

Prison Development at Hei Ling Chau –
Feasibility Study and Preliminary Site Investigation for
Land Formation and Infrastructure Works

Administration's Response to
Issues raised at the meeting on 9 July 2002

Site Selection

A summary of our preliminary assessment of the site options of Kong Nga Po and Hei Ling Chau is provided at Annex A. As is apparent from it, both site options can meet Correctional Services Department's (CSD) operational requirements and they attract different advantages and disadvantages in various aspects. Taking into account all relevant factors, including the relative potentials of the two sites for alternative development in the long run from an overall planning point of view, we have selected Hei Ling Chau for further pursuit of the feasibility study (FS) and site investigation (SI).

Alternative Site Options

2. A territorial location search for pursuing the proposed prison development has been undertaken based on a set of objective criteria (see Enclosure II of LC Paper No. CB(1)2178/01-02(01) discussed at the meeting on 9 July 2002). Two possible site options at Hei Ling Chau and Kong Nga Po have been identified for further consideration.

3. The area of site needed for the project should be sufficient for the prison development of 7,220 penal places and all associated facilities. There is no suitable site available in any part of the urban area for such purposes. Any hypothetical site of such a size in the urban area would have high opportunity cost for alternative developments. Indeed, one of the benefits of the project is to release valuable penal sites on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon for redevelopment to serve the community needs. It is also doubtful if the public would support a prison project of such a scale at an urban location.

Implications for Prison Visitors

4. At present, there are already a total of six institutions on Lantau Island and three institutions on Hei Ling Chau. The current travelling time and cost for a trip from Central to Hei Ling Chau and Lantau is provided at **Annex B**. Such information can provide a useful reference in assessing the implications for visitors to the proposed new prison complex, assuming that the existing travelling mode is adopted.

5. One of the areas to be covered in the proposed FS is a detailed traffic impact assessment, which will include a study of possible new travel means for visitors such as direct marine transport from the urban areas to Hei Ling Chau. Subject to this study, we are of the preliminary view that the proposed transport infrastructure under this project (such as fixed crossing and piers) can support the development of new travel means at a competitive price and reduce travel time for visitors to Hei Ling Chau.

6. As a separate initiative, CSD launched a pilot Video Visit Scheme in April 2001 to link up remote institutions with a town centre by means of a video-conferencing system. The system provides a convenient way for friends and relatives to get in touch with prisoners in remote institutions. With the rapid advancement of information technology, we believe that similar schemes will be a useful alternative for visitors to consider after the commissioning of the co-located prison complex in 2013.

Traffic Impact

7. In order to assess the potential traffic generation from staff, visitors and other operational requirements, we have undertaken a preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA). While this preliminary TIA should not pre-empt the findings of a detailed, comprehensive TIA to be included in the FS, it aims at identifying traffic issues that need to be fully addressed later.

8. The preliminary TIA indicated that the additional traffic arising from the prison development would not cause unacceptable impact on the road network of Lantau Island. During the construction phase, there will be no land access to Hei Ling Chau until the proposed fixed crossing is completed towards the end of the construction phase. Constructional plants, labour and materials

for the reclamation and building works will be delivered to the site via marine transport. As such, the construction phase of the proposed prison complex would unlikely generate adverse traffic impact in the South Lantau area.

9. According to the preliminary TIA, ferry services could be a cost-effective and convenient travelling mode to the proposed prison complex upon its commissioning in 2013. The number of daily trips generated to Hei Ling Chau for work and prison visit should support the provision of direct ferry services from Central and Tsuen Wan. It would significantly reduce the land-based travel demand via the road network on Lantau Island.

10. The provision of public bus services from Tung Chung to Hei Ling Chau would further reduce the number of private cars travelling via Tung Chung Road and South Lantau Road. With the completion of the current road-widening project of Tung Chung Road by 2006, we believe that the additional traffic generated upon the completion of the proposed project would not cause unacceptable impact to the road network in Lantau.

11. We must emphasize that this TIA is preliminary and should be reviewed in the detailed TIA to be included in the FS. Subject to the results and recommendations of the FS, we remain open in considering alternative ways of addressing the traffic demand generated by the proposed development.

Justification of Fixed Crossing

12. The fixed crossing connecting Hei Ling Chau and Lantau Island is an absolutely necessary provision to meet the emergency and operational needs of the proposed prison development -

- On a daily basis, it provides a mode of access alternative to sea transport and meets specific transport needs. The land and sea access can together ensure an adequate transport capacity to meet the overall operational requirements of the proposed prison development.
- During inclement weather (such as foggy or stormy days) when marine transport is affected, it provides a secured access to the proposed prison development to ensure normal or

reduced-scale operation.

