

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. FC265/20-21
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : FC/1/1(31)

Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 32nd meeting
held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex
on Friday, 9 July 2021, from 2:46 pm to 5:23 pm

Members present:

Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP (Deputy Chairman)
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, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, SBS
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, 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
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, JP
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 Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, 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 CHAN Cheuk-yin, Jennie	Principal Executive Officer (G), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP	Under Secretary for Food and Health
Ms Elaine MAK Tse-ling	Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health) 2
Mr Allen LEUNG Kin-tak	Project Director 4, Architectural Services Department
Mr WAI Man-fai	Senior Project Manager 236, Architectural Services Department
Ms Amy CHEUNG Yi-mei, JP	Head of Energizing Kowloon East Office, Development Bureau

Mr KING Kwok-cheung	Deputy Head of Energizing Kowloon East Office, Development Bureau
Mr Michael LEUNG Chung-lap, JP	Project Manager (E), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Mr Albert CHAN Wing-yin	Chief Engineer (E3), Civil Engineering and Development Department
Miss Winnie CHUI Hiu-lo	Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health) Special Duties 2
Miss Ann CHAN Wai-yan	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2
Ms Sharon HO Ho-shuen	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Civil Service (Housing and Establishment)
Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP	Under Secretary for Education
Mr Philip HAR Mung-fei	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Infrastructure and Research Support)
Mr Frank WONG Tak-choi	Project Director 1, Architectural Services Department
Ms Judy LAU Oi-wing	Senior Project Manager 125, Architectural Services Department

Other persons attending:

Dr HO Hiu-fai	Chief of Service Department of Accident and Emergency, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Hospital Authority
Mr Donald LI	Chief Manager (Capital Planning), Hospital Authority
Mr Andrew WONG	Chief Project Manager (Capital Projects) 1, Hospital Authority

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Miss Bowie LAM	Council Secretary (1)1
Miss Queenie LAM	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)2

Mr Frankie WOO
Miss Yannes HO

Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

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

2. In respect of the public works items to be considered at this meeting, the Chairman declared that he was a Director and the Chief Executive Officer of Well Link Insurance Group Holdings Limited. He was also a Director of Well Link General Insurance Company Limited and Well Link Life Insurance Company Limited, both under the Well Link Insurance Group.

**Item 1 — FCR(2021-22)42
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

**PWSC(2021-22)20
HEAD 708 — CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS
AND EQUIPMENT**

Education Subventions

31ED — Conversion to Shatin Public School

3. The Chairman advised that this item sought the approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") for the recommendation of the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)20 to recommend to FC the upgrading of 31ED to Category A at an estimated cost of \$148.6 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices for carrying out the conversion to Shatin Public School. No members requested separate discussion and voting of the item.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)42

4. At 2:48 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)42 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

**Item 2 — FCR(2021-22)43
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)21

HEAD 705 — CIVIL ENGINEERING

Civil Engineering — Land development

**841CL — Site formation and associated infrastructural works for
development of columbarium at Siu Ho Wan on Lantau
Island**

5. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)21 for the upgrading of 841CL to Category A at an estimated cost of \$182.0 million in MOD prices for site formation and associated infrastructural works for the development of columbarium at Siu Ho Wan on Lantau Island. No members requested separate discussion and voting of the item.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)43

6. At 2:49 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)43 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

**Item 3 — FCR(2021-22)44
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)22

HEAD 703 — BUILDINGS

Quarters — Internal Security

73JA — Redevelopment of Western Police Married Quarters site

7. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)22 for the upgrading of 73JA to Category A at an estimated cost of \$2,020.0 million in MOD prices for the redevelopment of Western Police Married Quarters site. No members requested separate discussion and voting of the item.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)44

8. At 2:49 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)44 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

**Item 4 — FCR(2021-22)45
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)23

HEAD 703 — BUILDINGS

Public Safety — Fire services

**174BF — Construction of fire station-cum-ambulance depot with
departmental quarters and facilities in Area 72, Tseung
Kwan O**

9. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)23 for the upgrading of 174BF to Category A at an estimated cost of \$655.0 million in MOD prices for the construction of fire station-cum-ambulance depot with departmental quarters and facilities in Area 72, Tseung Kwan O. No members requested separate discussion and voting of the item.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)45

10. At 2:50 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)45 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

