

## **Information Paper**

### **Legislative Council Panel on Housing Subcommittee to Follow Up the Issues Related to the Wang Chau Development Project Public Housing Development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long**

#### **Purpose**

This paper provides background information on the public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long (Wang Chau Project), the issues of concern and its latest development.

#### **Background**

2. The Government's overall target of building 17 000 public housing units at Wang Chau has never been changed. It will proceed first with Phase 1 to provide around 4 000 units and then Phases 2 and 3 with a flat production of around 13 000 units at later periods. The need for undertaking necessary measures, such as the provision of infrastructures, environmental mitigation measures and handling of brownfield operations, etc., which would require more time, was the main consideration in deferring Phases 2 and 3 to later periods.

3. In response to public concerns about the Wang Chau Project, the Government has, on many occasions, given a detailed account of the particulars of the project to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Members, District Council (DC) members and the general public, etc., such as holding a press conference on 21 September 2016; submitting information papers to the LegCo Panel on Housing on 18 October 2016 and releasing on the same day the reports of the Planning and Engineering (P&E) Study for the public housing site at Wang Chau, in order to allow the public to have a better understanding of the project.

4. Subsequently, the Government attended joint meetings and public hearings of the LegCo Panel on Housing and Panel on Development on 15 November, 29 November and 6 December 2016; and conducted a site visit

to Wang Chau with 13 LegCo Members on 3 March 2017; while relevant departments met with villagers affected by Wang Chau Phase 1 and interested parties on 31 March 2017; and attended the LegCo Summon on 25 January 2018 on motions by Members. In addition, the Government issued press releases on a number of occasions to provide detailed documents and information on various questions.

5. The Wang Chau Project has been discussed for a long time in the community and LegCo since late 2016. The Government has responded many times and has provided a large number of documents and information to give an account of the relevant details and particulars. These documents and information are made public and are accessible online (see Annex 1).

### **Issues of Concern**

6. To sum up the previous discussions, we would like to reiterate in below the main points in respect of the issues of concern raised by Members:

#### Phased Development

7. In 2013, the Government conducted the technical feasibility of proceeding concurrently with Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Wang Chau Project for an estimated total of 17 000 units. Based on the preliminary findings of the P&E Study since mid-2013, the concerned government departments started to examine the optimal way to take forward the development at Wang Chau.

8. In late 2013, the concerned government departments, after discussion, considered that concurrent development of all phases of the Wang Chau Project would involve more complicated issues in respect of infrastructures, environmental mitigation measures and the handling of brownfield operations than taking forward Phase 1 first, as it would take a longer time to formulate and implement corresponding measures. Having considered all factors, the Government decided in early 2014 to develop Wang Chau Phase 1 first and defer the development of Phases 2 and 3 to later periods. This has the advantage of advancing the commencement of Wang Chau Phase 1, which would enable the completion of around 4 000 public housing units at an earlier date. If we insisted on developing Wang Chau Phases 1, 2 and 3

concurrently at that time, we would not be able to kick start the relevant procedures for Phase 1 development by now.

9. Later, the concerned departments conducted public consultations and rezoning procedures in accordance with the established procedure. At the meetings of the relevant DC and the Town Planning Board (TPB), we clearly explained that the Government had not given up the construction of the remaining 13 000 units in Phases 2 and 3 of the project.

#### Phases 2 and 3 Development

10. After months of discussion, the Finance Committee (FC) of LegCo approved the funding application in March 2017, allowing the Government to commence an engineering feasibility study for site formation and infrastructure works for the remaining phases (i.e. Phases 2 and 3) of the public housing development at Wang Chau in late July 2017. The Government anticipates that the study will be completed in early 2019. Upon its completion, the Government will formulate a development timetable based on the outcome of the study.

#### Handling of Brownfield Sites

11. The Government has never given up the idea of using the brownfield sites and has commenced a feasibility study in 2016 with Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area as a pilot case to explore the feasibility of moving brownfield operations into multi-storey buildings. The study is expected to be completed in this year. Meanwhile, the Planning Department has conducted a survey on the distribution and use of brownfield sites in the New Territories in 2017, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The Government will make all-out efforts to implement the works relating to the brownfield sites in the New Territories mentioned above.

#### Environmental Impact Assessment

12. According to Schedule 3 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO), if an engineering feasibility study of an urban development project with a study area covering more than 20 ha or involving a total population of more than 100 000, it will be classified as a Major Designated Project requiring Environmental Impact Assessment Reports.

13. Since both the development area and population involved in Wang Chau Phase 1 are lower than the specified levels in Schedule 3 of EIAO, the related statutory process is not required under Schedule 3 of EIAO. As for the Wang Chau Project including Phases 1, 2 and 3, it will depend on the results of the engineering feasibility study for site formation and infrastructure works for Phases 2 and 3 to determine whether the statutory EIA process under Schedule 3 is necessary.

#### Consultation

14. While the Government has conducted informal consultations on the Wang Chau Project, such informal consultations definitely would not replace public consultations and statutory consultations. Informal consultation is a long-standing practice in the Government's consultation system with the objective of collecting opinions. The opinions collected will help the Government to finalize proposals and properly respond to the community's concerns during public consultations. However, these informal consultations cannot and will not replace public consultations conducted according to the statutory and established procedures.

15. The Government has strictly followed the statutory and established public consultation procedures when taking forward Wang Chau Phase 1. From 2014 to 2016, the Government publicly consulted the Ping Shan Rural Committee and the Yuen Long DC before submitting rezoning proposals to TPB for vetting according to statutory procedures. TPB conducted public consultation and collected 109 representations. Following the completion of the rezoning process, the Government gazetted and conducted public consultation on sewerage and road works, as well as on land resumption in connection with Wang Chau Phase 1 according to the statutory procedure and 159 objections were received. In 2017, the Government consulted again the Ping Shan Rural Committee and the Town Planning and Development Committee of Yuen Long DC regarding the proposed works. It was well evident that the public could fully participate and did in fact express their views through the above public consultations.

