

Motion on
“Reviewing afresh the use of land at the Kowloon waterfront”
at the Legislative Council meeting
of 9 December 2009

Progress Report

PURPOSE

The above motion moved by Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun and as amended by Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon James TO Kun-sun was passed at the Legislative Council on 9 December 2009 (see Annex). This paper reports on the issues of concern raised by Members on the motion.

HONOUR THE PLEDGES MADE IN THE POLICY ADDRESSES

2. The Chief Executive highlighted the concept of “Progressive Development” in his Policy Addresses of the current-term Government, such that the environment is taken into account as we pursue economic development in order to develop a quality city life for our people. In this connection, the Government has undertaken a variety of measures, such as initiating a review of the development intensity of various districts, imposing height restriction, where appropriate, and further beautifying the Victoria harbourfront areas to create a vibrant and accessible harbourfront. In taking forward these initiatives, we also take into account factors such as housing, economic, social and employment needs of Hong Kong, so as to achieve a pragmatic balance on the various demands for land resources.

REDUCTION OF DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY

3. In order to reduce the development intensity along the Victoria

harbourfront areas to enhance urban design, we have been reviewing the outline zoning plans (OZPs) of various districts in a progressive manner since 2007, and have decided to accord priority to the OZPs covering the harbourfront areas. Where justified, we will consider revising the development parameters prescribed in the OZPs, such as specifying the building height and other development restrictions to improve building design, urban environment and air ventilation. The Planning Department (PlanD) has so far reviewed 17 OZPs, of which six and one reviewed in part cover areas falling within the statutory harbour boundary. We will continue to gradually review the remaining OZPs covering areas within the harbour limit in the next few years.

4. When reviewing building height restriction, we take into account various factors including the existing topography, level of site formation, land use, local characteristics, harbourfront setting, the height profile of existing developments, the building height restrictions prescribed in the OZPs of the vicinity, etc. We also pay due regard to the Town Planning Board (TPB)'s *Vision and Goals for Victoria Harbour*, the *Harbour Planning Guidelines* endorsed by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC), and the Urban Design Guidelines of the *Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines*.

5. For land sale sites, in response to the public aspiration for a better living environment and a lower development intensity, we have been reviewing the development parameters of each site in the Application List (AL) from the 2008-09 AL onwards since the establishment of the Development Bureau (DEVB). To this end, for each site included in the 2009-10 AL, appropriate development parameters have been stipulated in the Conditions of Sale, such as the maximum Gross Floor Area (GFA) or plot ratio and the building height restriction, including those which are not yet provided for in the relevant OZPs, or where the sites are to be disposed of at a lower GFA/building height as justified. Where appropriate, we will also include other planning requirements such as site coverage and non-building areas etc.. As pointed out by the Secretary for Development when announcing the 2009-10 AL in March last year, 15 of the sites included in the 2009-10 AL have had the development

intensity reduced at a range from 8% the lowest to over 50% the highest.

IMPROVEMENT OF AIR VENTILATION

6. The Government promulgated the Technical Circular on Air Ventilation Assessment (AVA) in 2006. Departments and bureaux will carry out AVA in accordance with the Technical Circular when launching large-scale government projects, planning new development areas and comprehensive redevelopment areas and preparing new or revised major town plans. We will also conduct AVA for individual land sale sites where necessary to assess the impact of the development on pedestrian wind environment, and will include appropriate requirements in the Conditions of Sale to ensure that the air ventilation in the surrounding area is at an acceptable level.

7. Apart from government projects, we also encourage quasi-government organisations such as the Urban Renewal Authority and private developers to carry out AVA for their development projects. For individual sites zoned “Comprehensive Development Area” where air ventilation may be affected by the development, we will require the developer to submit AVA together with the Master Layout Plan to the TPB for approval. For other sites where planning permission is required, AVA may be required as an approval condition as appropriate.

STRENGTHENING COORDINATION AND COOPERATION AMONG GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

8. To strengthen the coordination and cooperation among Government departments, DEVB has set up a dedicated Harbour Unit in April 2009 to co-ordinate inter-departmental efforts on harbourfront planning. The Harbour Unit maintains close liaison with different departments to identify and implement harbourfront enhancement initiatives. It will also consult organisations such as District Councils and the HEC as appropriate.

DEVELOPMENT OF HARBOURFRONT SITES

9. To create a vibrant, green, accessible and sustainable harbourfront, we will press ahead with the relevant planning work, improve accessibility and connectivity of the harbourfront, and implement enhancement initiatives for the public's enjoyment. As mentioned in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2009-10, the proposal on harbourfront beautification options submitted by the HEC in August last year will serve as the basis of our work. We will co-ordinate the efforts of concerned bureaux and departments and implement the enhancement measures across the territory on a step-by-step basis. We will refer to the 22 action areas on both sides of the harbour as proposed by the HEC, exploring and gradually taking forward the short, medium and long term harbourfront enhancement measures.

10. At present, some harbourfront sites are occupied by public facilities or are under private ownership. Such problems need to be resolved progressively on a case-by-case basis. We are pleased to see that some proprietors and developers are collaborating with us in taking forward harbourfront enhancement work. We will examine all feasible measures seriously, so as to create favourable conditions for the construction of continuous promenades.

11. On the other hand, the acquisition of harbourfront land may be required for use as temporary works areas due to infrastructure projects. We will seek to strike a compromise between meeting the needs of infrastructure projects and the corresponding impact on public enjoyment of the waterfront. For instance, a vacant harbourfront site on Sung On Street, To Kwa Wan was once required by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) for use as a temporary barging facility for the Shatin to Central Link and the Kwun Tong Line Extension. We listened to the views of the residents and reconciled with the MTRC and the relevant departments. Eventually, another site for the temporary barging facility was identified, and the harbourfront site on Sung On Street was released for use as public open space. We will continue to make every

endeavour to minimise the impact of infrastructure projects on the harbourfront.

12. The Government will continue to attend to public views on quality life and urban planning with an open attitude. We will also continue to enhance relevant policies and implement harbourfront beautification initiatives, with a view to further adding vibrancy and creativity to the waterfront for public enjoyment.

Development Bureau

February 2010

Annex

Motion on
“Reviewing afresh the use of land at the Kowloon waterfront”
moved by Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 9 December 2009

Motion as amended by Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon James TO
Kun-sun

That the Chief Executive has put forward the policy directions of reducing development density as well as constructing and beautifying the waterfront promenade in his past three years' policy addresses, yet there is still much room for improvement in the planning of many waterfront sites in Kowloon and other districts, the Government should as far as practicable enable as many members of the public as possible to use these waterfront sites; at the same time, these sites have still been wrongly planned for the construction of densely built high-rise buildings in recent years, causing further damages to the beautiful ridgelines of Kowloon and other districts and even blocking the ventilation openings and aggravating the wall and heat island effects, hence exacerbating the environmental problems; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to honour its pledges made in the policy addresses and, by adhering to the overriding principle of conforming to environmental protection and low development density, strengthen the coordination and cooperation among different departments as well as review afresh the use of waterfront sites in Kowloon and other districts, including improving the accessibility of the waterfront and studying measures to address issues relating to ownership of private lands at the waterfront, present use of waterfront sites as well as impact of various future projects on lands at the waterfront, so as to create favourable conditions for the implementation of the Kowloon waterfront promenade project.