

**Confirmed Minutes of the 158th Meeting of
the Advisory Council on the Environment
held on 9 January 2009 at 2:30 pm**

Present:

Prof LAM Kin-che, SBS, JP (Chairman)

Prof Paul LAM, JP (Deputy Chairman)

Ms Teresa AU

Dr Dorothy CHAN, BBS

Prof CHAU Kwai-cheong

Mr Oscar CHOW

Ms Betty HO

Mr Michael JEBSEN, BBS

Mr Edwin LAU

Mr Michael LEE

Dr MAN Chi-sum, JP

Dr Alfred TAM

Mr TSANG Kam-lam

Prof WONG Ming-hung

Mr Simon WONG, JP

Dr YAU Wing-kwong

Prof Ignatius YU

Mr Carlson K S CHAN (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies:

Prof Joseph LEE

In Attendance:

Ms Anissa WONG, JP

Mr Richard SIU

Dr P M SO

Ms Monica KO

Ms Josephine CHEUNG

Mr KWAN Chung-kit

Ms Loletta LAU

Permanent Secretary for the Environment

Technical Secretary/Technical Services, Planning
Department

Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity), Agriculture,
Fisheries and Conservation Department

Principal Information Officer, Environmental Protection
Department (EPD)

Chief Executive Officer (CBD), EPD

Office Manager (CBD), EPD

Executive Officer (CBD), EPD

In Attendance for Agenda Item 4

Dr Glenn FROMMER	Head of Sustainability Development, Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC)
Mr Richard KWAN	Manager – Environmental, MTRC
Mr Henry LEUNG	Senior Environmental Engineer, MTRC
Miss Natalie IP	Environmental Engineer I, MTRC
Miss Jade FUNG	Public Relations Officer, MTRC

In Attendance for Agenda Item 5

Mr C S LIU	Chief Engineer/Project 2, NTN&W Development Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr Y P HUNG	Senior Engineer/8, NTN&W Development Office, CEDD
Mr K K LO	Engineer/1, NTN&W Development Office, CEDD
Miss P Y TAI	Engineer/2, NTN&W Development Office, CEDD
Ms April KUN	Senior Town Planner/NDA, Planning Department
Mr Davis LEE	Consultant, Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong Ltd. (Arup)
Mr Joseph MA	Consultant, Arup
Mr W L YAN	Consultant, Arup
Dr Michael LEVEN	Consultant, Arup

Action

Agenda Item 1 : Welcome remarks, general briefing on operation of the Council and formation of Subcommittees

The Chairman welcomed Ms Teresa Au, Prof Chau Kwai-cheong, Mr Oscar Chow, Mr Michael Jebsen, Mr Michael Lee, Dr Alfred Tam, Prof Wong Ming-hung, Prof Ignatius Yu and Prof Joseph Lee who had newly joined the Council and extended congratulations to Prof Paul Lam for being appointed as the Deputy Chairman to succeed Prof Wong Yuk-shan. He also expressed a note of thanks to Prof Wong Yuk-shan, Prof Howard Huang, Mr James Graham, Ms Goretti Lau, Dr Ng Cho-nam, Prof Poon Chi-sun, Mr Markus Shaw, Mr Eddie Wong and Prof Wong Tze-wai who had retired from the Council.

2. Ms Anissa Wong expressed her gratitude, and that of the Secretary

for the Environment, for Members' support in the drive to build a better environment for Hong Kong by serving on the Council and looked forward to the advice of Members which would be instrumental in the formulation of strategies and implementation of initiatives for bringing about improvement to the environment.

3. The Chairman said that as it was the first Council meeting for the new term, it would be useful to have a general briefing on the operation of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE).

Functions of the Council

4. The Chairman said that the ACE was the Government's principal advisory body on matters relating to environmental protection and nature conservation. It was consulted on a wide range of issues including new legislative proposals and implementation of pollution control and nature conservation measures. Major policy initiatives were also referred to the ACE for advice before they were adopted by the Government. Under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance, the Director of Environmental Protection was required to take into account comments of the ACE, if any, made on EIA reports during the statutory public inspection period.

