

立法會
Legislative Council

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Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee

**Minutes of the 7th meeting
held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex
on Wednesday, 10 January 2018, at 8:30 am**

Members present:

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Alvin YEUNG (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon IP Kin-yuen
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding

Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon CHAN Chun-ying
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

Member attending:

Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP

Members absent:

Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon KWONG Chun-yu

Public Officers attending:

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| Ms Carol YUEN Siu-wai, JP | Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1 |
| Mr Eddie MAK Tak-wai, JP | Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1 |
| Mrs Vicki KWOK, JP | Deputy Director of Environmental Protection(2) |
| Mr Andy CHAN | Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Waste Reduction and Recycling) |
| | Environmental Protection Department |
| Ms Doris HO, JP | Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)1 |
| Mr SOH Chun-kwok | Assistant Director of Planning (Special Duties) |

Clerk in attendance:

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| Ms Connie SZETO | Chief Council Secretary (1)4 |
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Staff in attendance:

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| Mr Keith WONG | Council Secretary (1)4 |
| Ms Alice CHEUNG | Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1 |

Miss Yannes HO
Ms Haley CHEUNG

Legislative Assistant (1)6
Legislative Assistant (1)9

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2017-18)14, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 and the changes to the directorate establishment in relation to the seven items on the agenda. She then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest relating to the item under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the item. She also drew members' attention to RoP 84 on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

EC(2017-18)11 Proposed creation of one permanent post of Assistant Director of Environmental Protection (D2) to lead the Waste Reduction and Recycling Division in the Environmental Protection Department with effect from the date of approval by the Finance Committee for providing dedicated staffing support at the directorate level on a permanent basis, to implement the on-going measures and formulate new initiatives to promote waste reduction and recycling

2. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create one permanent post of Assistant Director of Environmental Protection ("ADEP") (D2) (designated as ADEP (Waste Reduction & Recycling)) to lead the Waste Reduction and Recycling Division ("WRD") in the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD"), with effect from the date of approval by the Finance Committee ("FC"), so as to provide EPD with dedicated staffing support at the directorate level on a permanent basis, and to implement the on-going measures and formulate new initiatives to promote waste reduction and recycling. She pointed out that discussion of the item was carried over from the meeting on 20 December 2017.

Setting an indicator on quantity for local waste recovery

3. Mr CHU Hoi-dick pointed out that according to "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong - Waste Statistics for 2016", nearly 69 tonnes and 158 tonnes of non-PET plastic bottles and PET plastic bottles were respectively disposed of at landfills every day. This reflected that a large

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quantity of recyclable waste plastics were still not properly recovered. In addition, according to the "Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013-2022" ("Blueprint"), the Government aimed to reduce the per capita waste disposal rate to 1kg per day by 2017 and increase the recycling rate to 55% by 2022. However, as shown by the 2016 statistics, per capita waste disposal rate was 1.4kg per day and the recycling rate was 34%, both widely falling short of the targets as set out in the Blueprint. He considered that the Administration had to outline a clear direction in relation to waste reduction and recycling when creating the proposed post, otherwise it would be difficult to achieve the targets as set out in the Blueprint.

4. Deputy Director of Environmental Protection(2) ("DDEP(2)") said that the Government had actively rolled out publicity and promotion activities to educate and encourage members of the public to carry out clean recycling for waste plastic containers carrying beverages or personal care products with a view to enhancing the quality of recovered waste plastics, thereby increasing recovery quantity and reducing the amount of wastes disposed of at landfills. The Government also planned to introduce a district-based pilot scheme to strengthen support for collecting and recycling waste plastic bottles. She added that the targets were set in the Blueprint taking into account measures such as the upcoming municipal solid waste charging scheme and the commissioning of Organic Waste Treatment Facilities Phases I and II for food waste recycling. The Government believed that the implementation of these two measures would have a positive impact on reducing disposal quantity.

5. Mr James TO criticized the Government for the lack of monitoring of waste plastics recycling as a large quantity of waste plastic bottles collected through three-colour waste separation bins were not properly handled and recycled, but ending up in the landfills eventually. He demanded the Government to explain measures in place to make sure that waste plastics collected through three-colour waste separation bins would subsequently be recycled properly, and urged the Government to set a clear objective for the quantity of recycling waste plastics. Mr TO and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that they would not support this staffing proposal because they considered that the proposed post, even if created, would not help increase recycling quantity in the absence of any specific indicator for waste reduction and recycling on the part of the Government.