**Item 5 — FCR(2021-22)46
RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)17

HEAD 703 — BUILDINGS

Recreation, Culture and Amenities — Open spaces

451RO — Town Park in Area 68, Tseung Kwan O

474RO — Kwai Chung Park

449RO — Open Space at Hung Hom Waterfront

442RO — Open Space at Hoi Fan Road, Tai Kok Tsui

11. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)17 for the upgrading of 451RO, 474RO, 449RO and 442RO to Category A at estimated costs of \$558.2 million, \$318.3 million, \$266.7 million and \$196.1 million in MOD prices respectively for works projects for the development of town park in Area 68, Tseung Kwan O, Kwai Chung Park, open space at Hung Hom Waterfront, and open space at Hoi Fan Road, Tai Kok Tsui. No members requested separate discussion and voting of the item.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)46

12. At 2:51 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)46 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

Item 6 — FCR(2021-22)47

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 12 MAY 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)9

HEAD 703 — BUILDINGS

Health — Hospitals

87MM — New Acute Hospital at Kai Tak Development Area

HEAD 707 — NEW TOWN AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Civil Engineering — Land development

**702CL — Kai Tak development – remaining infrastructure works
for developments at the former runway and south apron**

13. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 12 May 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)9 for the upgrading of 87MM to Category A at an estimated cost of \$30,441.1 million in MOD prices to carry out the main works for construction of a new acute hospital ("NAH") at Kai Tak Development Area ("KTDA"), and the upgrading of part of 702CL as 862CL to Category A at an estimated cost of \$168.7 million in MOD prices for the construction of a landscaped elevated walkway connecting the amenity area under Kwun Tong Bypass with NAH. The item had been discussed by PWSC for one hour and 33 minutes, and the Administration had provided supplementary information.

New Acute Hospital

Project cost and relocation of services

14. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr Tony TSE, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr Vincent CHENG, Dr Priscilla LEUNG, Dr Pierre CHAN, Dr Junius HO and Mr Martin LIAO expressed support for the project as the relocation of services from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital ("QEHA") to NAH would address the need of the growing population and enhance the overall quality of healthcare services in Hong Kong. Ir Dr LO enquired if the construction process could be expedited.

15. Chief Manager (Capital Planning), Hospital Authority ("CM(CP)/HA") said that the tender for the proposal under consideration was the last one for the NAH project, and the Hospital Authority ("HA") was hopeful of meeting the target schedule for construction.

16. Mr Tony TSE considered the project cost of \$30,441.1 million relatively high compared to those for the Hong Kong Children's Hospital ("HKCH") and the Chinese Medicine Hospital ("CMH"). He sought explanation on the difference in cost, the current stage of the tendering process for NAH, and whether the Administration had reviewed lately the estimated project cost.

17. CM(CP)/HA said that it was difficult to compare the project cost of the three hospitals. The project cost and number of bed spaces in HKCH and CMH were \$13,000 million and \$8,000 million, and 468 beds and 400 beds respectively, i.e. an average cost of about \$20 million per bed. On the other hand, NAH would have 2 400 beds at an average cost per bed of about \$15 million. As the works in NAH were more complex and the standard of medical facilities was significantly higher than those of CMH, the project cost of NAH was considered reasonable. As regards the tendering process, HA had invited and received tenders. The project estimate had been updated in light of the returned tender price.

18. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired about the phased commissioning of NAH, and whether private out-patient service would be provided in NAH.

19. Chief of Service Department of Accident and Emergency, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Hospital Authority ("C(SD of A&E)/QEHA") said that HA was currently studying how the existing services in QEHA would be relocated to NAH. The Specialist Out-Patient Clinic Block and the Oncology Block might be commissioned first as the former would help reduce the long waiting period of patients, and construction of the latter was on schedule.

On the other hand, construction of the Acute Block was relatively complex and a phased commissioning approach would be adopted, during which time accident and emergency ("A&E") service would continue to be provided by QEH. He said that QEH currently provided service for private out-patients on a small scale and its expansion at NAH was not envisaged.

20. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired if the Administration would pledge to shorten the waiting time for A&E service at NAH upon the relocation of service from QEH, and whether there could be a longer transition period for the relocation of services to allow time for the tying-in of transport facilities and for members of the public to adapt to the change. C(SD of A&E)/QEH said that the long waiting time for A&E service at QEH was caused by insufficient space, doctors and nurses. The situation should improve at NAH as HA was increasing the supply of healthcare professionals in about two to three years before the commissioning of NAH, and the number of consultation rooms would be increased from 10 in QEH to over 23 in NAH. These would shorten significantly the waiting time for A&E service, especially for Triage Category III patients, i.e. those whose conditions were relatively stable but who nevertheless required medical attention as soon as possible. For the transition period, HA was considering relocating patients of the Specialist Out-Patient Clinic first as their degree of danger was relatively low, and they did not have to stay overnight in the hospital and should be able to adapt to the new environment and the transport and other facilities. As for the Acute Block, it would comprise two parts for servicing in-patients and out-patients respectively. The centres for day-patients might commence operation first as these patients would only stay until 7:00 pm or 8:00 pm, and should also be able to adapt to services and facilities in NAH as well as transport and related facilities. In the meantime, QEH would continue to operate for servicing other patients.

21. Dr Priscilla LEUNG was appreciative of the outstanding A&E service provided by HA's healthcare personnel, as well as the proposed construction of a pedestrian waterfront promenade adjacent to NAH. She enquired how the commissioning of NAH would enhance healthcare services in Central Kowloon. She also sought elaboration on the link bridge between NAH and HKCH, including whether ventilation systems would be installed therein.

22. C(SD of A&E)/QEH explained that redevelopment and construction programmes were underway in three major hospitals in Kowloon. These included the Kwong Wah Hospital, the first phase of redevelopment of which would be completed in 2022-2023. With over 500 additional beds, the Kwong Wah Hospital would take-over some services from QEH. Another was the United Christian Hospital which was also undergoing

redevelopment. These two major hospitals (which would each have about 500 additional beds after redevelopment) and NAH would be in the Kowloon region, and together they would enhance the provision of healthcare services for residents in Central Kowloon by 2025-2026.

23. As regards the link bridges, CM(CP)/HA said that HA had planned for a holistic operation of HKCH and NAH and as such had designed several link bridges connecting the two hospitals for use by members of the public and hospital staff. Three bridges would respectively connect the Acute Block to HKCH, the Oncology Block to HKCH, and the Oncology Block to the Education Block. The link bridges would be about 30 m in length, and air-conditioning systems would be installed therein.

24. Dr Pierre CHAN enquired about the plan for the King's Park site (where QEH was situated) after the relocation of QEH services to NAH, and whether its future positioning would be a large A&E hospital or an out-patient centre. CM(CP)/HA said that plans for the future usage of QEH would be made after the relocation of services to NAH. The redevelopment of QEH would be included in the Second Ten-year Hospital Development Plan ("HDP") for which planning had just commenced and the details were not yet available. Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") stressed that planning for the First and Second Ten-year HDPs would impact on HA's overall service development, network and role to tie-in with community needs. As such, more thoughts and time would have to be given to the future development of the King's Park site.

Demand for healthcare services and manpower

25. Mr Michael TIEN expressed concern on whether the existing and future number of beds provided by public hospitals would address the demand while providing buffer to cater for service needs. He enquired about the increase in the number of beds in the next 20 years to address existing and future needs.

26. CM(CP)/HA said that around 6 500 and 9 000 additional beds had been planned for in the First and Second Ten-year HDPs respectively. When making projections for the demand of beds, regard would be given for meeting future needs, making up for existing inadequacies and providing buffer. Even though the number of beds might remain unchanged after redevelopment of some existing hospitals, the resulting bigger space would be able to accommodate buffer beds when necessary. He pointed out that the number of beds in the First Ten-year HDP had increased from 5 000 to around 6 500, and the feasibility of a further increase in the Second Ten-year HDP would be examined.

