

**For Discussion  
on 23 June 2003**

**Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs  
and Panel on Transport**

**Reusing the Noise Barrier Materials  
Recovered from the Tolo Highway Widening Project**

**PURPOSE**

This paper seeks Members' views on a proposal to reuse the noise barrier materials recovered from the Tolo Highway – section between Ma Liu Shui Interchange and Island House Interchange Widening Project (the project) and informs Members of the current position of the project.

**BACKGROUND**

2. At the meetings of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport (the Panel) held on 22 November 2002 and 28 February 2003, Members noted that some of the noise barriers for the project could be removed or deferred. Members suggested that those noise barriers should be relocated elsewhere. The Administration undertook to report back to the Panel on a proposal on how to reuse those noise barrier materials recovered from the project.

**THE PROPOSAL**

3. The noise barrier materials recovered are of the absorptive type and close to 9,000 m<sup>2</sup>. After consideration of the quantity, the colour mix of the available materials, we propose to use these in the following three retrofitting projects –

- (a) Fanling Highway near Choi Yuen Estate;
- (b) Fanling Highway near Fanling Centre; and
- (c) Yuen Shin Road near Kwong Fuk Estate.

These road sections are part of the Tolo Highway northern section and providing noise barriers of the same type, make and colour at these locations could be regarded as natural extensions of the provisions at the Tolo Highway.

4. In terms of timing and readiness, site investigation and preliminary design for these three projects have been completed recently. The above retrofitting works can start in early 2004 and complete by about end 2005. We will consult the Tai Po District Council and North District Council before making a start on the works.

5. In terms of effectiveness, we estimate that about 3,000 dwellings in the vicinity of the road sections, including Choi Yuen Estate, Fanling Centre, Kwong Fuk Estate and Wang Fuk Court, will benefit. After the retrofitting works, traffic noise could be reduced by up to 10dB(A).

## **PROGRESS ON TOLO HIGHWAY WIDENING**

6. In response to a question raised by Members at the meeting of the Panel held on 28 February 2003, we have also investigated the feasibility of removing the transparent noise barriers alongside the southbound carriageway which is for the protection of the World Wide Fund for Nature facility at Island House. We have concluded that the most appropriate form of noise protection for this facility is for the barriers to be erected along the carriageway rather than inside the facility. Details of our investigation are attached at the **Enclosure**.

7. As regards the works at Tolo Highway, all construction works are now substantially completed. All traffic lanes in the northbound carriageway will be opened in end of June 2003.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

8. Members are invited to comment on the proposal to reuse the noise barrier materials recovered from the project.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

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**Widening of Tolo Highway**

**Noise Mitigation Measure for  
Island House Conservation Studies Centre**

**BACKGROUND**

The Panel on Transport was briefed at the meeting on 24 January 2003 about the Administration's proposed modification to the noise barriers for the Tolo Highway widening project. Subsequently the Panel conducted a site visit to Tolo Highway on 14 February 2003, with representatives of the relevant District Councils and the Highways Department.

2. At the meeting held on 28 February 2003, the Panel examined the proposed modifications to the noise barriers at Tolo Highway, and requested the Administration to review further whether the noise barriers provided for the Island House Conservation Studies Centre could be further improved.

**ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS CONSIDERED**

3. The Director of Highways (DHy) has, in consultation with the Environmental Protection Department, re-examined the noise barriers at Island House. The traffic noise from Tolo Highway can either be mitigated at source, that is at the edge of the carriageway, or at Island House, the noise sensitive receiver.

4. To mitigate at the receiver end, an alternative is to provide a noise barrier in the vicinity of Island House itself. This requires construction of a section of 6-metre-high noise barrier near the Centre. The works involve removal of some existing trees, excavation, concreting, erection of a framework and installation of noise barrier panels.

5. The World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong (WWF) occupies the buildings of Island House and surrounding areas under a licence from the Lands Department. Representatives from the Environmental Protection Department and Highways Department visited the Island House on 22 May 2003. A representative of the WWF expressed concerns on the following issues :

- (a) The Island House was built in 1905 and was a gazetted monument. Construction works within the premises were undesirable.
- (b) During construction, the building itself and the slopes around the building might suffer settlement and result in structural damage.
- (c) The Conservation Centre was essentially an outdoor classroom. The proposed barrier near the Centre could provide noise protection only to the building itself.
- (d) Some trees of rare species would have to be removed to facilitate the construction of the barrier and a construction access.

In view of the above, the proposed 6-metre-high noise barrier near the Centre was considered not acceptable.

- (e) Provision of air conditioning is an alternative that has been explored. Whilst upgrading of air conditioning and improvement to glazing can be provided, this would protect the building and not any outdoor activities.

## **CONCLUSION**

6. After reviewing the on-site conditions and out-door operation of the Centre, it is concluded that the transparent noise barriers which are already installed along the roadside of Tolo Highway should be retained. This avoids additional and abortive costs. This is also the option acceptable to WWF, since it benefits the majority of the outdoor activities in the area as well as the building and avoids inconvenience during construction.