Meetings and visits

5. The Chairman said that the full Council meetings were conducted generally on a monthly basis. The agendas, papers and confirmed minutes of the meetings (with Members' names deleted) were uploaded onto the ACE's website. Meetings were normally conducted in English and all the documents were mainly in English. The Council had agreed that no simultaneous interpretation service would be provided. A press briefing would be held by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman as well as Subcommittee Chairman, where necessary, after each Council meeting. Open fora would be held on selected topics which would enable the Council to exchange views with the stakeholders and members of the public. Site visits would be arranged on a need basis to let Members have a better understanding of the issues to be discussed. The Chairman said that the proposed meeting schedule in 2009 had been circulated to Members before the meeting. Members endorsed the meeting schedule.

Open meetings

6. The Chairman said that the Council agreed at the meeting in March 2007 that the following sessions of the full Council and EIA Subcommittee meetings be opened to the public –

- (a) Presentation Session and Question-and-Answer Session of a discussion item on EIA report at the EIA Subcommittee meeting requiring the attendance of the project proponent team; and
- (b) Presentation Session and Question-and-Answer Session of a discussion item of the ACE meeting when the ACE discussed the report submitted by the EIA Subcommittee on EIA report requiring the attendance of the project proponent team.

Since December 2007, the public could observe the above sessions of the meetings by means of a telecasting system at the public viewing room on the same floor. The opening up of the meetings was an administrative arrangement only and was not applicable to internal discussion sessions of a discussion item on EIA report and all other sessions of the meetings of the ACE and its Subcommittees.

Declaration of interest

7. The Chairman briefed Members on the existing one-tier system on declaration of interest which was an honour system for Members to declare any direct personal interests as and when a need arose. The system had been adopted by the Council since 1994. ACE paper 57/1994, which set out the details of the declaration system, had been circulated to Members before the meeting. Members agreed to maintain the current system on declaration of interest.

Rules for Voting

8. The Chairman said that the Rules for Voting adopted by the Council since 1996 had been circulated to Members before the meeting. It was an administrative arrangement which facilitated the smooth operation of the meeting. As stated in the rules, votes would not normally be taken unless Members' views were clearly divided on a matter where a formal stance of the

Council was required. Members agreed to maintain the current system on Rules for Voting.

Confidentiality of classified information

9. The Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members of the need to maintain confidentiality of classified documents and information presented to them in connection with their service with the Council.

Subcommittees under the Council

10. The Chairman said that three Subcommittees under the Council assisted the Council in dealing with respective subjects, namely the EIA Subcommittee, Nature Conservation Subcommittee and Waste Management Committee. Their terms of reference and related information had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

11. The Chairman informed Members that 11 Members had signed up for the EIA Subcommittee, nine for the Nature Conservation Subcommittee and seven for the Waste Management Committee. Members who had not signed up for the Subcommittees were welcome to join any time in future. Non-Subcommittee members were also welcome to join the Subcommittee meetings if they had interest in a certain subject but they shall not vote in case voting was taken.

12. The Chairman informed Members that the Subcommittee Chairpersons were to be elected among Members. As an established practice, there was also a Deputy Chairman for the EIA Subcommittee in view of the statutory role of the ACE under the EIA Ordinance. To facilitate the arrangement of the first Subcommittee meetings, Members agreed to elect the Chairman/Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittees during the break of the meeting.

(Note: The Chairman announced after the break that Prof Paul Lam and Mr Tsang Kam-lam were elected as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the EIA Subcommittee respectively, Prof Chau Kwai-cheong was elected as the Chairman of the Nature Conservation Subcommittee and Prof Wong Ming-hung was elected as the Chairman of the Waste Management Subcommittee.)

Agenda Item 2 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 157th meeting held on 15 December 2008

13. The Chairman said that the draft minutes of the last meeting had been circulated to Members, including retired Members in the last term. Members agreed that the draft minutes be confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 3 : Matters Arising

14. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Agenda Item 4 : MTR Corporation new railway projects
(ACE Paper 1 /2009)

15. A Member declared that the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) was a client of the company she worked for but she had no direct or personal interest in the Corporation as well as the proposed railway projects. The Chairman suggested and Members agreed that she could stay and continue to take part in the discussion.

