr CHAN Chun-ying

Against:

Mr WONG Ting-kwong

Mr CHAN Hak-kan

Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun

Mr LEUNG Che-cheung

Ms YUNG Hoi-yan

Dr CHENG Chung-tai

(12 members)

Ms Starry LEE Wai-king

Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee

Mr Steven HO Chun-yin

Ms Elizabeth QUAT

Mr LAU Kwok-fan

Mr Tony TSE Wai-chuen

Abstained:

Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him

(2 members)

Mr YIU Si-wing

39. The Chairman declared that the item was approved.

ITEM 2 — FCR(2021-22)21

**HEAD 152 — GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : COMMERCE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUREAU
(COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TOURISM
BRANCH)**

Subhead 700 — General non-recurrent

**New subhead — "Upgrading of Facilities of the Hong Kong Wetland
Park"**

40. The Chairman advised that this item sought the approval of FC for a new commitment of \$135 million under Head 152 Government Secretariat: Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Commerce, Industry and Tourism Branch) Subhead 700 General non-recurrent for upgrading the facilities of the Hong Kong Wetland Park ("HKWP"). The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau had consulted the Panel on Economic Development ("EDEV Panel") on the proposal on 26 April 2021. EDEV Panel had spent about 50 minutes on the discussion of the proposal.

41. At the Chairman's invitation, Mr Christopher CHEUNG, Chairman of EDEV Panel, briefed members on the salient points of EDEV Panel's discussion. Mr CHEUNG advised that members of EDEV Panel generally supported the proposal and urged the Administration for early completion of the project to enhance the appeal of HKWP and visitors' experience. Members were concerned about the design optimization of various exhibition and visitor facilities of HKWP, and the related operating expenses and arrangements for continuous update of exhibits in the future. Some members suggested the Administration make good use of information technology to facilitate visitors' itinerary planning. Some members also suggested the Administration consider converting venues for hire with low usage rates in HKWP to other uses, so as to open up more space for visitors. The response of the Administration had been circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)976/20-21(01).

Mode of funding application

42. Mr Tony TSE enquired why the Administration did not draw reference from the manner in which funding applications for public works or information technology projects were made, but created a new commitment to seek FC funding for upgrading the facilities of HKWP.

43. Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development ("USCED") responded that the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP only included upgrading of the facilities, but not any public works projects, and the relevant expenditure was also non-recurrent in nature. Therefore, the Government applied for FC funding by means of a new commitment.

Facilities of the Hong Kong Wetland Park

Shade shelters

44. Mr Tony TSE and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung suggested the Administration enhance the facilities within HKWP so that visitors would less likely be exposed to sunlight when staying outdoors. Mr LEUNG pointed out that except for bird hides, there were basically no shade shelters in other places outdoors in HKWP.

45. USCED responded that the Entry Plaza of HKWP had also provided shade shelters. To maintain the original appearance of the outdoor natural landscape of HKWP as far as possible, the Government would carry out maintenance constantly for outdoor facilities in accordance with established procedures. He added that the Government would continue to study how to provide shade shelters to enhance visitor comfort while avoiding the

impact on ecological environment. The proposed upgrading of facilities was mainly for indoor facilities.

Ancillary transport facilities

46. Mr Tony TSE enquired about the traffic arrangements for attracting visitors to HKWP. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung was concerned about the remote location of HKWP, which would deter the public or visitors from visiting the Park. A walk to HKWP from car parks nearby was still needed even if visitors took private transport. Access to HKWP by bus was also not very convenient.

47. USCED responded that in addition to providing signages for directions to HKWP and tourist attraction signs, the Government had also adopted opinions of members of EDEV Panel to provide on HKWP's website a link to the Transport Department's mobile application "HKeMobility", so that visitors taking private transport could be informed about the availability of vacant parking spaces in car parks near HKWP and organize their itinerary. Depending on the needs arising from tourism development, the Government would continue to review the situation of parking spaces for coaches in HKWP.

Exhibition themes

48. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung suggested increasing the number of exhibitions related to fishponds in the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP. Mr Holden CHOW suggested engaging different organizations and enterprises in the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP, including regular updates to themes of facilities/exhibitions.

49. In response, USCED advised that the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP included enhancing the "Human Culture" Gallery. The Gallery would combine elements of interaction and media art for visitors to enjoy an immersive 3D simulated visual experience by exploring with other visitors the operation of a fishpond and rethink how to cherish wetland and water resources. The proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP also included enhancement to other exhibition galleries. Many interactive elements were introduced to make indoor exhibitions more interesting. Seasonal elements would also be added when conditions permitted. The exhibits would be updatable so as to maintain visitors' interest and competitiveness of HKWP. At the same time, indoor exhibitions and outdoor environment would be linked to attract visitors to visit HKWP again. The Government would welcome cultural, arts and creative organizations to organize activities that matched the theme of HKWP.

Sculptures at main entrance

50. Mr YIU Si-wing suggested that the Administration refer to the practices of other theme parks and set up sculptures at the main entrance of HKWP to attract visitors to take photos, so as to enhance publicity.