27. Dr Junius HO expressed concern on the shortage of beds and doctors and sought details on the allocation of resources to each hospital under the First Ten-year HDP. With only about 15 000 additional beds in the next 20 years and 15 298 doctors currently servicing in Hong Kong, he observed that for every 1 000 people in Hong Kong, there would only be 6 beds and 1.9 doctors; the ratio of doctors lagged behind those of 2.5 in Japan, 2.6 in USA, 3 in UK and 3.8 in Australia. He cautioned that insufficient doctors had given rise to the partial operation of some hospitals such as the Tin Shui Wai Hospital. Mr Martin LIAO shared Dr HO's concern and asked about the Administration's plan for the short-term deployment of healthcare manpower to NAH, and the mid and long-term plan for increasing their supply. He noted that proposals in the Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 might be conducive to increasing manpower supply (by creating a new pathway for admission of qualified non-locally trained doctors who were Hong Kong permanent residents to practice in Hong Kong) but the pool of such candidates would be small. Dr Priscilla LEUNG urged the Administration to take bold steps in planning for the supply of health personnel and resources for acute hospitals in the light of the prevalence of infectious diseases such as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19").

28. USFH pointed out that apart from an increase in the number of beds, there would be increases in other types of services such as out-patient service, operating theatre service and consultation room service, all of which contributed to addressing the needs for healthcare services. He cautioned that regard should be given to the differences in the healthcare systems of Hong Kong and other places when making comparison. Locally trained graduates had all along been the major source of supply of healthcare professionals. Reviews on the number of publicly-funded training places for medical students were conducted once every three years, and the number of doctors graduating every year would increase from 420 in the current year to 470 in the three years from 2022-2024 and 530 in the three years from 2025-2027. The Government would explore room for further adjustment and the subject could be considered at meetings of the relevant Bills Committee.

29. Dr Junius HO requested the Administration to provide information setting out the allocation of resources to each hospital/community health centre/support services centre, including the costs for the different phases of works and their respective percentage shares of the funding of the \$200 billion set aside for the First Ten-year HDP; as well as the ratio of beds vis-a-vis the population of Hong Kong before and after the implementation of the First Ten-year HDP, and a comparison of this ratio with those in the

Mainland and overseas. USFH undertook to provide supplementary information after the meeting.

[*Post-meeting note:* The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC 214/20-21(01) on 24 August 2021.]

Traffic and transport arrangements

30. Mr Tony TSE and Mr Vincent CHENG followed up on members' concern raised at the PWSC meeting about traffic congestion in the vicinity of NAH, and enquired about the construction schedule of the Central Kowloon Route ("CKR") and whether the traffic problem would be resolved with the commissioning of CKR. Dr Priscilla LEUNG urged the Administration to conduct publicity to familiarize citizens with the means for commuting to/from NAH.

31. USFH said that according to the supplementary information provided by the Government to PWSC on 9 June 2021, CKR was expected to be completed in 2025, which would match with the phase-by-phase commissioning of NAH in 2026. CM(CP)/HA supplemented that the supplementary information showed that there would be a comprehensive traffic network in the vicinity of NAH by 2026 through the commissioning of new strategic road projects, and the implementation of local road projects and a series of junction improvement works in the Kowloon Bay Area.

32. Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed concern on the potential impact of transport congestion on NAH's A&E services. Notwithstanding the designation of two ambulance ingress/egress to the A&E department at NAH at Wang Chiu Road and Shing Cheong Road respectively, he was worried that serious traffic congestion at the former would result in reliance on the latter. He doubted if the two ambulance ingress/egress and the road systems concerned would help alleviate traffic volume in the vicinity. Besides, the proposed location and entrance/exit of the car parks at the Specialist Out-Patient Clinic Block and the Education Block might create traffic congestion problems. In the light of the road planning restrictions and as NAH would be located along the waterfront, he asked if consideration would be given to the delivery of A&E service by sea.

33. CM(CP)/HA explained that traffic congestion at Wang Chiu Road was caused mainly by traffic in the Kowloon Bay Area. According to the Highways Department, improvement works at road junctions currently being undertaken in the vicinity would ease congestion. While there was

relatively less traffic at Wang Chiu Road and the risk of blockage to ambulance service was not high, the current design for two ambulance ingress/egress would provide a solution if one entrance was blocked. CM(CP)/HA also pointed out that emergency service in the district was not dependent solely on NAH. The United Christian Hospital provided an alternative in the event of traffic congestion in Kwun Tong and, upon the commissioning of NAH, both hospitals would jointly improve the quality of A&E service in future.