6. DDEP(2) said that three-colour waste separation bins on the street were managed by contractors of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD"). FEHD signed contracts with the contractors

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which stated that waste plastics had to be collected and delivered properly to recyclers for processing. As regards the recycling work in private housing estates, EPD would provide these estates with three-colour recycling bins free of charge and promote waste reduction and recycling among owners' corporations and property management companies through outreaching teams to be established soon, as well as assisting them in identifying recycling outlets. She added that the recovery quantity in Hong Kong was influenced by the demand for recyclables and prices in external markets as most of the locally recovered materials would be exported to other places. Therefore, it was difficult for the Government to set target for recovery quantity. Nonetheless, the Government had formulated strategy and directions for recycling in the Blueprint as its long-term objective.

Supporting the local recycling industry

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7. Mr WU Chi-wai pointed out that the Mainland would further tighten the requirements for import recyclables from 2018 onwards, rendering it more difficult and costly for local recyclers to export recyclables to the Mainland. He urged the Administration to strengthen communication with the recycling industry to help them respond to the new development. In addition, Mr WU requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the international trading standards and recovery prices of various types of recyclables in the international trading market, as well as the reasons why recyclers in Hong Kong were not proactive in recovering recyclables with recycling value in the international market.

8. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen commented that the Government should strengthen contact with relevant environmental protection authorities in the Mainland and consider seeking the Mainland's relaxation of the requirements for wastes imported from Hong Kong.

9. DDEP(2) said that the Government had been keeping close contact with the local recycling industry and supporting the industry to upgrade its operational capability through the Recycling Fund, thereby assisting the industry in addressing the Mainland's new tightened requirements for import recyclables. On the other hand, the Government had maintained communication with relevant environmental protection authorities in the Mainland in a bid to understand the actual impact of the implementation of the new requirements for recyclables on the local recycling industry, so that the Government could put forward specific supportive measures for the industry. She undertook to provide the Subcommittee with the

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supplementary information requested by Mr WU Chi-wai.

10. Dr Fernando CHEUNG urged the Government to introduce measures to promote the establishment of a local recycling chain, so that the local recycling industry would have the capability and techniques to recycle wastes locally, effectively reducing its reliance on the Mainland market.

11. DDEP(2) said that the local recycling industry was vulnerable to factors such as fluctuations of recycling markets and environmental protection regulations overseas as most of the local recyclables had to be exported for processing at present. The responsibilities of the proposed post would include promoting the development of a local recycling chain, such as making available land in the EcoPark for a recycled paper manufacturing plant, so as to facilitate the absorption of waste papers recovered locally in the long run, thereby reducing reliance on export.

Voting on the item

12. The Chairman put the item EC(2017-18)11 to vote. At the request of Mr CHU Hoi-dick, the Chairman ordered a division, and the division bell was rung for five minutes. Eleven members voted for the item and five against it. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval. The votes of individual members were as follows:

For

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| Mr WONG Ting-kwong | Dr Priscilla LEUNG |
| Mr WONG Kwok-kin | Mr Charles Peter MOK |
| Mr KWOK Wai-keung | Mr Martin LIAO |
| Mr POON Siu-ping | Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok |
| Mr HO Kai-ming | Mr SHIU Ka-fai |
| Mr CHAN Chun-ying | |
| (11 members) | |

Against

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| Mr James TO | Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung |
| Mr CHAN Chi-chuen | Dr Fernando CHEUNG |
| Mr CHU Hoi-dick | |
| (5 members) | |

13. Mr James TO requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

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EC(2017-18)12 Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) to lead a new team under the Planning Unit of Planning Division in the Planning and Lands Branch of the Development Bureau up to 31 March 2022; creation of one permanent post of Chief Town Planner (D1) to lead the Housing and Office Land Supply Section of the Planning Department ("PlanD"); and redeployment of one permanent post of Chief Town Planner within PlanD to oversee the district planning work with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee

14. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) (to be designated as Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)7 ("PAS(PL)7")) to lead a new team under the Planning Unit of Planning Division in the Planning and Lands Branch of the Development Bureau ("DEVB(PLB)") up to 31 March 2022; create one permanent post of Chief Town Planner ("CTP") (D1) to lead the Housing and Office Land Supply ("HOLS") Section of PlanD; and redeploy one permanent post of CTP within PlanD to oversee the district planning work with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee ("FC").

