

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)586/20-21
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 8 January 2021, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** :
- Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
 - Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
 - Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
 - Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
 - Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yeet, GBS, JP
 - Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
 - Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP
 - Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
 - Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
 - Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
 - Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
 - Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
 - Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP
 - Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
 - Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
 - Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
 - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
 - Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
 - Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
 - Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
- Member absent** :
- Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP (Chairman)

Public Officers : Agenda item III
attending

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Kasper NG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)
Education Bureau

Vocational Training Council

Mr LEUNG Yam-shing
Deputy Executive Director

Ir Jimmy TANG
Deputy Academic Director (Engineering)

P&T Architects and Engineers Limited

Mr Joel CHAN
Architect & Director

Agenda item IV

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Philip HAR
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Infrastructure and Research Support)
Education Bureau

Agenda item V

Dr CHOI Yuk-lin, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Philip HAR
Principal Assistant Secretary
(Infrastructure and Research Support)
Education Bureau

Clerk in attendance : Ms Angel WONG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

Staff in attendance : Miss Wincy LO
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Rachel WONG
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

No information paper has been issued so far.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)334/20-21 -- List of outstanding items for discussion)

Items for discussion at the next regular meeting

2. The Deputy Chairman advised that the next regular meeting would be held on 5 February 2021 at 10:45 am. Members would be informed of the agenda items upon confirmation from the Chairman.

3. The Deputy Chairman reminded members that a special meeting had been scheduled for 19 January 2021 at 4:30 pm to discuss the following items:

- (a) Review Report of the Task Force on Review of School Curriculum; and
- (b) Governance and security issues relating to recent incidents on university campus and follow-up work.

She further advised that representatives of the eight University Grants Committee-funded universities, The Open University of Hong Kong, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Shue Yan University had been invited to participate in the discussion of item (b) above.

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III. 8021EM – Development of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) Aviation and Maritime Education Centre at Tsing Yi

(LC Paper No. CB(4)334/20-21(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

4. The Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)") briefed members on the proposed development of the Vocational Training Council ("VTC") Aviation and Maritime Education Centre ("AMEC") at Tsing Yi, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. 334/20-21(01)]. Deputy Academic Director (Engineering) ("DAD(E)"), VTC and Architect & Director, P&T Architects and Engineers Limited then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the project design.

(*Post-meeting note:* The PowerPoint presentation materials were issued to members via LC Paper No. CB(4)355/20-21(01) on 8 January 2021.)

Declaration of interest

5. The Deputy Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. She reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

6. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok declared that he was the Chairman of the Engineering Discipline Advisory Board of VTC and a Board member of the Airport Authority Hong Kong ("AAHK").

Discussion

Aviation and maritime-related programmes

7. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether there was a decrease in this year's student intake of the aviation and maritime-related programmes offered by VTC due to COVID-19 and if so, how VTC could ensure sufficient student enrolment for the programmes to be offered by AMEC. DAD(E), VTC advised that the number of applications for the aviation and maritime-related programmes received in the 2020-2021 academic year ("AY") had remained at a level similar to that of the 2019-2020 AY, with about 2.4 and 2.5 applicants per place respectively. Mr CHENG further requested the Administration to include in its papers to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and Finance Committee

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("FC") how VTC would secure sufficient student enrolment for AMEC.

8. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support to the proposed development of AMEC and requested VTC to provide supplementary information on the aviation and maritime-related programmes offered by VTC before and after the commissioning of AMEC, including student intake of individual programmes.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)507/20-21(01) on 10 February 2021.)

9. Mr MA Fung-kwok asked why students of VTC's aircraft maintenance programmes were ineligible to apply for the licence issued by the Civil Aviation Department ("CAD") and whether graduates of the programmes would be qualified to perform maintenance on aircrafts of different manufacturers. Deputy Executive Director ("DED"), VTC explained that at present, students of the aircraft maintenance programmes had to attend a majority part of their practical training provided by outsourced suppliers to meet the training hour requirements of CAD. The establishment of AMEC would enable VTC to arrange more quality and diversified in-house practical training for students, which would significantly improve the teaching and learning of the relevant programmes, as well as to more flexibly respond to the evolving licencing requirements.

10. Mr MA Fung-kwok was concerned about the need of developing AMEC. He said that to his understanding, some universities had no longer offered maritime programmes and the Maritime Services Training Institute ("MSTI") in Tuen Mun also offered marine-related programmes. Moreover, the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy ("the Academy"), which had been established by AAHK in 2016, also offered a wide range of aviation training. He enquired about the difference between the aviation programmes provided by the Academy and AMEC.