34. CM(CP)/HA said that there would be 645 and 270 car parking spaces in the Education Block and the Specialist Out-Patient Clinic Block respectively, and their locations would not cause blockage to traffic. As regards delivery of A&E service by sea, CM(CP)/HA said that this would be restricted by the height of the Kai Tak Bridge Road which made it not possible for large vessels to pass through. Furthermore, patients transported by vessels would have to be transferred to hospitals by ambulance. Nevertheless, there were two spots at the former runway where vessels could offload patients, and HA would study the feasibility of making use of these two spots as the transfer point.

Landscaped elevated walkway

35. Mr YIU-Si-wing sought details of the landscaping works of over \$6 million for the landscaped elevated walkway. Head of Energizing Kowloon East Office, Development Bureau explained that, to tally with the overall planning of KTDA, the Government aimed to add greening and landscaping features to the elevated walkways in the Kowloon Bay Area. For the elevated walkway under consideration, there would be flower beds on the deck, transparent glass panels on the roof for bringing in natural light, and improvement works to the landscaping features of the amenity area at ground level. Project Manager (E), Civil Engineering and Development Department added that the project cost was, in addition to the above-stated facilities, inclusive of the need to retain 39 trees and plant seven trees.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)47

36. At 3:54 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)47 to vote. The Chairman declared that the majority of the members present and voting were in favour of the item. The item was approved.

- Item 7** — **FCR(2021-22)48**
- HEAD 140** — **GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
FOOD AND HEALTH BUREAU (HEALTH
BRANCH)**
- Subhead 000** — **Operational expenses**
- Head 143** — **GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU**
- Subhead 000** — **Operational expenses**

37. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for:

- (a) a supplementary provision of \$2,313.6 million under Head 140 Government Secretariat: Food and Health Bureau (Health Branch) Subhead 000 Operational expenses in 2021-2022 to meet the costs for extending the operation of community testing centres ("CTC") and mobile specimen collection stations to sustain the provision of the COVID-19 testing services for the public; and
- (b) a supplementary provision of \$26.4 million under Head 143 Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau Subhead 000 Operational expenses in 2021-2022 to meet the costs of regular testing for frontline employees who had yet to get vaccinated at the initial implementation stage of the "vaccination in lieu of regular testing" ("VRT") arrangement.

The Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") consulted the Panel on Health Services on the proposal at its meeting on 11 June 2021, and the item had been discussed by the Panel for one hour and 11 minutes.

38. Ms Elizabeth QUAT, Chairman of the Panel on Health Services, reported on the deliberation of the Panel on the item. At the said Panel meeting, some members enquired if the supplementary provision sought of \$2,313.6 million was for meeting an increase in the testing capacity or in cost payable to testing service contractors. The Administration advised that it would be for meeting increased volume for free testing provided to the public. Panel members supported submission of the funding proposal to FC for consideration.

Community testing service

Testing cost and capacity

39. Mr CHAN Chun-ying noted that the Secretary for Food and Health had said that the \$1,460 million earmarked for testing services under the Anti-epidemic Fund had been exhausted in March 2021. He enquired about the arrangements made since then and if there had been delay in payment to contractors concerned. He also asked how long the supplementary provision of \$2,313.6 million would last, the number of tests to be conducted, and the cost per test.

40. USFH acknowledged that the earmarked resources had by and large been used up in March 2021 due to unexpected surge in testing volume, and supplementary provision was needed to settle some of the outstanding payments to support extensive testing. A new tender for testing service was being invited and while the supplementary provision sought was estimated with reference to the cost for tests in the previous tender in late-2020. It was envisaged that the unit cost might be lower this time under the competitive process. How long would the supplementary provision last basically depended on the actual volume of testing demand. At the estimated level, the supplementary provision was estimated to last until around September 2021. However, if the vaccination rate increased resulting in a corresponding decrease in testing demand, the supplementary provision would be able to last longer.

41. While expressing support for the proposal, Mr Tony TSE enquired about the basis for determining the amount of supplementary provision, and the reason for making provision up to September 2021. Mr YIU Si-wing took the view that free testing service should be provided until there was no such need. He further enquired if the Administration would have to pay contractors for the estimated daily free testing capacity of 45 000 tests even though this number might not be reached, and asked for the difference in cost of testing service and deep throat saliva specimen collection packs.

