

Appointment of committee and advisers on facilities for West Kowloon Cultural District

The Government announced today (April 6) the Chief Executive has appointed members to the Consultative Committee and its three Advisory Groups on the Core Arts and Cultural Facilities of the West Kowloon Cultural District. The appointment commenced today (April 6) and will last till the end of 2006.

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Rafael Hui, said the main task of the committee was to re-examine and re-confirm if appropriate, the need for the core arts and cultural facilities for the WKCD as defined in the Invitation for Proposals (IFP) issued in September 2003 to meet the aspirations and needs of the local arts and cultural community and attract visitors. The committee would also advise the Chief Executive on the justifications for the core arts and cultural facilities and other types of arts and cultural facilities as appropriate and necessary to be provided at the WKCD and the financial implications for developing and operating these facilities.

"The Consultative Committee and its three Advisory Groups comprise members from the arts, cultural, entertainment and tourism sectors," Mr Hui said.

"They are mainly professionals or practitioners in relevant fields who would be in the best position to help re-examine the core arts and cultural facilities for the WKCD."

The Chief Secretary will chair the Consultative Committee. The three Advisory Groups set up under the Consultative Committee, namely the Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group, the Museums Advisory Group and the Financial Matters Advisory Group, will be chaired by the Hon Selina Chow Liang Shuk-ye, the Hon Victor Lo Chung-wing and the Hon Marvin Cheung Kin-tung respectively.

The Performing Arts and Tourism Advisory Group (PATAG) and the Museums Advisory Group (MAG) will consider ways to gauge views in the coming months from the public, particularly views from the arts and cultural sector as well as the tourism industry on the subject.

The Financial Matters Advisory Group (FMAG) will consider the financial implications of the core arts and cultural facilities as recommended by the PATAG and the MAG. To support the work of the FMAG, the Government intends to appoint a financial adviser to conduct relevant financial studies. (*Note)

The Government announced in February that it would press ahead the project under a new development approach according to the following principles:

- (1) to adhere to the original objective of developing a world-class integrated arts, culture and entertainment district;
- (2) to make the best use of past efforts for the WKCD;
- (3) to continue to explore Public Private Partnership (PPP) in taking forward the WKCD with a view to bringing in market creativity and vibrancy, facilitating diversity in arts and culture, and ensuring the sustainable operation of the WKCD;
- (4) to continue to designate the project area on the West Kowloon Reclamation site for the development of a Cultural District; and
- (5) to continue to uphold the principles of "partnership", and for the project to be "community-driven" and "people-oriented" as put forward by the Culture and Heritage Commission for WKCD development.

The setting up of the Consultative Committee and its three Advisory Groups is crucial at this stage. "After confirming the core arts and cultural facilities to be provided at WKCD, we will be in a position to formulate an alternative development approach to take forward the project," Mr Hui added.

The Consultative Committee will first meet on April 21 and will endeavour to submit its findings to the Government in six months' time.

The Terms of Reference and membership lists of the Consultative Committee and its three Advisory Groups are attached in the Annex.

(*Note: To avoid potential conflict of interest, the Government has not appointed to the FMAG individuals who may be connected with the financial consultants registered with the Government. After a financial adviser has been appointed, the Government will consider appointing other financial experts to the FMAG.)

Ends/Thursday, April 6, 2006