11. DED, VTC explained that VTC had all along been working closely with the Academy in planning for their respective training programmes, with a view to addressing the different training needs of the industry. For instance, the Academy mainly targeted the in-service practitioners. In fact, it had been increasingly difficult to arrange practical training at the training centre in Xiamen. AMEC would provide the state-of-the-art facilities which met the latest needs of the industries with a view to enabling students to fulfil the practical training requirements for obtaining relevant licences. Various stakeholders in the aviation industry, including the aircraft engineering companies, airline companies, air transport associations etc., had expressed support to the development of AMEC.

12. Mr Holden CHOW enquired about the difference between the maritime-related programmes offered by MSTI and AMEC. DAD(E), VTC advised that MSTI focused on seafarer-related training while AMEC would offer

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maritime engineering-related programmes for students.

13. Ms Starry LEE expressed support to the proposed development. She opined that although students of the aviation maintenance programmes could undergo the required practical training in Hong Kong upon the commissioning of AMEC, VTC should encourage students to attend practical training on premises of the outsourced training providers in Gangzhou, Xiamen etc. so as to broaden their knowledge and strengthen their competitiveness in employment.

14. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether AMEC would be accommodated with unique and state-of-the-art training facilities to attract more students. DAD(E), VTC advised that augmented reality, virtual reality and other smart technologies would be applied in the delivery of programmes to provide the enhanced in-house practical training.

Career prospects of graduates

15. Mrs Regina IP expressed support to the proposed development of AMEC which would enhance the quality of the aviation and maritime programmes. She enquired about the employment situation of the aviation and maritime industries, including the number of companies providing aircraft maintenance/ship repair services in Hong Kong, the number of jobs offered by these companies to the graduates of the relevant programmes, and the career prospects of graduates with Aircraft Maintenance Licence and those of maritime programmes in the Greater Bay Area.

16. DAD(E), VTC advised that there were several companies providing aircraft maintenance services in Hong Kong. These companies recruited a total of about 200 to 300 technical staff each year, with a starting monthly salary at about \$12,000. VTC's aviation-related programmes aimed to equip students for obtaining the Aircraft Maintenance Licence, which was internationally recognised. Graduates with this licence could develop their career at the Greater Bay Area. In fact, VTC had been highly dedicated to nurturing talent for Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

17. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed concern about the low starting salary of the graduates of the relevant programmes, which would discourage students from taking the programmes. She enquired how AMEC would help its graduates obtain better remuneration and develop in the Greater Bay Area. DAD(E), VTC advised that the practical training offered in the aviation and maritime-related programmes were recognised by CAD and the Marine Department respectively, and hence, students would be eligible to obtain the basic licences. Graduates with these licences would be able to develop and progress further in the relevant industries with improvements in remuneration and career prospects.

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18. As major cuts in jobs had been seen in the aviation and maritime industries amidst the COVID-19 epidemic, Mr Vincent CHENG was worried that there would not be sufficient employment opportunities for the graduates of AMEC. He sought information on the number of job losses in the aviation and maritime industries in 2019 and the number of intake places for the relevant programmes to be offered by AMEC.

19. US(Ed) responded that there was a manpower shortage in the aviation and maritime industries all along and the manpower demand in the relevant industries was expected to remain keen in the long run. VTC also anticipated that, upon the commissioning of AMEC, the planned intakes for the aviation and maritime-related programmes would be progressively increased from some 700 to approximately 1 000 subject to prevailing manpower situation. DAD(E), VTC supplemented that with reference to the press release issued by the International Air Transport Association, the global passenger traffic was forecast to return to a level similar to that of 2019 in late 2024. As regards the employment opportunities of the graduates of the aviation and maritime-related programmes, VTC's statistics showed that about 60% of the graduates in the 2019-2020 AY pursued further studies. For the remaining graduates who pursued direct employment, most of them were employed in the relevant industries.

20. Mr Holden CHOW enquired whether VTC had sought support from the companies in the aviation and maritime industries to offer graduates of the proposed AMEC placement and employment opportunities. DAD(E), VTC advised that VTC had all along been closely collaborating with the aviation and maritime industries with a view to arranging more industry attachment opportunities for students.

21. Dr CHENG Chung-tai considered that Hong Kong's aviation industry had not only been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, its leading status as a major aviation hub in the region would also be affected by the political situation.

22. While showing confidence in the recovery of the aviation industry, Ms Starry LEE was concerned about the development of the maritime industry in Hong Kong and that many young people were unwilling to join the industry. She sought further information about VTC's maritime-related programmes and prospects of the graduates of the programmes. DED, VTC undertook to provide supplementary information requested by Ms LEE after the meeting. DAD(E), VTC advised that VTC's maritime-related programmes mainly provided training to engineering technicians serving on board. The training facilities for aviation and maritime-related programmes would respectively account for about 80% and 20% of spaces in AMEC. DED, VTC supplemented that among the spaces dedicated for aviation-related programmes, over 25% were common facilities that could also be used by the students of the maritime-related programmes.