42. USFH said that the overall testing capacity was indicative for estimation only as the actual demand might change in tandem with the evolution of the epidemic situation. Provisions had been made in the contract for the contractor in each CTC to conduct a minimum of 20 000 tests during the contract period of three months including self-paid testing service. If the actual volume did not meet this level at CTCs, the Government could make use of the capacity flexibly and provide free testing to targeted groups including via mobile testing stations. While deep throat saliva specimen collection packs were used at the initial stage of the epidemic. However,

as some might not know how to take the specimen properly resulting in inconsistent specimen quality, this method was gradually phased out by professional swabbing service for specimen taking, in particular in places which called for high reliability in terms of specimen quality such as the airport.

43. Mr CHAN Han-pan expressed concern on the cost for testing services, and enquired about the basic cost and the government subsidy for each test. USFH said that the basic cost concept was not used in estimating the cost for COVID-19 tests. The supplementary provision of \$2,313.6 million was estimated on the basis of the unit cost of \$240 per test as per previous tender services which covered the entire process including testing, issuing reports and swabbing services. In this round of tender, the previous unit cost was used as the basis of cost estimation. Yet taking into account the factor of increased market competition, the unit charge would likely be below \$240 per test.

44. Dr Junius HO said that according to data in the Enclosure to FCR(2021-22)48, about 3.9 million tests had been conducted for community testing up to June 2021 (including testing on a mandatory basis, targeted testing on an obligatory basis and testing on a voluntary basis). This would amount to about \$590 per test on the basis of the supplementary provision of \$2,313.6 million, which would be much higher than that of \$240 quoted by the Administration. He requested the Administration to provide a breakdown of the cost for the some 3.9 million tests conducted and the projected cost of community testing for the coming months up to September 2021. Otherwise, he would not be able to support the proposal. Mr WONG Ting-kwong expressed similar concern. He said that if the cost per test was \$240, the supplementary provision of \$2,313.6 million should be sufficient for a total of 9.6 million tests, i.e. 3.9 million tests already taken and 5.7 million forthcoming tests. He would support the funding proposal on the condition that the Administration would provide clear estimates on the number of tests and unit cost, and the respective number of free tests and self-paid tests.

45. Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health) 2 ("PAS(FH(H)2")) said that the supplementary provision sought was partly for meeting expenses incurred between late March 2021 and early July 2021, and partly for anticipated expenses from early July 2021 to late September 2021. At the request of the Chairman, Dr Junius HO and Mr Wong Ting-kwong, USFH undertook to provide:

- (a) the number of tests, months concerned, and cost for tests already provided by test service contractors for which payment by the Government was outstanding;
- (b) as from the date of FC's approval of the funding proposal, the remaining amount of supplementary provision available after discounting figures in (a) above and the number of tests which the Government estimated could be funded; and
- (c) the number of tests conducted by the Government/test service contractors under the respective test categories since the outbreak of COVID-19 until now.

[*Post-meeting note:* The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC 251/20-21(01) on 20 October 2021.]

Testing service for residents of outlying islands

46. Mr CHAN Han-pan expressed concern on the lack of testing service in outlying islands and asked the Administration to arrange mobile testing stations/vessels for these islands as many of their residents were unable to travel to CTCs for taking the tests.

47. USFH said that whenever there were outbreaks of cases requiring compulsory testing, the Government had provided testing service in outlying islands areas promptly. Under normal circumstances, swabbing service would be provided at existing locations such as the Central District and Lantau Island accessible through public transport for tests which were not of an urgent nor compulsory nature. He agreed to explore ways to facilitate residents of outlying islands taking voluntary tests.

Cost for SMS notifications

48. Mr YIU Si-wing considered the estimate of \$38.4 million for SMS notifications for test results expensive, and enquired about the process for engagement of the existing contractors, if a new tender would be invited, and whether there had been recurrence of delays in sending, or mis-sending of, SMS notifications.

49. USFH said that the cases of delay in sending SMS notifications might be caused by the design of the system concerned rather than the telecommunications companies' mishap. PAS(FH(H)SD2) explained that

multiple SMS notifications had to be sent to a testee's mobile for each test, including one for confirming registration and another for test result. The charges payable to telecommunications companies were based on the length of the notifications, and the overall cost for each test was below \$2. The provision of \$38.4 million was estimated to be used up to March 2022, which included SMS notifications for self-paid tests. The same telecommunications companies had been engaged by FHB and HA, and the cost was comparable with the market rates. At Mr YIU Si-wing's request, the Government undertook to provide information on the process for the acquisition of service for SMS notifications for test results (including the means for the selection of contractors and the tendering arrangements).