15. The Chairman pointed out that the Administration consulted the Panel on Development on the proposal on 26 June 2017. Members from the Liberal Party, the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions as well as Mr YIU Si-wing expressed support for the Government's submission of the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee ("ESC") for consideration. Members belonging to the Democratic Party and the Civic Party said that they had not yet decided if they supported it; Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Abraham SHEK said that they had reservation on the proposal. Some members requested the Administration to strengthen the coordination among various departments in order to expedite the various studies and planning work in relation to land development after the creation of the proposed post, including promoting the concept of "multiple uses" (一地多用) to optimize land utilization. Furthermore, some members requested the Government to update the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines ("HKPSG") in order to increase the supply of community facilities, and allocate the reviewed vacant school premises ("VSP") sites for use by cultural, arts and sports groups as far as possible. Regarding

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the development of brownfield sites, some members requested the Government to reserve adequate land for accommodating the brownfield operators affected by the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area ("NDA") Project, and adopt the land acquisition mode of "rehousing before clearance".

Creation of the post of Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)7 on a supernumerary basis

16. Mr CHAN Chun-ying and Mr Martin LIAO noted from the Government's paper that the proposed supernumerary post of PAS(PL)7 needed to take over some of the existing responsibilities of the permanent Principal Assistant Secretary (Planning and Lands)2 ("PAS(PL)2") post, including overseeing the formulation of brownfield policy framework and related studies as well as formulating measures to reactivate the revitalization scheme for industrial buildings ("IBs"). They opined that it took a long time to handle these two tasks, but the Government had set the duration of the post at three years only, reflecting its lack of long-term commitment to land planning issues. They enquired if the Government would extend the supernumerary post or make it permanent upon the expiry of its term. Mr CHAN also asked why the Government proposed that the existing permanent PAS(PL)2 post should provide secretariat support to the Task Force on Land Supply.

17. Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands)1 ("DS(PL)1") remarked that PlanD was commissioning the Study on Existing Profile and Operations of Brownfield Sites in the NT to review the current situation of a total of 1 300 hectares of brownfield sites in Hong Kong; separately, the Civil Engineering and Development Department had also engaged a consultant to explore the technical feasibility and financial viability of accommodating brownfield operations in multi-storey buildings. The two studies were expected to be completed by the end of 2018, and the proposed supernumerary PAS(PL)7 post would then be able to formulate a long-term policy on the development of brownfield sites based on the outcomes of the two studies. Furthermore, in the light of the establishment of the Task Force on Land Supply at end-September 2017, the Planning Division of DEVB(PLB) had to immediately deploy internal manpower to provide support, so PAS(PL)2 was arranged to provide secretariat support to the Task Force. Towards the end of 2021, the Government would review the progress of implementing the policy framework and measures for brownfield and relaunching the revitalization scheme for IBs as well as the overall workload of the Planning Division of DEVB(PLB) in considering the necessity of keeping the supernumerary

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PAS(PL)7 post as well as the work arrangements for PAS(PL)2.

18. Mr WU Chi-wai pointed out that the Government in recent years advocated increasing land supply, and the various bureaux and departments relating to land and housing policies had therefore created a number of new posts in relation to land planning. He was worried that the work of these posts would overlap, leading to a waste of government resources. He requested the Government to provide supplementary information explaining the number of new staff engaged by various bureaux and departments over the past two years to cope with the work relating to increasing land supply and the details of the posts, as well as the detailed division of work among each of the posts.

19. DS(PL)1 explained that the provision of sites for housing development involved a number of planning and engineering stages during which policy bureaux and departments would get involved, so various bureaux or departments would need to create different posts in the light of their respective job requirements. She undertook to provide the Subcommittee with the relevant supplementary information.

[Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 13 February 2018 vide LC Paper No. ESC83/17-18(01).]

Brownfield development policy

20. Mr WU Chi-wai and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung were concerned that there were economic activities on most of the brownfield sites in Hong Kong at present. If the Government intended to develop brownfield sites, it would have to address the problem of re-accommodating brownfield operators. They enquired about the Administration's measures or compensation packages to assist in the relocation of brownfield operators. Moreover, Mr LEUNG was also concerned if the Government would compensate the people living on brownfield sites when the sites were resumed for development.