- During emergency situations, it provides a most important land access to the prison complex to ensure expeditious, massive dispatch of disciplined services forces to the prison complex to reinforce prison staff and deal with the matter.

Centralisation of Remand Facilities

13. One of the major advantages of co-location is cost saving through significant economy of scale. Currently, there are four reception centres¹ (remand facilities) situated on Hong Kong Island, in Kowloon and in the New Territories. Everyday there are remands to be escorted from these centres to various courts or other penal institutions throughout the SAR. By centralising the remand facilities at the proposed new prison complex, we will be able to achieve recurrent savings notably in terms of vehicles' operation and maintenance costs and escorting staff.

Impacts on Marine Life and Public Consultation

14. While in-depth assessment is not possible at this stage without undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), we have attempted a preliminary assessment of the potential impacts on marine ecology and fisheries resources. A table summarising the assessment is attached at Annex C.

15. We must emphasise that the proposed development is a designated project under the EIA Ordinance and hence conducting an EIA is a statutory requirement and will be included in the proposed FS of the project. Apart from assessing the potential impacts of the proposed development on marine life, and possible effect on nearby fishing grounds and fish culture zones, we are required to identify mitigation measures to minimize the impacts and reduce them to acceptable levels under the EIA study.

16. Mariculturists and fishermen who are affected by the proposed project may obtain ex-gratia allowance if they meet the eligibility of the allowance under the established criteria.

¹ The four receptions centres are Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, Pik Uk Correctional Institution, Tai Lam Centre for Women and Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution.

17. Public consultation is a key element of the statutory EIA process. Members of the public and the Advisory Council on the Environment can raise their comments with the Director of Environmental Protection with regard to the Project Profile and the EIA report of the proposed development during the respective public inspection periods. Before such statutory consultations, we have already started to meet with interested parties to brief them on the proposed development and gauge their views and possible concerns in advance. On 12 August we attended a meeting of the Islands District Council which expressed general support for the proposed project. We will soon meet with the fishermen associations and green groups.

Co-location of Penal Institutions

Main Considerations of Site Options

	Kong Nga Po	Hei Ling Chau
Site Description and General Engineering Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Land-based site in North district, part of which falling within the Frontier Closed Area.Site formation through excavation and levelling of hills.Infrastructure provision required, including water supply, drainage and sewage treatment systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Isolated island opposite to Lantau.Site formation principally through reclamation as cutting mountain would not be cost effective and would generate huge amount of surplus fill.Infrastructure provision required, including water supply, drainage and sewage treatment systems.
Operational Effectiveness (including court/clinic attendance, family/legal visits, NGO support, supply of rations and daily necessities, transport of raw materials for Correctional Services Industries and products, and access during adverse inclement weather)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Readily accessible by land-based transport links.Travelling time by land for court attendance in city centre is about 40 minutes.Travelling time by sea is not applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A fixed crossing to Lantau (with special engineering design to avoid closure during inclement weather) and ancillary access roads are necessary and possible.Road accessibility would also rely on the Tsing Ma Bridge.Travelling time by land for court attendance in city centre is about 95 minutes.Travelling time by sea is about 60 minutes on the assumption that a secure landing and transit area can be made available in Central or Wanchai, otherwise longer travelling time will be required. However, sea transfer may become inoperable under inclement weather.
Emergency Response (including emergency support (On Call/Standby duties))	<u>By Land</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A full Emergency Unit (EU) platoon could reach site within 30 minutes.Regional Police Tactical Unit (PTU) Company and Quick Response Force (3 platoons) could respond within 60 minutes.	<u>By Land</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A EU Platoon (deployed from Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin regions) could reach Hei Ling Chau (HLC) in 90 minutes.