[*Post-meeting note:* The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC 251/20-21(01) on 20 October 2021.]

Employees of contractors

50. Mr LUK Chung-hung referred to a case where employees of the contractor of a Community Vaccination Centre were regarded as self-employed persons. He asked if such a practice was acceptable, and stressed that the Administration should state clearly especially for the upcoming contract that the employees of contractors must have employer/employee relationship with the contractors. Otherwise, the employees would be deprived of rights such as leave benefits and entitlement to Mandatory Provident Fund.

51. USFH said that the question was on whether the service provider had complied with the relevant labour legislation, and FHB was making enquiries with the Labour Department on related issues. The Government would be careful in ensuring that the contractors possessed the necessary qualifications, and would specify clear conditions in the relevant documents to safeguard employees' rights.

Regular testing for government employees

52. On the supplementary provision of \$26.4 million to meet the cost of regular testing for frontline government employees, Mr CHAN Chun-ying asked about the number of employees who had taken the first dose of vaccine; and who could produce medical certificates to show that they were unfit for vaccination and hence had to undergo regular testing as an alternative; and whether the Administration would request employees other

than the above two categories to pay for testing service after a certain period instead of subsidizing their tests through public money.

53. Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2 ("DS(CS)2") said that under the VRT arrangement, frontline government employees who could provide vaccination record of having received the first dose of vaccine could be exempted from regular testing. The number of frontline employees participating in this arrangement had increased from around 55 000 in late May 2021 to around 64,000 in late June 2021, i.e., an increase in vaccination rate from around 40% to over 70%. The remaining employees who could not be vaccinated for various reasons, such as medical conditions, had to undergo regular testing with the cost borne by the Government. It was estimated that the supplementary provision of \$26.4 million would last for about two to six months.

54. Mr Tony TSE said that government employees who had frequent contact with members of the public should take the lead in getting vaccinated and show their support of the government policy. The government had to incur additional expenses for regular testings for unvaccinated government employees. He considered that the Administration should request those not receiving vaccination to provide reasons. He also asked about the Administration's measures to boost the vaccination rate of government employees.

55. DS(CS)2 explained that it was necessary to seek supplementary provision to cover the expenses of regular testing under the VRT arrangement implemented since 31 May 2021 as no provision was previously secured for related expenses. The Government had implemented a series of measures to boost the vaccination rate of government employees, such as through granting vaccination leave and allowing them to go for vaccination during office hours, and the vaccination rate of frontline government employees of over 70% under the VRT arrangement was a clear indication of the effectiveness of such measures. The latest information on the application for and taking of vaccination leave showed that the vaccination rate of civil service had exceeded 50%, and the Government believed that the rate would continue to rise with further encouragement. She assured members that the Government would regularly review the implementation of the VRT arrangement.

56. Mr CHAN Han-pan asked if the Administration would charge government employees undergoing such tests on a cost-recovery basis, with a view to encouraging government employees to be vaccinated. At Mr CHAN's request, USFH undertook to provide the number of employees in government departments who had to undergo regular COVID-19 testing,

and the amount of subsidy by the Government for each test; and to advise if the Government would consider recovering the cost for testing from these persons.

[*Post-meeting note:* The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. FC 196/20-21(01) on 20 July 2021.]

Voting on FCR(2021-22)48

57. At 5:04 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)48 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division. The Chairman declared that 15 members voted in favour of and two members voted against the item, and no members abstained from voting. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For:

Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan	Mr WONG Ting-kwong
Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee	Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun
Mr Frankie YICK Chi-ming	Mr YIU Si-wing
Mr MA Fung-kwok	Mr LEUNG Che-cheung
Ms Elizabeth QUAT	Mr POON Siu-ping
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok	Mr Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Ms YUNG Hoi-yan	Dr Pierre CHAN
Mr CHAN Chun-ying (15 members)	

Against:

Dr Junius HO Kwan-yiu (2 members)	Dr CHENG Chung-tai
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58. The Chairman declared that the item was approved.