16. Dr Glenn Frommer briefed Members on the background, specific environmental issues and implementation programme of the upcoming railway projects, including the Express Rail Link, Shatin to Central Link, South Island Line (East) and Kwun Tong Line Extension. He said that the MTRC would like to seek Members' views on the key environmental issues in respect of the proposed railway projects in order to address them at the early stage in the context of strategic planning prior to the submission of individual EIA report under the EIA Ordinance.

17. The Chairman welcomed the opportunity to have a strategic view on the upcoming railway projects in the coming decade and for the Council to provide comments on the key environmental issues at the early planning stage. The Council would have separate opportunities to give comments on individual project upon the submission of individual EIA report of the projects.

18. The Chairman enquired about the major strategic considerations in the alignments for railway lines and locations of stations in the planning stage. Dr Glenn Frommer said that there were a number of considerations, including

engineering and technical feasibility (such as the construction of a tunnel under the harbour), interface with other major projects, relevant international and local standards as well as workers' safety, which would affect the railway alignments, station locations, methods and timing of the construction works. The proposed alignments and stations were broad indications at this stage and would be refined subject to detailed design, engineering considerations as well as public comments. As for the Express Rail Link, the current proposed alignment was more concrete which had been re-aligned westward to minimize disturbance to nearby residents.

19. A Member enquired about the experience learnt from previous railway projects. Mr Richard Kwan said that the experience learnt in past railway projects had helped shed lights on the new projects. An important experience learnt from large railway projects, such as the West Rail and Ma On Shan Rail, was the importance of continuous public engagement. While the latest technology and design were adopted in the project, a “soft” approach was crucial to communicate with the public on the “hardware” in addressing their concerns. It was now an established practice that a dedicated Project Liaison Team, on top of the Corporate Liaison Team, would be set up for each individual project. This mechanism would not only enhance communication with stakeholders, interest groups and members of the public, but also take on board the views of the general public for beneficial development of the projects. On the technical aspect, experience showed that the adoption of environment-friendly construction methods would be beneficial to both the Corporation and the public as illustrated in the “ground freezing” method for the cross-over bridge of the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line.

20. A Member considered that it was important for the MTRC to be sensitive to the comments collected and take into account the feedbacks seriously in the early planning stage, in particular perceived environmental nuisances such as visual impacts of ventilation shafts. By minimizing the environmental impacts in a sustainable manner, it would help the project go through the EIA process more smoothly. The Chairman suggested that early engagement with potential sensitive receivers of performance venues located near some new projects should be conducted in order to incorporate the views in the engineering design. Dr Glenn Frommer said that they fully recognized that early communication with stakeholders would be the best approach to address concerns related to environmental issues. They had been continuously improving the public engagement mechanism and taking proactive measures to

gauge public comments throughout the planning and implementation process.

21. A Member said that she was pleased to note that the MTRC had taken into account a number of environmental aspects in the railway projects as outlined in the paper. Nonetheless, cost consideration was one of the major determining factors for a commercial enterprise in decision making, such as in the final design of the projects. It was of paramount importance for MTRC to balance commercial interest with public interest, which were often conflicting. Dr Glenn Frommer said that the provision of viable railway service was the prime consideration of the Corporation. Other key considerations, such as maximization of catchment service area and safety of passengers, were accorded higher priority than cost implications.

22. A Member said that one of the new railway lines would take about 10 years to complete and there would be quite substantial development in the environment-friendly technologies within such a long time span. Dr Glenn Frommer said that experience showed that the general construction methods were rather standard, such as cut-and-cover, boring or blasting methods for tunnel construction and the pace of technological advancement was not very fast. They would adopt the best possible technologies available in the market. For example, the more advanced approach in blasting would be adopted for the West Island Line project (which had been endorsed by the Council). For the on-going railway system, the best possible and most energy-efficient technologies would be adopted by upgrading the existing systems, such as the fire-protection or communication signaling systems.

