

(Translation)

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(Attn: Miss Josephine So)
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13 November 2018

Dear Miss So,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene -
List of Follow-up Actions**

Our responses to the items on the list of follow-up actions pursuant to the Panel meeting held on 5 October are as follows:-

- (a) The existing fallow farmland in the Agricultural Park (Agri-Park) would be rehabilitated upon full commissioning of the Agri-Park, resulting in a substantial increase in arable farmland and higher traffic demand compared with the present. To meet the long-term operational needs and overall objectives of the Agri-Park, the Government, taking into account the advice of the consultants, plans to construct a single two-lane carriageway to connect the Agri-Park with Tsiu Keng Road and Fan Kam Road. This would facilitate farmers to transport produce, machineries and equipment. The road would also be open to the public and visitors for farming-related activities such as educational, interactive and experiential activities. To meet the traffic demand and safety requirements, it would be designed to the “Rural Road” standard of 7.3 metres wide single two-lane carriageway in accordance with the Transport Department’s Transport Planning and Design Manual (TPDM).

The Government conducted consultations for the proposed road (including the alignment and design) between July and October 2017 and received support from the North District Council.

- (b) 蕉徑長瀝關注組 (the Concern Group) submitted a proposal on the alignment for the road in the Agri-Park to the Government on 5 October 2018 (after the objection period of the gazettal for the proposed road works for the Agri-Park Phase 1 under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370)). The proposal is to extend Tsiu Keng Road (currently a single-lane carriageway) for connecting the area under development for the Agri-Park Phase 1. After seeking advice from the consultants and conducting site visit, we have the following assessments.

First, the alignment does not provide any connection to most of the land in the eastern part of the Agri-Park, thus failing to meet the actual needs of tenants of the Agri-Park in the future. In addition, the alignment will lead to encroachment upon the village environs, involving resumption of private land in the Tsiu Keng village area and affecting the nearby residents and environment. In line with the long-term development needs of the Agri-Park and the design criteria for the above-mentioned “Rural Road”, it is estimated that the proposal will affect eight structures upon widening of the section of Tsiu Keng Road to the standard of 7.3 metres wide single two-lane carriageway. The number of affected structures is higher than that under the proposal of the Government (i.e. three structures). The turning radii of the bends recommended by the Concern Group are 44 metres and 20 metres, which could not fulfill the requirement for the road design standard of a minimum turning radius of 88 metres for the “Rural Road” in accordance with the Transport Department’s TPDM.

In the light of the above, the consultants considered that the proposal is not feasible. We agree with the consultants’ view that the proposed road alignment recommended by the Government and supported by the North District Council is the most appropriate and balanced solution having regard to the actual needs.

- (c) Establishment of the Agri-Park is to help nurture agro-technology and knowledge on modern farm management, as well as to facilitate knowledge transfer so as to enhance productivity.

The Agri-Park farmland will mainly be made available to the public through open applications, with a view to encouraging and nurturing new agro-businesses to invest in and explore new agricultural production methods on a commercial scale. Rent for the farmland

will be set to attain these objectives rather than for profit-making. When setting the rent of the Agri-Park, we aim at providing a level-playing field for farmers (whether operating inside or outside the Agri-Park) at an affordable rent level to help genuine farmers while the land resource could be fully utilised. The standard tenancy period is 5 years. Considering the difficulties experienced by existing farmers in finding farmland for cultivation and securing stable tenancy agreements with landowners, the five-year term tenancy agreement with the prospect of renewal can give tenants sufficient certainty for making investment in their farms.

Farmers operating within the area prior to the establishment of the Agri-Park as well as farmers affected by Government development projects that take place within the same timeframe will be accorded priority to apply for farmland in the Agri-Park if they wish to continue farming. Existing farmers operating within the area of the Agri-Park may, upon production of valid tenancy agreements or supporting documents, enter into the first tenancy agreement with the Agri-Park at the same rent and tenancy period, up to a maximum of five years.

To meet the overall objectives of the Agri-Park and ensure reasonable production output, each tenant will be required to submit an annual production plan for assessment of the farming modes and overall productivity, which will form part of the tenancy conditions. Parties that have fulfilled the agreed tenancy conditions will be considered for renewal.

Yours sincerely,

(Bill WONG)
for Secretary for Food and Health

cc

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