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Panel on Development

Meeting on 24 November 2009

**Background brief on proposed New Development Areas
in North East New Territories**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the proposed New Development Areas (NDAs) in North East New Territories (NENT) and a summary of the concerns and views expressed by Members on the subject.

Background

2. The Planning and Development Study on NENT, commissioned by the Planning Department and completed in 2003, identified Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling as suitable NDAs and confirmed their feasibility based on findings of various planning, engineering and environmental assessments. In view of the slower growth of population and housing demand, the NDA proposals were shelved, pending a comprehensive review of the need for strategic development areas in the "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" (the HK2030 Study)¹.

3. The Chief Executive announced in his 2007-2008 Policy Address the planning for NDAs as one of the ten major infrastructure projects for economic growth. On 26 February 2008, the Panel on Development (the Panel) discussed the Administration's proposal to carry out a planning and engineering study (P&E Study) on the NDAs in NENT. The overall objective of the Study is to establish a planning and development framework for the Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling NDAs (i.e. the Three-in-One NDA Scheme) to meet long-term housing, social, economic and environmental needs, and to formulate

¹ The HK2030 Study updates the territorial development strategy for Hong Kong with a view to recommending a spatial development pattern to respond to various social, economic and environmental needs in the next 20 to 30 years. The HK2030 Study has been completed and the findings were promulgated to the public in October 2007.

an implementation programme. On the recommendation of the Public Works Subcommittee, the Finance Committee approved relevant funding proposal at an estimated cost of \$54.2 million on 9 May 2008. The P&E Study commenced in June 2008 and was scheduled for completion in June 2011.

4. The P&E Study includes a three stage public engagement. The Stage One Public Engagement, which was conducted from mid-November to December 2008, is to engage the public at an early stage to generate discussions of key issues relating to the development of the NDAs. Stages Two and Three of the exercise will engage the public on the Preliminary Outline Development Plans (ODPs) and Recommended ODPs respectively.

5. To facilitate more focused discussion in the Stage One Public Engagement, the Administration consolidated the key issues/concerns into four major topics, viz. strategic roles of NDAs, people-oriented communities, sustainable living environment and implementation mechanisms. The Administration briefed the Panel on these key issues/concerns and solicit members' views at the Panel meeting on 25 November 2008.

Concerns and views expressed by Members

6. The major concerns and views expressed by Members during the relevant discussions at the Panel and the Public Work Subcommittee are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Comprehensive planning

7. Members urged the Administration to adopt comprehensive planning for the NDAs with a balanced mix of housing developments, adequate and timely provision of transport facilities, medical and other community facilities, as well as employment opportunities. Some Members pointed out that apart from the Mass Transit Railway, other transport services should be provided to meet the needs of the residents. Moreover, there should be good pedestrian links and cycle tracks in the NDAs.

8. The Administration advised that the planning for the NDAs would be people-oriented, and adequate community facilities would be in place before residents start to move in. There would be a balanced mix of housing developments in the NDAs, and there would also be sufficient transport facilities for the residents. Land had been reserved along the Lok Ma Chau spur line for a station at Kwu Tung. The planning intention was to ensure local employment opportunities for residents in the NDAs and nearby fringe areas such as Fanling North. Employment opportunities, including those from industries with clean and high value-added industrial processes, would be available. While no hospital had been planned for the NDAs at present, the Administration would

review the need for various community facilities, including a hospital, in the P&E Study.

9. Members also expressed concern on whether the planning of the NDAs would take into account the growth of population and traffic arising from the opening up of the Frontier Closed Area and the proposed new Boundary Control Point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai. There was also a view that the planning of the NDAs should not be constrained by the existing area boundaries.

10. The Administration advised that the Three-in-One NDA Scheme, the proposed Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point, the future developments on the land to be released from the Frontier Closed Area and the Lok Ma Chau Loop were all inter-related to a certain extent. The proposed Boundary Control Point would be conducive to the development of North New Territories and the associated connecting road would be beneficial to the NDAs. Two consultancy studies on the Frontier Closed Area and Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point were in progress and the consultant responsible for undertaking the P&E Study for the NDAs would make reference to those studies.