23. A Member asked whether the construction period could be shortened as the long time frame would have social and environmental costs. Dr Glenn Frommer explained that as Shatin to Central Link as well as the Express Rail Link involved a number of sections and interface with new and existing railway lines, it was necessary to maintain the existing railway and cross-boundary services. In view of the complications, the projects had to be monitored and managed carefully. There were a number of constraints, such as limited work sites in congested areas, working hour limit and the need to install noise enclosures, which would affect the progress of the works. From the perspective of the Corporation, best effort would be made to expedite the construction works in collaboration with contractors and relevant parties.

24. In response to the Chairman and a Member's enquiries about the

implementation programme, Dr Glenn Frommer said that with the assistance of relevant parties in streamlining the process, the schedule for commencing the Express Rail Link in late 2009 would be a relatively realistic assessment. Miss Natalie Ip added that their plan was to submit the EIA report on the Express Rail Link to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in around May 2009.

25. A Member was concerned about the traffic arrangements and passenger flows for the large number of visitors arriving at the West Kowloon Terminus through the 26-km Express Rail Link as there were no stations in between the two points. Dr Glenn Frommer said that the current mass transport and bus service system should be able to provide an efficient means in diverting passengers from the West Kowloon Terminus. Prior to the commissioning of the Express Rail Link, detailed traffic arrangements would be worked out with the Highways Department to streamline road network and bus service in order to optimize the traffic flow.

26. A Member asked whether consideration would be given to providing goods delivery service by the Express Rail Link. Dr Glenn Frommer said that the design of the Express Rail Link, with an average speed of 180 to 200 km per hour and maximum speed of 300 km per hour, was primarily a railway line for passenger service.

27. A Member considered that it would be important to consider means to reduce construction waste and maximize reuse of waste at an early stage given the huge volume of construction waste to be generated by the proposed railway projects. It was estimated that as much as 12 million cubic metres of construction waste would be generated from the Express Rail Link. Dr Glenn Frommer confirmed that waste minimization and maximization of waste reuse would be the key approach in managing waste generated from the projects. Temporary storage of waste for reuse would be explored.

28. A Member enquired about the basis of demographic data for planning the railway network. Dr Glenn Frommer explained that the Corporation worked closely with the Railway Development Office of the Transport and Housing Bureau on the planning issues. The demographic data was based on the information provided by the Railway Development Office which had conducted studies on the distribution and changes of demographic information over time, including the change in patronage after development of

new railway lines.

29. A Member asked whether the EIA reports for railway projects would include environmental impact assessment on related property development projects on the sites. Dr Glenn Frommer said that the EIA studies would be exclusively for the construction and operation of the railway lines. There might be some planned property developments associated with the railway projects, such as Shatin to Central Link and South Island Line. The property developments would have to go through relevant town planning process with master layout plans and a separate EIA study would be necessary.

30. The Chairman summarized Members' views as follows –

- (a) the Council appreciated the MTRC's proactive approach in engaging the Council early on the vision and strategic plan of the railway projects;
- (b) the Council fully supported the extension of railway network, an environment-friendly means of transport, to meet the increasing demand of the city;
- (c) the Council supported the early public engagement approach through which the MTRC could gauge views of relevant parties at an early stage so that the community's concerns and aspirations could be addressed by suitable mitigation measures in the EIA process. The MTRC was encouraged to be sensitive to the feedbacks, in particular on environmental nuisances;
- (d) the Council considered that the best way to resolve environmental problems associated with the railway projects was to identify the potential impacts, such as ecology, noise and vibration, and address them as early as possible through fine-tuning of railway alignments and re-siting of stations as appropriate;
- (e) the Council suggested that the construction waste generated from the projects should be minimized, reused and properly managed; and
- (f) the Council suggested that the strategic design of the railway lines

had to be both environment-friendly and user-friendly. Detailed transit plans had to be devised for the traffic flow of passengers.

Agenda Item 5 : North East New Territories New Development Areas – Planning and Engineering Study – Stage One Public Engagement
(ACE Paper 2/2009)

31. A Member declared that the Conservancy Association, of which she served as the Chairman, and her company had provided submissions on the North East New Territories (NENT) New Development Areas (NDAs) Planning and Engineering Study. She had no personal or direct interest in the project. The Chairman suggested and Members agreed that she could stay and continue to take part in the discussion.