Item 8 — FCR(2021-22)49

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 16 JUNE 2021**

PWSC(2021-22)24

HEAD 703 — BUILDINGS

Education – Primary

**356EP — A 30-classroom primary school in Tsuen Wan West
Station (TW7) Development, Tsuen Wan**

59. The Chairman advised that this item sought FC's approval for the recommendation of PWSC made at its meeting on 16 June 2021, i.e. the recommendation in PWSC(2021-22)24 for the upgrading of 356EP to Category A at an estimated cost of \$392.8 million in MOD prices to construct a primary school in Tsuen Wan West Station Development, Tsuen Wan for the reprovisioning of The Church of Christ in China Chuen Yuen First Primary School ("CYFPS"). The item had been discussed by PWSC for 22 minutes, and the Administration had provided supplementary information.

Demand for school places

60. Noting that the reprovisioning of CYFPS would increase the number of classrooms from nine to 30, Mr Michael TIEN asked for the respective number of classrooms: (a) required for students of Tsuen Wan District whose education needs had been met by borrowed places from the Kwai Tsing District; (b) required for implementing small class teaching in Tsuen Wan District; and (c) which might be reduced as a result of a decrease in the school-age population in Tsuen Wan District in the coming years.

61. Under Secretary for Education ("USED") said that since the 2012/2013 school year, School Net 62 of Tsuen Wan District had been borrowing about 100 to 200 places from Kwai Ching District every year. Hence, about four classrooms might be required for (a) above. As only 10 primary schools in School Net 62 of Tsuen Wan District were implementing small class teaching, about 30 additional classrooms would be required for (b) above. As for (c) above and based on the latest projections of school-age population in Tsuen Wan District 2021-2029, the number of classrooms which might be reduced gradually would be around four for 100 school-age population.

62. Mr Michael TIEN said that as the data indicated a need for additional classrooms in Tsuen Wan District, he was supportive of the funding proposal.

63. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired about the extent and time to/in which the additional classrooms in the reprovisioning project would be able to cater for the demand for school places in Tsuen Wan District. He also asked if the proposal would impact on Kwai Tsing District.

64. USED said that the reprovisioning project would be able to meet the estimated demand for school places in Tsuen Wan, and there were no plans at this stage for further construction of schools in this district. Apart from catering for the demand for school places, the project would also meet the

policy objective of improving school premises and facilities which were not constructed up to the prevailing standards. Kwai Tsing District had surplus school places and one school had been allocated with a planned school premises in Sham Shui Po in 2020 for reprovisioning as well as easing the situation. As such, the funding proposal would not impact on school places in Kwai Tsing District.

65. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr Holden CHOW expressed support for the project. Mr LEUNG asked if the location of the reprovisioned school would impact on the enrolment of students by the adjacent school. He also enquired if the design and standard of the reprovisioned school (in particular its assembly hall) would conform with the "Year 2000 design". Mr CHOW also enquired about enrolment of the new school.

66. USED said that the allocation of school places was based on the school net and there would not be any particular impact on the adjacent school. Furthermore, the existing CYFPS was located nearby. The standard of new schools including the assembly halls would conform with the prevailing standards, and was different from the "Year 2000 design". The design would take into account the topography and size of the sites, facilities, etc, and the school sponsoring body concerned would be duly consulted. As for the enrolment of students, USED said that CYFPS had been in operation in Tsuen Wan District for over 60 years and was well supported by parents. As such, problems with the enrolment of students were not envisaged.

Usage of existing site

67. Mr YIU Si-wing and Mr Holden CHOW expressed concern on the future usage of the existing CYFPS site. They asked if the Education Bureau would discuss proactively with the Planning Department and come up with an early and concrete option. Mr CHOW suggested that the site be used for education or other community use such as that of transitional housing.

68. USED said that CYFPS would cease to occupy and voluntarily relinquish possession of its existing school premises upon reprovisioning. As its size of 600 sq m was small, the Education Bureau would review its suitability for school or other educational uses. If the vacant school premises was not required to be retained for school use, EDB would, in accordance with the Central Clearing House Mechanism, inform the Planning Department and other relevant departments for consideration of suitable alternative long-term use. She assured members that the Government would uphold the principle of optimizing land resources, and a

mechanism was in place for government departments to utilize the site for transitional housing purpose or other community facilities.

Voting on FCR(2021-22)49

69. At 5:23 pm, the Chairman put item FCR(2021-22)49 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 ended at 5:23 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
15 November 2021