

## **LCQ2: The work of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority**

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Following is a question by the Hon Alan Leong and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council meeting today (November 19):

Question:

Regarding the work of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("the Authority"), will the Government inform this Council:

(a) as the three development proposals for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") put forward by the Government in 2004 had been criticised by some Members of this Council, members of the public and bodies concerned, and the entire plan had to be scrapped and start from scratch again, whether it knows how the Authority will materialise the policy direction of "public engagement" in the formulation of the blueprint for the development of the WKCD project, and gauge the views of members of the public and community groups in a systematic manner, as well as institutionalise such practice, so as to avoid making the same mistake as that in 2004;

(b) as the Board Chairman of the Authority stated earlier that the blueprint for the development of the WKCD project had to produce a synergy effect as well as have good connectivity with the community, whether it knows how the Authority will simultaneously build up a sound community cultural network at the community level to avoid the WKCD from becoming an isolated cultural island; and

(c) whether it knows how the Authority will formulate an expenditure reporting mechanism for the WKCD development project to facilitate this Council to monitor if the 21.6 billion dollars appropriated to the Authority are spent properly?

Reply:

President,

(a) At the joint meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs and the Panel on Development last Friday, the Chief Secretary for Administration, who is the Chairman of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("the Authority"), had explained in

detail the process of the preparation of the development plan for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD"). The preparation of the development plan will be conducted in three phases, which will take the form of workshops, discussion groups, brainstorming sessions and exhibitions etc. to allow ample opportunities for the public to participate in the discussions and express their views.

The Authority will also set up a consultation panel in accordance with the Ordinance in order to initiate dialogue with the arts and cultural sector and to collect public views in a systematic manner. To allow more time for Members to ask their supplementary questions, I am not going to repeat the detailed arrangement for the preparation of the development plan here. In a nutshell, the objective of the WKCD Project is to promote cultural development in Hong Kong. Since culture nurtures people, the more the development process is able to attract public attention and participation, the better it will be for the cultural development. The entire process will therefore be conducted in a highly transparent and completely open manner.

(b) As mentioned in the question, the future development plan of the WKCD will ensure smooth connectivity with the neighbouring areas so as to achieve positive interaction and synergy. In addition to the development of the hardware cultural facilities, the Authority will also plan for arts and cultural activities to meet the aspiration of society. The Government considers the WKCD as a major strategic investment to promote the long-term development of arts and culture. We will also enhance the cultural hardware and the corresponding software in other districts of Hong Kong.

The Government has launched a series of activities to promote arts and nurture audience to promote cultural exchange and co-operation, and foster the development of creative industries and promote cultural tourism. Relevant measures include further support for the development of the performing arts groups, strengthening nurturing of small and medium-sized arts groups, implementation of the "Venue Partnership Scheme", strengthening of arts education targeting mainly youngsters and students such as organising School Culture Day and Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme, incorporating the relevant learning experience of "Aesthetic Development" into the "New Senior Secondary" curriculum to be launched in the 2009/10 school year, assisting arts groups in introducing their art forms to schools, learning from overseas experience in promoting art education in the community as well as increasing local residents' understanding of and interest in arts through the "Enhanced Community Arts and Cultural Activities Programme" of the Hong Kong Arts Development

Council. I am not going to list out all the details here.

The Authority is required to implement a series of the financial control and monitoring measures contained in the West Kowloon Cultural District Ordinance. These include preparing an annual report for each financial year and submitting it to the Financial Secretary who will cause the report to be laid on the table of the Legislative Council. The annual report will include a statement of accounts for the financial year, which comprises a profit and loss account, a cash flow statement, a balance sheet and an auditor's report of the accounts.

The Authority will also include the following additional information in the annual report: -

- the construction progress and actual expenditure in relation to various core arts and cultural facilities ("CACF") for that financial year;
- details of the income and expenditure on the operation of individual CACF for that financial year;
- remuneration information of the senior staff of the Authority;
- a comparison of the income and expenditure account for that financial year with the one for the previous financial year.

The above is my concise reply to the question.

Ends/Wednesday, November 19, 2008