

Speaking Note for SHPL

Special Finance Committee Meeting on 21 March 2007

Madam Chairman,

Land Supply

On land supply, our policy objective is to provide sufficient land to meet the development needs of our community. In drawing up the Application List, we will make available, for application by developers, sites located in various districts, for different uses and of various sizes. As the 2007-08 Application List has just been announced last week, I will not go into details here. Application List aside, developers may acquire land through various means, including purchasing land in the private market, acquiring and assembling existing properties for redevelopment, and participating in property development projects of the two railway corporations and the Urban Renewal Authority.

2. A Consultancy Study on a Review of the Processing of Lease Modification and Land Exchange Applications launched by the Government in conjunction with the Pre-Construction Task Force was completed in February 2007. The Lands Department is putting in place some quick wins while studying the feasibility of other recommendations, with a view to speeding up the processing of applications.

Planning for Hong Kong

3. Our planning vision is to make Hong Kong a better place for all of us to live and work in. We aim to draw up rational land uses through statutory plan making, having regard to social, economic and development needs. In mapping out our plans for the future, we strive to strike a balance between development and conservation, with a view to facilitating sustainable development for our city. In the planning process, we will engage and consult the community extensively to seek their views.

4. In providing a planning framework for long-term strategic development, we will maintain close ties with the Mainland, in particular the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region. We will continue to enhance cooperation with our Guangdong authorities and to further the sharing of

planning information and experiences.

Building Safety and Maintenance

5. To put in place a permanent solution to resolve the long-standing problem of building neglect, we have conducted a two-stage public consultation on building management and maintenance. The results of the consultation exercises have confirmed the community's support for the introduction of mandatory building inspection and mandatory window inspection. There is also a general community consensus that owners should be responsible for upkeeping their buildings and shouldering the financial commitment. We will soon report to the LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on the results of the public consultation and the arrangements for the implementation of the two schemes.

Minor Works Control System

6. Apart from the above, we also see a need to simplify the statutory requirements and procedures for carrying out small-scale building works, such as the installation of supporting frames for air

conditioners, erection of advertisement signboards as well as the repair of windows and drainage pipes. The proposed minor works control system was introduced into the Legislative Council in 2003 on which Members and the industry have voiced their comments. To allow a more comprehensive dialogue with the industry, we have excised the minor works proposal from the relevant Amendment Bill. A working group was subsequently established with relevant stakeholders to examine how the proposal should be refined and implemented. The consultation work has largely been completed. We are now drafting the relevant legislation and plan to introduce the amendment bill into the Council in the current legislative session.

Expenditure on Buildings, Lands and Planning

7. To implement the policies on Buildings, Lands and Planning, we estimate that the public expenditure for this policy area in 2007-08 will be \$8,295 million, representing 3.1% of the total public expenditure. Compared with 2006-07, the allocation from my Operating Expenditure Envelope to the policy areas of Building, Lands and Planning in 2007-08 is \$3,191m, and is similar to this year's provision (\$3,212m).

8. Our group of departments, in pursuing our various policy initiatives and in discharging their respective functions and responsibilities, will continue to be guided by the relevant Ordinances and practical administrative practices. We will continue re-prioritizing our tasks and re-engineering our work processes so as to maximize efficacy and efficiency. In response to growing community aspirations for balanced and sustainable developments, we will continue strengthening the internal development approval process and mechanism to ensure efficient coordination of our group of developments in the development process.

9. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer any questions that Members may wish to raise. Thank you, Madam Chairman.