32. Mr C S Liu briefed Members on the background of the NENT planning and engineering study for NDAs at Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling (i.e. the Three-in-One Scheme). A video on the study was shown to facilitate Members' understanding. Mr Joseph Ma briefed Members on the details of the planning framework. He highlighted that to facilitate a more focused discussion in the Stage One Public Engagement, the key issues were consolidated into four focus topics, namely "strategic roles of NDAs", "people-oriented communities", "sustainable living environment" and "implementation mechanisms".

33. A Member enquired about the long time frame required for the development which would take about 10 years starting from the study in 2008 to the planned population intake in 2019. Mr C S Liu explained that the initial overall implementation programme was based on past experience of public works programme having regard to the need to go through a series of statutory processes, such as town planning process, land resumption and authorization for road construction. In view of the large number of private lots involved, it was anticipated that land resumption would be a lengthy process for the project. Nonetheless, every effort would be made to identify possibilities of advancing the works schedule in the programme implementation review.

34. A Member supported the focus of "people-oriented communities". She said that planning of community development usually consisted of a package of housing, commercial and community facilities. As revealed in the experience of developing new towns, such as Tung Chung and Tseung Kwan O,

the provision of community facilities often lagged behind population intake. The development of the NDAs should avoid such problems. Mr C S Liu said that similar feedback had been received in the public consultation. Special attention would be paid to this point and the implementation programme would be closely monitored, in particular on the timely bidding of resources for timely provision of community facilities.

35. A Member supported the key planning principles. He considered that in order to develop “people-oriented communities”, the provision of job opportunities should be given emphasis in view of the experience of insufficient job opportunities of some new towns such as Tin Shui Wai. A broader approach should be adopted and opportunities for more economic activities, such as manufacturing and production activities, should be explored. Mr Joseph Ma said that appropriate community back-up facilities, such as commercial, social welfare, leisure and recreational facilities, would be distributed evenly in the development clusters. Sufficient land would be reserved for employment-generating facilities. In reply to the Chairman’s enquiry, Mr Ma confirmed that the special industries referred to in the paper did not mean hazardous industries.

36. A Member considered that the experience in developing new towns showed that the degree of self-sufficiency generally reflected the degree of successful planning. Thus, it was important to provide adequate facilities and job opportunities to enhance the economic viability of the NDAs. A Member shared that the planning of economic activities for provision of job opportunities was very important for new towns. He suggested that the public consultation should include seeking views of the local population about the kinds of jobs they would expect.

37. In reply to a Member’s enquiry about the boundaries of the three NDAs, Mr C S Liu explained that the current boundaries were mainly based on the recommendations of the previous planning study on NENT conducted in late 1990’s which had gone through a number of technical assessments. Nonetheless, the boundaries were only indicative and would be refined after further technical assessments and land use planning under the current study.

38. A Member considered that while the study focused on the three NDAs, the Lok Ma Chau Loop which was in close proximity should also be considered in the study in a comprehensive approach. The Chairman

considered that on top of the Lok Ma Chau Loop, the Frontier Closed Area was also in the vicinity and the cumulative impacts of the development on these areas should be considered in a holistic manner. A Member supported seeking views of the public on the development of the areas in a holistic planning approach. Rather than focusing only on the development of NDAs, the Lok Ma Chau Loop, Frontier Closed Area, Sheung Shui and Fanling should be included. For example, the abundant heritage resources in Sheung Shui and Fanling old towns should be considered in a package for the development of a heritage trail.

39. Ms April Kun explained that the Frontier Closed Area Study (stage one community engagement just completed) and the Lok Ma Chau Loop Study (would commence later this year) were being conducted in parallel with the NDAs Study. For technical reasons, these studies had to be carried out separately. Nonetheless, all the planning studies were overseen by the same branch of the Planning Department. The consultants of these different studies had been requested to make reference to other studies and discuss with each other in order to have a more holistic view and comprehensive consideration for coordinated recommendations of the development in the area as a whole. Mr C S Liu added that the cumulative impacts of the development in the whole area would be addressed in the EIA study.

