

NOTE FOR FINANCE COMMITTEE

72LC – Prison Development Plan at Hei Ling Chau Stage 1 of the feasibility study and preliminary site investigation for land formation and infrastructure works

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of –

- (a) the outcome of stage 1 of the feasibility study and preliminary site investigation for land formation and infrastructure works (the feasibility study) for the proposed prison development plan at Hei Ling Chau (HLC); and
- (b) the Administration's decision at this point not to seek funding for stage 2 of the feasibility study.

BACKGROUND

2. Under the proposed HLC prison development plan, as set out by the Administration in PWSC (2002-03)95, all penal institutions on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon, as well as all the remand facilities in the territory, would be relocated to the proposed prison complex at HLC. At its meeting on 16 May 2003, the Finance Committee (FC) approved funding of \$46.7 million for carrying out the feasibility study of the proposed project in two stages. Stage 1 (costing around \$7 million) involves a technical and sustainability assessment of different options for land formation and infrastructure, taking into account feedback from public consultation. Stage 2 (costing around \$40 million) is intended to cover more detailed assessments of the preferred development option, including consideration of mitigation measures to minimise various environmental impacts; and the statutory environmental impact assessment. The Administration undertook at the meeting to report to the FC the findings of stage 1 of the feasibility study (including the results of the public consultation to be conducted) and to seek FC's approval before proceeding to stage 2.

/FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- Encl. 1 3. Stage 1 of the feasibility study started in September 2003 and has now been completed. As part of stage 1 of the Study, we have conducted two rounds of public consultation. In the process, we have consulted relevant statutory/advisory bodies, and a wide range of community groups, green groups as well as other interested parties (see list at Enclosure 1). The majority of the respondents did not support the proposed project. The objection was directed mainly at the choice of site at HLC, the need for and scale of the proposed reclamation, and the proposed bridge connecting HLC and Lantau. A summary of the points of concern raised by the public is at Enclosure 2. Concerns were also raised about the need for the project, the site selection process and alternatives to address the problem of prison overcrowding.
- Encl. 2

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

4. Taking into account the views received in the first round of public consultation and having balanced the merits and demerits of various options, the Project Consultant has recommended that the land required for the project should be formed by reclamation inside the HLC typhoon shelter with on-site reprovisioning of the typhoon shelter. A bridge with landing point at Mui Wo with a bypass connecting to South Lantau Road is recommended as the land access route option.

5. Based on the results of the preliminary assessments, the Project Consultant considers that the recommended option is technically feasible. Compared with other options to form land at HLC, it would have less impact on the marine and terrestrial ecology. As the impact on the natural topography and vegetation would be smaller, the impact on the conservation potential of HLC and Sunshine Island might be reduced. From the land use perspective, the impact on the Lantau South Country Park and the existing and planned land uses at Mui Wo would also be minimal. No land resumption would be required. With the bypass, the operational traffic of the prison development can directly gain access to South Lantau Road without going through the Mui Wo town. Besides, the existing topography of HLC would provide effective screening for the new prison complex. However, it is expected that the bridge would have potential visual impact on the surrounding areas, particularly to the residents of Mui Wo.

/WAY

WAY FORWARD

6. In summary, according to stage 1 of the feasibility study, while the project is technically feasible (subject to further studies under stage 2 of the Study), there is strong public objection to the HLC project. Having studied the findings of stage 1, the Administration has decided to shelve the project for the time being, in view of the public's objection to the proposal and call for the Administration to explore alternative development plans to address the problem of prison overcrowding. In the meantime, we will explore such alternative development possibilities.

7. In exploring such alternative possibilities, we will initially consider the feasibility of maximising the redevelopment potential of certain existing penal sites to yield additional places. For example, subject to further study and consultation with relevant parties, we may redevelop the Lo Wu Correctional Institution (current capacity of 182) to provide about 800 additional penal places in a few years' time.

8. We remain committed to alleviating overcrowding in our prisons in the long term. We will consult the relevant panel(s) of the Legislative Council on specific plans in due course.

Security Bureau
October 2004

List of Parties Consulted

A. Statutory/advisory bodies

Eastern District Council*
Islands District Council*
Southern District Council*
Sham Shui Po District Council*
Tsuen Wan District Council*
Advisory Council on Environment
Town Planning Board
The Country and Marine Park Board, Country Parks Committee

B. Local Community Groups

Cheung Chau Rural Committee
Mui Wo Rural Committee
Peng Chau Rural Committee
South Lantau Rural Committee
Discovery Bay City Owners Committee
Peninsular Village Homeowners Committee
Cheung Chau Area Committee
Lantau Area Committee
Peng Chau / Discovery Bay Area Committee

C. Green Groups

Conservancy Association
David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation
Friends of the Earth
Green Lantau Association
Green Peng Chau Association
Green Peace
Green Power

* Information paper on the proposed prison development issued to the rest of the District Councils. No comment received.

Kadoorie Farm
Lantau ECO - Transport Group
Save our Shorelines
Society for Protection of the Harbour
Save Lamma Campaign
The Hong Kong Marine Conservation Society
World Wide Fund

D. Other Interested Parties

Committee on Community Support for Rehabilitated Offenders
Christian Prison Pastoral Fellowship Ltd.
C & A Tours Ltd.
Gray Line Tours of Hong Kong Ltd.
Hong Kong Cargo-Vessels Trader's Association
Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tugs Boats Association
Hong Kong Christian Kun Sun Association
Lantau Tours Ltd.
Living Islands Movement
Provisional Local Vessels Advisory Committee
The Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong
Treasure Island
香港釣網養殖漁民聯會
離島養漁業協進會（長洲）
香港漁民團體聯席會議
香港水產養殖業總會
港九水上漁民福利促進會
香港漁業聯盟

Points of concern raised by the public during the public consultation

Policy and planning issues

- Question the need for the prison project
- Demand alternative solutions to solve the prison overcrowding problem
- Criticize the site selection process
- Concept of co-location of penal institutions not justified
- Question the need for a fixed crossing
- Question the cost-effectiveness of the project
- Land requirement too excessive
- Potential security risks to the areas nearby

Technical aspects of the feasibility study

- Potential visual and landscape impacts of the new prison complex, the fixed crossing and the associated land access routes, including the fung shui impacts of the bridge
- Potential impacts on terrestrial and marine ecology
- Potential impacts on water quality and tidal flow
- Planning implications on the conservation and tourism uses of South Lantau
- Potential impacts on the land traffic in South Lantau
- Potential impacts on fishery