21. DS(PL)1 pointed out that there were economic operations on most of the brownfield sites in Hong Kong at present. The Government would consider how to provide other spaces to accommodate these economic activities when developing brownfield sites, and the proposals under study included accommodating the aforesaid operations in multi-storey buildings. However, constructing multi-storey buildings involved construction costs and expenses on operation and management, and the rentals were believed

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to be higher than those for the existing brownfield sites, so some operators would need to consider whether to transform their operations. Therefore, when developing brownfield sites, the Government would also study how to encourage and support brownfield operators to transform and identify other spaces for their operations, apart from making compensation for the commercial activities affected by public works projects according to the prevailing mechanism.

22. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for the staffing proposal. He pointed out that a number of industries including the construction industry required more sizeable sites for operation, but the Government had failed to provide sufficient sites for these industries since the 1990s, prompting the need of the operators to operate on brownfield sites. He hoped that the holder of the proposed supernumerary PAS(PL)7 post would be able to deal with the brownfield development policy properly after taking office to ensure that brownfield operators could continue to have suitable sites for operation.

23. DS(PL)1 advised that it was the Government's expectation for the planning of NDAs that sites would be reserved for various economic purposes (including the current operations on brownfield sites) apart from housing development. Taking the Hung Shui Kiu NDA as an example, the Government had reserved sites there for use by port back-up, open storage and logistics trades, etc.

24. Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that many owners of agricultural land and fish ponds in the New Territories sabotaged the ecological value of the sites to turn them into brownfield sites so as to attract such trades as recycling and construction to operate there, and these constituted instances of unauthorized development of brownfield sites. He enquired if PlanD had taken any enforcement actions against the unauthorized commercial activities carried out on agricultural land.

25. Assistant Director of Planning (Special Duties) ("ADP(SD)") advised that in 2016, PlanD issued Enforcement Notices in respect of more than 150 cases of unauthorized developments on the land zoned "Agriculture", requiring that the relevant matters that constituted the unauthorized developments should be discontinued by a specified date. He supplemented that the relevant control legislation was introduced in 1991, so the uses which had existed on a land before 1991 were not unauthorized developments. In addition, if business operators hoped to carry out commercial activities on brownfield sites, they could, lodge an application to the Town Planning Board ("TPB") according to the

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established mechanism for converting the land to other temporary uses. In the long run, the Government looked forward to establishing a mechanism to tackle brownfield development in a more orderly manner. At the request of Dr KWOK Ka-ki, ADP(SD) undertook to provide the Subcommittee with the details of PlanD's enforcement actions against unauthorized operations on brownfield sites, including the number of prosecutions instituted in recent years, as well as the sizes of the brownfield sites involving unauthorized operations.

[Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 13 February 2018 vide LC Paper No. ESC83/17-18(01).]

26. Mr CHU Hoi-dick pointed out that there were a large number of brownfield sites in the rural New Territories. If the Government could accord priority to the development of brownfield sites, there would be adequate land available for housing development and other commercial uses to effectively tackle the scarcity of land resources. He urged the Government to formulate a policy under which development of brownfield sites would be accorded priority so as to avoid the development of agricultural land or sites on the periphery of country parks.

27. DS(PL)1 said that as brownfield sites in the rural New Territories were usually small in size and scattered in different areas, the development potential of brownfield sites could not be unleashed if each of them was developed separately. Therefore, the Government was inclined to develop brownfield sites together with the surrounding land thereof under the NDA approach so as to achieve better site planning and enhance the supporting infrastructural facilities of the area. She supplemented that most of the brownfield sites in the New Territories were private sites and it would take a long time to deal with the land resumption work when developing such sites, so it was difficult to meet the short-term land supply needs. The Government had to study sources of land supply other than brownfield sites at the same time and could not pursue brownfield site development alone.

Reactivating the revitalization scheme for industrial buildings

28. Mr Jeremy TAM pointed out that since the introduction of the first round of the revitalization scheme for IBs in 2009, conversion of the lower floor units of some old IBs for non-industrial uses had not been permitted by the Government due to fire safety issues. He enquired how the Government would tackle relevant issues when reactivating the revitalization scheme for IBs so as to maximize the benefits brought

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about by the scheme.

29. DS(PL)1 advised that if owners hoped to convert the space on the first to third floors of an IB for non-industrial uses, the Fire Services Department ("FSD") would usually require the owners to convert the fourth floor of the IB for use as the refuge floor, and quite a number of owners would withdraw from the revitalization scheme for IBs as a result. In this connection, the Development Bureau ("DEVB") was exploring with the Security Bureau and FSD to see if there was any room for relaxing the requirements on refuge floors.