40. A Member echoed that a holistic approach should be adopted in developing the three NDAs, in particular the preservation of heritage and rural characteristics, as the adjacent areas were interrelated in terms of historical and economic development. He enquired about the proportion of residential, commercial and natural areas in the current land use and major changes in the future development. Ms April Kun said that comments collected so far indicated preferences to have Kwu Tung North and Fanling North be developed for residential purposes. The Lok Ma Chau area at the west and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling at the east could be considered for some employment uses. A more detailed assessment would be conducted in the next stage of the planning study in recommending a more balanced land use proposal.

41. A Member considered that the principle of “sustainable living environment” should be upheld. However, she envisaged that there would be complications to achieve the preservation of sites of high ecological value within the NDAs, in particular the Long Valley wetland in Kwu Tung North NDA. Given the vested interests of private owners and local villagers, there

would be great pressure for development and destruction of the wetland for economic gains. Thus, the implementation mechanism, such as by means of land resumption or public-private partnership scheme, would play an important role to preserve the ecologically sensitive areas. Mr C S Liu said that the land resumption issue for the Long Valley would be a great challenge. The previous NENT study had proposed a nature park for the area and the proposal would be reviewed.

42. A Member enquired about the composition of ownership of the private lands in the NDAs, which occupied about 57% of the total area, and possible impacts in case there was difficulty in the land resumption. Mr Joseph Ma said that the ownership of the private land comprised a mix of corporate owners and individual owners. In the next planning stage, more detailed consideration would be given to carefully package the proposal to allow the participation of private land owners.

43. A Member enquired about development guidelines on the proportion of built-up and conservation area. Mr Joseph Ma said that a detailed baseline assessment had been conducted for the area. The development would basically follow the characteristics of the land. Areas of ecological value, such as Long Valley and Ho Sheung Heung, would be preserved and major development would focus only on areas with less ecological and cultural heritage value. Detailed study would be conducted in the stage of Preliminary Outline Development Plans. A Member suggested that consideration should be given to growing some high value organic or safe food in the agricultural land near Ping Che North.

44. A Member suggested seeking views of the local population about the local rural characteristics and how they would like the rural area to be developed as the NDAs should have their unique characteristics. A Member considered that Hong Kong was short of areas with unique local characteristics. The quality of a community would count on the uniqueness and visual features representative of the local community. This uniqueness should be carefully planned in a holistic manner by drawing on local tradition and aspirations rather than preservation of segregated features in a fragmented approach.

45. Ms April Kun explained that a different approach had been adopted for the current consultation. The usual practice was that consultation would only be carried after the formulation of Outline Development Plans. For

the current exercise, views of the public were collected at the early planning stage before the preparation of any planning proposal or Outline Development Plans. This would enable timely incorporation of public views into the planning and design of the NDAs.

46. A Member asked how the problem of open storages currently existed in Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling could be addressed in the context of the EIA study. Mr C S Liu said that the initial idea was to rationalize the use of these sites by planning and reprovisioning works.

47. A Member considered that a holistic view should be taken on the scattered open storages in the area in order to encourage relocation of the open storages to a clustered area. Mr Joseph Ma said that detailed studies would be conducted in the next planning stage on the location of industrial use, such as green and business-type industries. The provision of land for logistical support would be considered in connection with these economic activities as well as the proposed new border crossing point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai. Planning of Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling would be carefully considered to ensure that there would not be adverse environmental impacts on the ecologically sensitive areas and nearby villages.

48. A Member noted that a large piece of agricultural land in the New Territories was converted to open storage or industrial facilities. He considered that assessment should be made on the need to reinstate the original land use or granting proper change in land use.

49. A Member enquired about relevant legislation governing the change of land use in the NDAs. Ms April Kun explained that there were statutory controls over land use under the Town Planning Ordinance. During the study stage, stakeholders including land owners would be consulted on key issues and Outline Development Plans. The key development parameters would be formulated and the land use proposals would be modified during the study process taking into account the public comments received with a view to developing a set of public-supported Outline Development Plans. This study process was non-statutory. The final land use proposals recommended by the study would later be translated into Outline Zoning Plans and the statutory town planning process under the Town Planning Ordinance would then be triggered.