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(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)507/20-21(01) on 10 February 2021.)

23. The Deputy Chairman said that both the aviation and maritime industries had recruitment difficulties and high turnover before COVID-19 as young people were unwilling to enter or stay in the industries. She considered that AMEC should place equal emphasis on aviation and maritime-related programmes and was concerned how AMEC would help the industries attract and retain young people, such as whether the prospects of the graduates of AMEC would be better and whether VTC would inform the public of the clear career pathways of the industries. DED, VTC responded that AMEC which was designated for providing aviation and maritime-related practical training, would certainly attract more students studying relevant programmes.

24. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Liberal Party was in support of the proposed development of AMEC to provide students with multiple progression pathways. To ease members' concern about the employability of the graduates of the aviation and maritime programmes, he urged VTC to ensure that the programmes would meet the needs of the industries so as to gain their support. He also suggested that more exchanges should be conducted with the Mainland. DED, VTC responded that VTC had been proactively planning for exchange programmes in and visits to the Greater Bay Area, and would maintain a close partnership with the relevant industries to ensure the quality of the programmes. VTC would also invite representatives of relevant educational institutions in the Mainland, including the Greater Bay Area, to visit AMEC for knowledge exchange.

25. Ir Dr LO Wai-kyok remarked that cultivation of talents was important for consolidating Hong Kong's status in the aviation and maritime industries in the long run. He urged the Administration to strengthen the promotion of vocational and professional education and training ("VPET") to enable students and parents have a thorough understanding of various professions.

26. US(Ed) responded that the Administration had been pro-actively following up on the recommendations made by the Task Force on Promotion of VPET on strengthening the promotion of VPET. DED, VTC supplemented that VTC had all along been promoting VPET programmes such as implementing VTC Earn and Learn Scheme to deepen industry collaboration with a view to enabling students to better understand the development of different industries.

Site location and potential traffic impact

27. Mr MA Fung-kyok said that the aircraft training centre in Xiamen was strategically located near the airport, taking advantage of the resources of the airport. He cast doubt on the cost-effectiveness of constructing AMEC on the site

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of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education at Tsing Yi ("IVE (Tsing Yi)") which was not close to the Hong Kong International Airport. DED, VTC advised that it was preferable to develop AMEC within the IVE (Tsing Yi) campus as some existing aviation and maritime-related programmes were delivered at the same campus which could bring benefits from synergy effect. In addition, the development of AMEC would enable VTC to maximise the development potential of the IVE (Tsing Yi) campus.

28. Dr CHENG Chung-tai considered the proposed location of AMEC undesirable. He remarked that the new residential buildings nearby would certainly increase the traffic flow of Sai Shan Road where AMEC was located. If all users of AMEC had to take public transport for daily commuting to AMEC, there would be additional burden on local traffic. He asked whether parking spaces were available at AMEC and how the Administration would lessen the traffic burden brought about by AMEC. The Deputy Chairman sought clarification on whether the development of AMEC would put great pressure on local traffic as Sai Shan Road was a blind alley.

29. US(Ed) undertook to provide more information on the proposed works project in the papers for PWSC and FC, and explained that the proposed site had been reserved for VTC's future expansion when the IVE (Tsing Yi) campus was put into use. DED, VTC clarified that AMEC was planned to provide practical training for about 1 000 students and VTC would ensure that the overall planned student intake figures of the IVE (Tsing Yi) campus would remain similar to the existing level through programme and class reshuffling upon the commissioning of AMEC. He further supplemented that users of AMEC and residents nearby had an opposite route during the peak hours, for example, when students attended classes in AMEC in the morning, the nearby residents would leave the area for work, and vice versa. Hence, the proposed AMEC would not create adverse impacts on the traffic, pedestrian networks, and public transport services.

Summing up

30. The Deputy Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the proposed project to PWSC and reminded the Administration to provide supplementary information on VTC's aviation and maritime-related programmes, prospects of the graduates, job opportunities outside Hong Kong and the potential traffic impact of AMEC.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)507/20-21(01) on 10 February 2021.)

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IV. 3355EP – A 30-classroom primary school at Site KT2c, Development at Anderson Road, Kwun Tong

(LC Paper No. CB(4)334/20-21(02) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

31. US(Ed) briefed members on the construction of a school at Site KT2c, Development at Anderson Road of Kwun Tong for the reprovisioning of Hong Kong Taoist Association Wun Tsuen School ("WTS"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. 334/20-21(02)].