Creation of a permanent Chief Town Planner post in the Planning Department

30. Mr HO Kai-ming said that he had no objection to the staffing proposal, but pointed out that when PlanD pursued development for an area, utilities were often planned in accordance with HKPSG only in order to meet the needs of the additional population brought by the new development, but overlooked the existing shortage of community facilities. He urged PlanD to consider the problems in relation to the utilities of the surrounding communities when planning for NDAs, especially the severe shortage of parking spaces.

31. ADP(SD) explained that before PlanD put forward development proposals to TPB, it would, apart from planning for the utilities in NDAs according to HKPSG, collect from various government departments information in relation to the social welfare facilities and utilities of the surrounding communities in order to consider the necessity of providing more supporting facilities in NDAs. He added that PlanD was well aware of the public concern about the shortage of parking spaces in various districts, and it would endeavor to strike a balance between land development and ancillary transport facilities when departments (such as the Transport Department) brought up the problem of parking space shortage in the course of new area development.

32. Mr Holden CHOW urged the post holder of CTP to listen carefully to the views of the local community when dealing with planning work. ADP(SD) advised that as a usual practice for PlanD, District Planning Officers ("DPOs") would directly communicate with the local communities and District Councils on planning issues. In conclusion, CTP and DPOs, being members of the planning team, would definitely pay full heed to public views when dealing with planning work.

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33. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired whether the work of the proposed CTP post would include studies into the development of land on the periphery of country parks, as well as the future uses of the Fanling Golf Course. In addition, noting from Enclosure 6 to the Government's paper that the proposed post would formulate, supervise and oversee the rezoning programme for some 210 potential housing sites, he requested the Administration to provide the details of the 210 sites, including such information as the location and size of the sites. He also enquired about the current work arrangements prior to the creation of the post.

34. ADP(SD) advised that the CTP post would not be involved in the studies into the changes in planned uses of sites as mentioned by Mr CHAN. Only when a site had to be rezoned and made available to the market would the proposed post be involved in the land planning work concerned. DS(PL)1 supplemented that the development of land on the periphery of country parks and the future uses of the Fanling Golf Course were still under study, and the Task Force on Land Supply would launch public engagement activities in the first half of 2018 to gauge public views on various land supply options. On the other hand, the Government had created short-term posts of a transitional nature in PlanD to share the work of the proposed CTP post on a temporary basis. Information relating to some 210 potential sites for housing development in the short to medium term would be provided to the Subcommittee.

[Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was circulated to members on 13 February 2018 vide LC Paper No. ESC83/17-18(01).]

35. Mr IP Kin-yuen noted from the Government's paper that the proposed CTP post would lead the HOLS Section whose work included considering suitable alternative long-term uses for VSP sites no longer required by the Education Bureau ("EDB") for mainstream educational services. He pointed out that as there was an upward trend in Hong Kong's birth rate in recent years, the number of school-age children was expected to rise gradually in the future. He was worried that if the Government converted a great number of VSP for other developments, it would be difficult to identify sites for constructing new school premises when there was a shortage of school places in the future.

36. ADP(SD) advised that PlanD and EDB had reviewed the long-term uses of 183 VSP sites in accordance with the Central Clearing House mechanism, and 18 of the sites were suitable to be rezoned to residential sites, while over 100 sites would be reserved for use as "Government,

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Institution or Community" sites. Consideration would be made to convert these sites to community uses according to district needs. He supplemented that the arrangement concerned was not about converting school premises into community facilities unilaterally. If there was an actual need for school premises in the community in the future, the Government might re-convert community facilities for use as school premises.

Joint discussion on the various proposals under the item

37. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen pointed out that the staffing proposal included creation of respective posts in DEVB and PlanD and redeployment of one CTP post within PlanD. He enquired why the Administration had consolidated these three staffing proposals into a single document for submission to ESC for consideration.

38. DS(PL)1 explained that DEVB had to provide policy steer on the work of PlanD, while the proposed CTP of PlanD was responsible for studying how to optimize the use of sites including VSP and IBs so as to tie in with the future land development needs. Its job objectives were related to the responsibilities of the proposed supernumerary PAS(PL)7 post, and hence these posts had been consolidated into a single document for submission to ESC for consideration.

39. The Chairman remarked that as some members were still waiting for their turns to ask questions, the Subcommittee would continue the discussion on this item at the meeting on 12 January 2018.

40. The meeting ended at 10:30 am.