50. A Member was pleased to note the vision of developing green

cities and the use of clean and renewable energy. He enquired about the design of renewable energy installations and coverage of carbon auditing measurement under the low carbon economy concept. Mr C S Liu said that opportunities for the use of renewal energy would be explored as far as possible. Nonetheless, the size of renewable energy facilities would not be large in view of practical considerations. On the carbon auditing, the current planning study mainly focused on the broad planning framework. Detailed carbon auditing on individual buildings could not be conducted, but broad-brush carbon auditing for the whole development would be considered in the next planning stage. A Member suggested that a larger coverage area, including Ho Sheung Heung, Long Valley, Sheung Shui and Fanling North, should be included for the development of larger scale renewable energy facilities.

51. Mr W L Yan added that the purpose of applying low carbon economy concept was to achieve energy conservation and waste reduction. A high percentage of carbon emission in Hong Kong was generated from vehicles and electricity consumption by buildings. The planning of the NDAs mainly focused on the use of mass transport system and provision of a rail-based transportation system. The major highways would be at the peripheries of the NDAs. Transportation management strategies, such as pedestrianization, cycling tracks and car pooling system for environment-friendly cars, would be considered within the NDAs. On the reduction of electricity consumption by buildings, the use of district cooling systems for commercial buildings, maximization of natural ventilation through wind corridors and reuse of wastewater would be examined in the study.

52. A Member noted that there was an increasing trend of developing green cities in other parts of the world and she was glad that the concept of green city would be adopted in the NDAs. She enquired about the means to assess the level of success of a green city and how to benchmark the green city. She considered that possible yardsticks could include the level of carbon emission and presence of local landmarks as unique local features.

53. A Member observed that the plan for the NDAs did not only target at achieving an acceptable level of environmental standards but aiming at a higher level. He asked whether the current legislative framework would allow the enforcement of a higher level of environmental standards, having regard to the fact that the development would probably involve both private and public sectors.

54. Ms Anissa Wong said that the study was led by the Civil Engineering and Development Department and Planning Department with an innovative approach of consulting the public in an early planning stage before the Preliminary Outline Development Plans were drawn up. In issuing the EIA Study Brief for this designated project, the EPD had specifically included a requirement for the creation of a low carbon environment for the NDAs. It was important to build in this environmental principle in the early planning stage so that appropriate infrastructural facilities, land use proposals and transport planning issues could be taken into account in the development plans of the area. In response to queries raised by some Members, she said for environment-friendly infrastructural projects, implementation through public works programmes was a likely option though other innovative approach should not be ruled out at this stage.

55. Mr C S Liu said that the Stage One Public Engagement mainly focused on development of broad principles and visions to facilitate the drawing up of Preliminary Outline Development Plans in the next stage. Members' views and concerns would be taken into account in the planning and design of the NDAs.

56. The Chairman summarized Members' views as follows –

- (a) the Council considered that the NENT was a very unique area with rich ecological and cultural heritage resources and the planning of the three NDAs should be conducted in an integrated, strategic and holistic framework for the whole area, including the Frontier Closed Area, Lok Ma Chau Loop and areas in the vicinity;
- (b) the Council considered that it was of paramount importance that the ecological integrity of the area should be enhanced and cultural heritage should be revitalized in a holistic rather than fragmented manner and these resources should be linked with the people-oriented communities to achieve a quality living environment;
- (c) the Council supported the development of the NDAs into green cities and adoption of resource-saving and energy-efficient

measures, including the application of low carbon economy concept, use of renewable energy, district cooling system, re-use of wastewater and development of a rail-based transport system, to achieve the objective of a sustainable living environment;

- (d) the Council supported the development of people-oriented communities and it was important to provide sufficient infrastructural facilities, including job opportunities and community facilities, timely to minimize the need to rely on transportation outside the NDAs; and
- (e) the Council considered that innovative means for the implementation mechanism should be explored in view of the large area of private land involved, including public-private partnership schemes and land resumption for nature conservation purpose, and a rehabilitation programme should be drawn up for the open storages and disused industrial facilities.

Agenda Item 6 : Any Other Business

Tentative items for discussion at the next meeting

57. The agenda was being compiled. Members would be informed in due course.

Agenda Item 7 : Date of Next Meeting

58. The next meeting was scheduled for 16 February 2009.

ACE Secretariat
January 2009