11. The Administration also advised that while the boundaries of the NDAs would be set out in the consultancy agreement for the conduct of the P&E Study, the consultant would be advised of the need to allow flexibility in determining the actual development areas having regard to the latest planning circumstances which might affect the areas.

Planning strategies

12. With regard to planning strategies for the NDAs, the following views were expressed by individual Members --

- (a) the Administration should clearly define the role of NENT in Hong Kong's future development;
- (b) land use planning for the NDAs should aim at providing a diversified life for the residents and a vibrant street environment;
- (c) the development of the NDAs should be under careful control and should not be at the expense of the existing natural environment;
- (d) NDAs could be developed into a leisurely place where residents could enjoy nature, with railway serving as a transport means as far as possible;
- (e) the implementation of NDAs should not be expedited just for the sake of creating more job opportunities;

- (f) the NDAs should be designed with due regard to their unique characteristics;
- (g) the plot ratio should not be higher than three and the height limit should not exceed 100mPD;
- (h) the industries to be developed in the NDAs should not cause any nuisance to the residents and the impact on the environment should be minimized as far as possible; and
- (i) consideration should be given to allocating land for container open storage use.

13. The Administration advised that in taking forward the planning and development of the NDAs, it would attach importance to the provision of necessary road networks and utilities for the development of logistics industry and other economic activities. The intention was to reserve sites for special industries with clean and high value-added industrial processes. The Administration would tap on the development of the NDAs to tackle incongruities in existing land uses, with due regard to preservation of heritage and rural environment. As part of the P&E Study, a Heritage Impact Assessment would be conducted. Environmental issues including greening works and design of the pedestrian walkways are key design issues and would be given due consideration in the planning and development of the NDAs. An Environmental Impact Assessment would be undertaken to ensure that the proposed uses would be environmentally acceptable. The Administration would be prudent in striking a balance between nature conservation and development.

Public engagement arrangements

14. Members considered that the consultation should be territory-wide and the Administration should ventilate the emotions of parties holding different views in conservation and development. The pace of public engagement could be slower so as to fully gauge the aspirations of society on how best to implement the NDAs. On Members' concern about the public engagement arrangements, the Administration advised that apart from video films and display materials, physical models would be produced to facilitate the public in understanding the proposals. At the second stage public engagement exercise, the Administration would seek further views on the planning concepts through public forums, exhibitions and briefings. At the final stage, the public would be consulted on the land use planning after completion of the planning and technical assessments.

Implementation approach

15. On the Administration's indication that it would consider adopting the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach in implementing NDAs, some

Members expressed concern that the implementation of the NDAs under a PPP approach would be led by developers and the Administration would be in a passive position. Members also cautioned that the Administration should ensure fairness and transparency in the implementation process. The Administration assured Members that the implementation approach would be fair, open and legal. It would try its best to overcome the challenges of adopting the PPP approach.

Recent development

16. The Administration plans to seek members' views on the Preliminary ODP in the Stage 2 Public Engagement at the Panel meeting on 24 November 2009.

17. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 November 2009

Proposed New Development Areas in North East New Territories

List of relevant papers

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	26 February 2008	<p>Administration's paper on "North East New Territories New Development Areas -- Planning and Engineering Study" (LC Paper No. CB(1)860/07-08(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/papers/dev0226cb1-860-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1276/07-08) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/minutes/de080226.pdf</p>
Public Works Subcommittee	23 April 2008	<p>PWSC(2008-09)2 on the funding proposal on "Review studies on North East New Territories New Development Areas : consultants' fees and site investigation" http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p08-02e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC93/07-08) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw080423.pdf</p>
Finance Committee	9 May 2008	<p>FCR(2008-09)7 on "Recommendations of the Public Works Subcommittee made at its meeting held on 23 April 2008" http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/fc/fc/papers/f08-07e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. FC12/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc080509.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	25 November 2008	<p>Administration's paper on "North East New Territories New Development Areas -- Planning and Engineering Study -- Stage One Public Engagement" (LC Paper No. CB(1)232/08-09(12)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/papers/dev1125cb1-232-12-e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief (LC Paper No. CB(1)232/08-09(13)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/papers/dev1125cb1-232-13-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)817/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/minutes/dev20081125.pdf</p>