	Kong Nga Po	Hei Ling Chau
Emergency Response (including emergency support (On Call/Standby duties)) (Cont'd)	<p><u>By Land (Cont'd)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For further reinforcement, additional PTU Platoons/ Companies from other Regions should be able to reinforce duties at the scene within 60 – 90 minutes, once mobilized <p><u>By Sea</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable <p><u>By Air</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Services take 7 minutes to reach the site. 	<p><u>By Land (Cont'd)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional PTU NTS deployed from Siu Lek Yuen would take about 100 minutes to respond. For further reinforcement, additional PTU Platoons/ Companies from other Regions/PTU HQs should be able to respond at the scene within 90 – 100 minutes. The longer Police response time could be remedied by the strengthening of CSD's Emergency Unit (i.e. to reserve more standby men on site to contain the emergency pending reinforcement.) <p><u>By Sea</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine Region would require between 1 and 2 hours to transfer PTU officers from a Police controlled pier (Marine Port District HQ at Aberdeen) to the island <p><u>By Air</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GFS would require 1.5 hours to transfer one platoon of Police Tactical Unit officers from designated locations to the sites. GFS would require longer time to respond after 2200 hours as pilots would need to be called out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Services from Mui Wo would take 16 minutes.
Planning, Environmental and Other Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kong Nga Po, partly falling within the Frontier Closed Area, may have great potential for long term development into other uses which can best take advantage of the strategic location of the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hei Ling Chau and Sunshine Island are proposed for conservation in the Study on South West New Territories Development Strategy Review due to the presence of ecologically important habitats (notably for the rare Bogadek's Burrowing lizard) and the natural landscape values of the islands. Reclamation may compromise the conservation objective.

	Kong Nga Po	Hei Ling Chau
Planning, Environmental and Other Considerations (Cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long term development potential of the boundary area is being examined in the Study on Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy. Natural and 'Fung Shui' woodland, as well as wet and dry agricultural land will be affected. Environmental Impact Assessment and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Impact Assessment, Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and Marine Archaeological Investigation required.
Resumption and clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial land resumption and clearance involving large numbers of village houses, removal of over 100 graves and substantial clearance of natural "Fung Shui" woodland would be inevitable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited land resumption may be required depending on the fixed crossing option chosen. For option A, clearance on both private building/ agricultural land is required. For option B, only government land is affected and small scale clearance will be required. For option C, only small scale land clearance will be required.
Capital investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total capital investment cost is about \$16 billion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total capital investment is about \$16 billion.

Annex B

Estimated travelling time and cost for visiting existing penal institutions on Lantau and Hei Ling Chau

Destination	Travelling Mode	Estimated Cost	Estimated Travelling Time
Lantau	Central to Tung Chung (By MTR) Tung Chung to penal institution, e.g. Shek Pik Prison (By Bus)	HK\$35	1.5 Hours
Hei Ling Chau	Central to Peng Chau (By Ferry) Peng Chau to Hei Ling Chau (By Kaito)	HK\$30	1.5 Hours

Note:

- 1) Existing penal institutions on Lantau include:
 - Chi Ma Wan Drug Addiction Treatment Centre
 - Chi Ma Wan Correctional Institution
 - Ma Po Ping Prison
 - Tong Fuk Centre
 - Shek Pik Prison
 - Sha Tsui Detention Centre
- 2) Existing penal institutions on Hei Ling Chau include:
 - Hei Ling Chau Correctional Institution
 - Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre
 - Lai Sun Correctional Institution

Annex C

Prison Development Plan at Hei Ling Chau

Potential impacts on marine ecology and fisheries are as follows:

Stage	Nature		Receivers	Existing Information / Preliminary Assessment
Construction phase	Temporary habitat loss and Disturbance	Marine	Seabed organisms, corals, Chinese White Dolphin, fisheries resources	Some corals were found in previous surveys but of limited ecological value. The area is not a core habitat for dolphins or porpoises.
		Intertidal	Rocky and sandy shore organisms	Natural coastline present but no known high ecological value habitats in intertidal zone
	Marine water quality changes (due to dredging, filling etc)		Marine organisms and Fish Culture Zones	Magnitude of impacts depends on reclamation configuration and build form of the fixed crossing, to be confirmed in the EIA. Mitigation measures to reduce impacts to ecological and fisheries sensitive receivers likely necessary
Operation phase	Permanent habitat loss	Marine	Seabed habitat, corals, fisheries resources	Some loss of habitats inevitable, measures to mitigate impacts necessary. Severity and acceptability to be confirmed in the EIA
		Intertidal	Rocky and sandy shore habitats	Some loss of habitats inevitable, measures to mitigate impact necessary. Severity and acceptability to be confirmed in the EIA
	Marine hydrodynamic and water quality changes (due to reclamation and bridge piers)		Marine organisms and Fish Culture Zones	To be addressed in the EIA through mathematical water quality modelling