Declaration of interest

32. The Deputy Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. She reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

Discussion

Handling of vacant school premises

33. Noting that the existing school premises of WTS had been built according to past planning standards in 1969, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan considered the school development project fully justified and expressed support to the project. Given that many vacant school premises ("VSP") had been left idle for years, Ir Dr LO urged the Education Bureau ("EDB") to assess as soon as possible whether the existing premises of WTS was suitable for school use and return it to the Planning Department ("PlanD") for consideration of suitable alternative uses if it was no longer required for re-allocation for operating school. Ms YUNG shared the view that EDB should expedite the handling of VSP to ensure efficient use of limited land resources.

34. US(Ed) responded that the existing school premises of WTS would be returned to the Government after the new premises had commenced operation. To ensure efficient use of land resources, EDB would assess the VSP's suitability for school or other educational uses having regard to factors including the size, location and physical conditions of the relevant premises, as well as the educational needs and relevant policy measures. If it was confirmed that the VSP was no longer required by EDB for re-allocation for school use, EDB would inform PlanD and other relevant departments for PlanD's consideration of suitable

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alternative long-term uses. Currently, only seven VSP were under EDB's purview earmarked/retained for school or other educational uses, including catering for the anticipated demand for school places, reprovisioning of existing schools to improve their learning and teaching environment and decanting use by schools undergoing in-situ redevelopment or extension works.

School reprovisioning

35. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan sought information on the number of aged schools that required reprovisioning. US(Ed) advised that among the 28 schools operating in "matchbox-style school premises", four had been reprovisioned and improvement works had been carried out in the remaining schools through the completed School Improvement Programme, annual major repair and emergency repair mechanism etc., with a view to improving the teaching and learning environment.

36. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan considered the slow progress of school reprovisioning undesirable. Given the limited new school sites for reprovisioning, she urged EDB to redevelop rather than reprovision the aged schools. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan urged EDB to expedite the reprovisioning or redeveloping of schools operating in matchbox-style school premises. US(Ed) explained that as most of the schools operating in matchbox-style school premises including WTS were located in densely populated areas, they were not suitable for in-situ redevelopment owing to space constraints. Reprovisioning was considered the most effective way to upgrade the facilities of schools and improve the teaching and learning environment.

37. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the criteria for determining whether a school would be reprovisioned or redeveloped. Noting that the supply of school places in the district would not be increased upon reprovisioning of WTS, she was concerned whether the demand for school places could be met. US(Ed) advised that in determining whether a school should be redeveloped or reprovisioned, EDB would make reference to the school-age population projections and take into account the actual numbers of existing students at various levels and the latest demographic changes. Given the physical condition of WTS and the stable demand for school places in the district, WTS would be reprovisioned to the new school premises with 30 classrooms.

38. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether it was EDB or WTS to initiate the reprovisioning, whether WTS would remain to be an aided school and whether WTS was free to increase its student intake upon reprovisioning. US(Ed) advised that when EDB confirmed that a school premises was required for allocation for reprovisioning use, EDB would normally conduct an open School Allocation Exercise which was on a competitive basis. EDB would make relevant announcement to invite applications from all eligible school sponsoring bodies in

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the territory. Upon reprovisioning, WTS would remain as an aided school. Although the new school premises could operate up to 30 classes, WTS would continue to operate 24 classes and subsidy would be provided according to the actual number of enrollment.

School location and facilities

39. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed concern about traffic flow and road safety at the school entrances. Principal Assistant Secretary (Infrastructure and Research Support) ("PAS(IRS)") advised that the school would have three entrances, of which two main entrances were at On Yan Street. Pedestrian railing had been constructed, and the Transport Department would study the provision of pedestrian lights as well as zebra crossing at On Yan Street to ensure pedestrians' safety.

40. As there had been an increasing trend in using e-learning for teaching and learning, Mrs Regina IP asked whether appropriate facilities, such as 5G network coverage, would be provided in the new school to facilitate e-learning. She also urged EDB to provide training for teachers as some teachers had difficulty in implementing e-learning. US(Ed) advised that the reference lists of furniture and equipment ("F&E") served as general guidance on furnishing and equipping new school premises. Schools were free to procure F&E not on the lists according to their school-based teaching and learning needs. To enhance support to schools on the practice of e-learning and STEM education, Wifi campus had been established for and subsidy had been provided to all schools.

41. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the existing and new school premises of WTS were in the same school net. She was worried that the reprovisioning of WTS from Upper Ngau Tau Kok Estate to Anderson Road would increase the transportation expenses of students. US(Ed) advised that although the reprovisioning of WTS would result in a change of school net from 48 to 46, the proposed site was close to the existing school premises and would not cause inconvenience to existing students. PAS(IRS) supplemented that students with financial needs could apply for the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme. Also, WTS had solicited donations to set up funds to support students in need.

Summing up

42. The Deputy Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the proposed project to PWSC.

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V. 3365EP – A 36 classroom primary school at Area 9, Tai Po

(LC Paper No. CB(4)334/20-21(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

43. The Deputy Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. She reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

44. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the proposed new primary school at Area 9, Tai Po ("the school"), which aimed to meet the projected long-term demand for public sector primary school places of the Tai Po District, including those arising from the new public housing developments at Chung Nga Road East and Area 9. Details of the proposal were set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. 334/20-21(03)].

45. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-kwan and Mr Holden CHOW expressed support to the proposed project. Noting that the public housing development at Chung Nga Road East was scheduled for completion in 2021 and the new school would only commence operation in the 2023-2024 school year, Ir Dr LO and Mr CHEUNG were concerned whether the new residents could get a school place close to home. As the public housing development at Area 9 would complete in 2023, Ms YUNG, Mr CHEUNG and Mr CHOW were worried that the commencement date of the new school could not tie in with the planned population intake. They asked about the Administration's backup plans in case of possible delay in completion of the school, such as whether existing schools in the Tai Po District could help absorb the increasing number of students.

46. US(Ed) responded that at present, there were 26 schools in the school net of the new school. The number of school places offered by those schools should be able to meet the demand of the new residents moving in by phases from 2021. The relevant government departments would closely monitor the construction progress of the new school. If everything went smooth, the new school could commence operation in the 2023-2024 school year. In case of any delay, flexible measures would be implemented with existing schools, such as operating additional classes and deploying school places from nearby school nets, etc. so as to ensure the new residents to have public sector school places. Mr Holden CHOW urged EDB to actively assist the new residents in arranging school places for their children, such as organizing briefings on the schools in the Tai Po District and getting existing schools ready for implementing backup measures.

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47. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan noted that the site area of the two school building projects discussed today were comparable. However, the number of classrooms of the schools in Tai Po and Kwun Tong were respectively 36 and 30. She enquired about the reason(s) for the variation and urged the Administration to fully utilize every site to build schools with more classrooms. US(Ed) explained that the useable floor space of the two proposed school premises would be fully utilized. However, as the development of the site in Kwun Tong was constrained by steep slopes, only a school with 30 classrooms could be constructed.

48. Mr Tommy CHEUNG highlighted that the school-age population had been decreasing all these years and asked how the projections of school-age population could justify the construction of the new school, such as how many years were covered in the projections. As the new school with better facilities would attract more students, he was worried that unfair competition in student enrolment would be created between the new school and existing schools in the district, forcing the under-enrolled schools to reduce the number of classes and overlapping public resources.

49. US(Ed) explained that for the Tai Po District, the projected school-age population aged 6 as appropriate for Primary One ("P1") would increase from around 2 200 in the 2020-2021 school year to around 2 700 in the 2028-2029 school year and the projected school-age population aged 6-11 would increase from around 14 000 to 16 000, reflecting a growing demand for primary school places. Moreover, EDB had maintained communication with relevant stakeholders, including the Tai Po District Primary School Heads Association of Tai Po, and they shared the view that the proposed construction of a new school could help address the projected demand for public sector primary school places in the district in the long term. In fact, the number of P1 classes in each school net each school year was determined by EDB, taking into account the anticipated demand for P1 places, the number of classrooms available, the class structure and parental choices, etc.

50. Dr Junius HO considered it not financially efficient to construct the new school as there were 11 VSP in the Tai Po District. The Administration should conduct refurbishment works on those VSP to meet the expected rising demand for school places. US(Ed) advised that after assessing the size and physical conditions of the 11 VSP, they had been returned to PlanD for consideration of suitable alternative uses under the Central Clearing House Mechanism. In fact, the VSP concerned fell short of the prevailing standards of school building in terms of their sizes and facilities so renovating them up to the prevailing standards for school use may not be cost-effective or viable. Dr HO maintained the view that the Administration could convert those VSP into schools with special characteristics to enhance school diversity. He said that he had reservation about the proposed project and requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the 11 VSP concerned to justify the need to construct the new school.

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(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)494/20-21(01) on 8 February 2021.)

Summing up

51. The Deputy Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's submission of the proposed project to PWSC.

VI. Any other business

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:26 am.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 March 2021