

For LegCo Development Panel's meeting on 21-1-2020

Comments of the Public Affairs Committee of the Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (HKIUD) on the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme

1 **General Comments**

- 1.1 Whilst noting that there is no single solution to overcome the shortage of land supply, the "Land Sharing Pilot Scheme", though somewhat ad hoc, appears to have its worth for trying, as one of various methods in a multi-pronged approach of land and housing supply. This is also on the understanding of the principles: (1) the LSPS is to complement and not replace the Government's planning of private land for public purposes; and (2) that it is meant to produce short to medium term results and would cover both the supply of public and private housing.
- 1.2 In general, new housing development should be located as far as possible, in NDAs, and developed as properly planned communities.

2. The **pros and cons** of the LSPS are as follows.

Points to note –

- 2.1 There are worries of **uncertainties** that whether the process would be challenged by way of judicial review where Government resumes other private land for providing infrastructure and community facilities – since the infrastructure would not only serve the public housing part of the development but would also serve the developer's share of private development. This **needs further clarification**.
- 2.2 The mass and profile of the additional development should be of a scale compatible with the adjacent development and district context and there is a concern that the additional population might upset the balance of provision of GIC facilities in the adjacent existing community.
- 2.3 The additional vehicular traffic so generated is a primary concern since the development is mainly residential with little or no provision for employment. This would aggravate the traffic impacts to the nearby community. A **walkable and smart-city technology design** should be pursued in the new development

Merits –

- 2.4 There are potential advantages in asking the developer to provide the

infrastructure as part of the development. This could ensure that the facilities are completed timely to serve the public housing as well as the developer's share of private housing. In the conventional method, roads etc. may have to follow a public works funding queue, and the timing of completion might not always tally with the housing development.

2.5 In the past, development and rezoning proposals were difficult to get approved due to uncertainties where the subject site is not within planned new development areas, and it is uncertain when the infrastructure will be available and whether there is sufficient capacity. It is believed that the LSPS as a policy-led approach, would provide the necessary certainty.

2.6 Many of the mechanisms involved in the Pilot Scheme are not alien, but in fact existing and familiar mechanisms, like the need to prepare comprehensive master plans and the need to go through Town Planning Ordinance rezoning, etc.

3 Challenges

3.1 Although many steps in the LSPS are extant, the challenge lies more on how the procedures would be well coordinated and streamlined if it is aspired to provide short- to medium-term results.

3.2 Despite that higher densities are envisaged in order to ensure that the development would be cost-effective, care should always be taken to avoid undue adverse environmental impacts.

3.3 It is also essential to take into account the adjacent community and provide the corresponding amount of GIC facilities and open spaces in the development to ensure a "balanced" community is achieved overall.

3.4 The assessment and processing of development proposals under this approach must be seen to be fair and transparent so as to avoid possible allegations of "collusion".

4 Suggestions

4.1 Sites remote from new towns and infrastructure networks are generally NOT encouraged as compared to those closer to and could more easily "tap" into existing and planned systems. Moreover, haphazard additional developments in sites in remote rural areas would likely be incompatible with the generally low-rise context.

4.2 The broader objective should be the provision of a balanced development, with integrated design of public and private housing for promoting an

inclusive neighbourhood community and interactions between people of different classes and ages. The developer should be asked to provide a required number of elderly housing and welfare facilities in the scheme, in view of the general ageing of the population.

- 4.3 The members of the proposed **Panel of Advisors should have the relevant professional knowledge and experience in reviewing the proposed master layout plan, to ensure the quality of the built environment** and not just the quantity of housing production. Regarding the **accountability**, members should have **reasonable local knowledge in order to gain public support and legitimacy as seen by the community.**
- 4.4 **A comprehensive urban design framework** is advocated for guiding the Panel and Government in vetting the LSPS development proposals.
- 4.5 Despite the LSPS is intended to provide for short- to medium-term solutions, a long-term solution is still required. As we have suggested in previous occasions, Government may need to consider legislating a “New Towns Ordinance” to provide a firm basis to facilitate further urbanisation of the rural NT areas.

**Public Affairs Committee of
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
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