51. In response, USCED advised that the Government was open to the development of peripheral products of HKWP, and would also consider whether iconic installations could be set up in HKWP to enhance its appeal.

Indoor Play Area

52. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired whether the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP included enhancement to the Indoor Play Area, and asked how parents could be attracted to visit HKWP with their children.

53. USCED responded that the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP would enhance facilities of the Indoor Play Area, including a rope course at mezzanine-level imitating high-tide and elevated slides to mudflat etc., with a view to enabling children to learn about mudflats and mangroves while playing; interactive installations or some simulated visual installations of other exhibition galleries were also likely to be popular among primary and secondary school students.

Renovation and maintenance of facilities

54. Mr Christopher CHEUNG enquired whether facilities of HKWP would need to be upgraded regularly in the future in light of technological advancement. He also enquired whether the funding sought included facility maintenance costs; and if not, whether the Administration needed to seek additional funding from FC for such costs in the future.

55. In response, USCED advised that facilities of HKWP proposed to be upgraded included quite a lot of technological elements. With the development of technology, visitors probably would have higher expectations on the technological level of these facilities.

56. In response, Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation ("DAFC") advised that the facilities proposed to be upgraded included new technological elements and applications, and it was expected that repair and maintenance expenses would increase, which could be absorbed by the departmental budget of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD").

Augmented reality technology

57. Mr LUK Chung-hung enquired, in addition to the application of augmented reality technology at the Entry Plaza, whether it could also be applied to other outdoor places of HKWP.

58. Executive Director (Hong Kong Wetland Park), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("ED(HKWP)") replied that the Government would consider applying augmented reality technology to appropriate outdoor locations to enrich visitors' experience.

Promotion of the Hong Kong Wetland Park

59. Mr Tony TSE enquired how the Administration would promote HKWP to attract more visitors and increase income, thereby reducing the amount of government subsidies for HKWP.

60. USCED responded that HKWP had two positions, namely an important gateway to nature education and an eco and green tourism attraction. In terms of the positioning on nature education, HKWP performed relatively well, as more than 90% of visitors to HKWP were local residents, including many groups from primary and secondary schools. Regarding the positioning as an eco and green tourism attraction, the Government would promote green and eco-tourism in Hong Kong through different platforms of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Owing to the epidemic, the Government expected that green and eco-tourism would be more popular with local residents and overseas visitors.

Usage rates of venues for hire

61. Dr CHENG Chung-tai was concerned that the usage rates of the two multi-function rooms in HKWP were lower than 30% from 2016 to 2018. He enquired why the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP did not cover the multi-function rooms, and suggested the Administration refer to the practice of wetland parks in Taiwan and make available the multi-function rooms for renting as venues for wedding ceremony or curatorial activities.

62. USCED responded that since the upgrading of facilities of HKWP did not involve any public works projects, the Government could not re-plan the space by demolishing the multi-function rooms or changing their structures, but it would consider using the space for exhibitions or for group use. DAFC added that although the current usage rates of the two multi-

function rooms were relatively low, the rooms would be open as resting places for visitors outside lease hours. The Government would explore ways for using the multi-function rooms, such as organizing special exhibitions or education activities.

Training of tour guides and tour escorts

63. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired whether the Administration would train up tour guides and tour escorts for introducing the features of HKWP to visitors.

64. USCED responded that AFCD would continue to cooperate with the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong in the provision of docent training courses for qualified local tour guides, which included introducing HKWP in the courses as an example of green and eco-tourism attraction to enhance tour guides' knowledge about HKWP.

Admission fee

65. Mr Christopher CHEUNG enquired whether the admission fee of HKWP could be increased after implementing the upgrading of facilities of HKWP, so that the Administration would have sufficient funds to maintain the quality of HKWP.

66. USCED responded that, as the admission fee of HKWP was regulated under the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations (Cap 208A), adjustments to the fee would require LegCo approval. At present, the Government had no plan to adjust the admission fee of HKWP.

Tendering procedures

67. Mr LUK Chung-hung was concerned that the proposed upgrading of facilities of HKWP involved complex and diverse technologies. It was believed that the main contractor would need to collaborate with subcontractors to complete the project. He asked whether the Administration could relax the entry threshold so that small and medium-sized innovation and technology companies could have an opportunity to play a part.

68. ED(HKWP) responded that the Government would conduct open tenders. Companies which met specific criteria in such terms of scale and qualifications could participate in the tendering. DAFC added that since the upgrading of facilities of HKWP was a large-scale project, the main contractor might cooperate with subcontractors. However, when submitting tenders, bidders had to clearly illustrate their capability for

completing the project and whether their subcontractors had the knowledge and experience in relevant fields, so that the Government could evaluate the tenders as a whole.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)21

69. At 5:11 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)21 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

70. The meeting was suspended at 4:34 pm and resumed at 4:44 pm.

71. The meeting ended at 5:11 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
26 August 2021