

**For information
on 23 January 2017**

Legislative Council Panel on Environmental Affairs

Long Term Conservation of Sha Lo Tung

Purpose

This paper provides information on the initiative under the 2017 Policy Address on the long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung (SLT).

Background

2. SLT is a valley of around 56 hectares in Northeastern New Territories. It comprises a mix of village housing, woodland, abandoned agricultural land, grassland, shrubland, marshes and freshwater streams. The area is located within the upper indirect water gathering ground with low gradient stream courses flowing through the abandoned agricultural land and drain to the Hok Tau Reservoir located to its north. Within this area, about 27 hectares is private land, the bulk of which is currently held by one single owner.

Ecological value of Sha Lo Tung

3. SLT has very important ecological value. SLT supports the most diverse dragonfly community in Hong Kong, including a number of endangered, endemic and locally rare species. The stream courses and freshwater marshes in the area are also important habitats for aquatic fauna such as freshwater fish, amphibians and reptiles, and fireflies. In light of its high ecological value, SLT is ranked second out of the 12 Priority Sites for Enhanced Conservation under the New Nature Conservation Policy.

Land Use Zoning

4. The land use zonings of the SLT Outline Zoning Plan, with 22 hectares (38%) designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest, 12 hectares (21%) as Conservation Area and another 22 hectare (38%) as

Green Belt, well reflect the planning intention to conserve the areas of ecological significance, to preserve the natural landscape, to promote conservation and to maintain the rural character of the place.

New initiative on long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung

5. As stated in this year's Policy Address, the Government is actively considering long-term conservation of SLT through a non-in-situ land exchange for the private land with high ecological value at SLT by offering the Shuen Wan Restored Landfill in Tai Po for a golf course development which is a project supported by Tai Po District Council. The non-in-situ land exchange in question, subject to further consideration and approval to be sought under the established mechanism, will be taken forward as a special and exceptional case having regard to the uniqueness of SLT, including its outstanding ecological value, a more unified ownership of the private land therein, the lack of any suitable land within SLT for the private land owner to implement viable development plans alongside conservation, and the availability of a restored landfill site that could possibly be considered for exchange. Relevant bureaux and departments will pursue discussions with the private land owner on the terms and conditions of the non-in-situ land exchange, if approved, in accordance with the established principles, procedures and mechanisms within the Government.

For information

6. The above is submitted for Members' information. We will make available further information on the long-term conservation of SLT when we are in a position to do so.

Environment Bureau
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

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