#### Rehousing and Ex-gratia Allowance Arrangement

16. Prior to clearance exercises, the Government will make arrangements for rehousing and Ex-gratia Allowance Arrangement (EGA) for residents affected in accordance with the established mechanism. The Lands

Department (LandsD) will issue a pamphlet entitled “Rehousing of Occupants of Squatter Structures affected by Government Clearance Operations” to affected residents, which explains in detail the prevailing arrangements on rehousing and EGA. In general, the existing eligibility criteria for rehousing and EGA are based on the Squatter Control Survey (SCS) conducted in 1982.

## **Latest Development**

### Pre-clearance Survey

17. To tie in with Wang Chau Phase 1, LandsD conducted a pre-clearance freezing survey in the concerned area on 30 October 2015. A total of about 180 households, involving about 400 clearerees, were registered in the pre-clearance freezing survey. Among them, about 100 households are residing in licensed domestic structures or surveyed domestic structures covered by the 1982 SCS; about 50 households are residing in licensed non-domestic structures or surveyed non-domestic structures covered by the 1982 SCS; and the remaining some 30 households are residing in unlicensed structures or structures that are not registered by the SCS. As at end-March 2018, LandsD has met with 156 registered households to explain to them the relevant rehousing and EGA arrangements. 12 households have been allocated PRH units. Since some households have not submitted any information or have not provided sufficient information to LandsD, vetting has not been completed and the situation of affected households is pending confirmation.

### Clearance Programme

18. On 6 November 2017, the Government consulted LegCo Panel on Housing regarding the site formation and infrastructure works for Wang Chau Phase 1. According to the usual practice, the Government will decide on the final eviction date after FC has approved the funding for the main works.

### Site Formation and Infrastructure Works for Phase 1

19. The design work for the site formation and infrastructure works for Phase 1 has been substantially completed. The Government will follow the established procedure to tender out the related works. The Government will invite approved contractors to carry out the proposed works subject to FC’s funding approval.

20. According to the current situation, the site formation and infrastructure works for Phase 1 would not be able to commence in mid-2018 as scheduled, hence the 4 000 public housing units in Phase 1 may not be able to be completed in year 2024/2025. However, the Government will still make all-out efforts to proceed with Phase 1 in order to complete it as soon as possible.

#### Engineering Feasibility Study for Site Formation and Infrastructure Works for Phases 2 and 3

21. The Government commissioned a consultancy in late July 2017 for an engineering feasibility study for site formation and infrastructure works for the remaining phases of the public housing development at Wang Chau. The study will last for about 18 months. It is anticipated that the study will be completed in early 2019. Upon its completion, the public will be consulted and a development timetable will be formulated in due course based on the outcome of the study.

#### Site Visit

22. Regarding the request for a site visit to Wang Chau made by LegCo Members during the meeting of the Subcommittee to Follow Up the Issues Related to the Wang Chau Development Project on 28 February 2018, the concerned departments are discussing the arrangements and details, and will arrange the site visit in due course.

#### **Conclusion**

23. The Wang Chau Project has been discussed for a long time in the community and LegCo, and the Government has submitted a large number of documents and information on the related matters. The Government hopes that the site formation and infrastructure works for Wang Chau Phase 1 can be carried out expeditiously so as to meet the scheduled completion of public housing units at Wang Chau Phase 1. Looking ahead, we anticipate that there will be different obstacles and challenges to be overcome when taking forward Wang Chau Phases 2 and 3. Meanwhile, the Government is conducting an engineering feasibility study on site formation and infrastructure works for the

remaining phases of the public housing development at Wang Chau.  
Comments from Members are welcome.

**Transport and Housing Bureau**  
**April 2018**

Documents and information provided to the public and Legislative Council

- (i) Document provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 18 October 2016 for the Panel on Housing  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/hg/papers/hgcb1-16-1-c.pdf>
- (ii) Press releases issued by the Government from 21 September 2016 to 13 November 2016  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/dev/papers/devhg20161115cb1-126-1-ec.pdf>
- (iii) Follow up document provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 28 November 2016 for the joint meeting of Panel on Housing and Panel on Development on 15 November 2016  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/hg/papers/devhg20161115cb1-201-1-c.pdf>
- (iv) Follow up document provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 5 December 2016 for the joint meeting of Panel on Housing and Panel on Development on 29 November 2016  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/hg/papers/devhg20161129cb1-254-1-c.pdf>
- (v) Follow up document provided by the Government in January 2017 for the joint meeting of Panel on Housing and Panel on Development on 6 December 2016  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/dev/papers/devhg20161206cb1-387-2-c.pdf>
- (vi) Responses provided by Development Bureau on 5 December 2016 for the letters issued to the joint meeting of Panel on Housing and Panel on Development on 28 and 29 November 2016  
Letters:  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/dev/papers/devhg20161206cb1-213-1-c.pdf>  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/dev/papers/devhg20161129cb1-254-2-c.pdf>  
Responses:  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/panels/dev/papers/devhg20161206cb1-260-1-c.pdf>
- (vii) Document provided by the Government on 7 December 2016 for Public Works Subcommittee regarding the Capital Works Reserve Fund Block Allocations  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/p16-37c.pdf>



- (viii) Responses provided by the Government for issues raised in the Public Works Subcommittee meetings  
(Provided by Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau on 30 November 2016 and 6 December 2016)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20161207pwsc-20-2-c.pdf>

(Provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 10 January 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170111pwsc-31-2-c.pdf>

(Provided by Environmental Protection Department on 10 January 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170111pwsc-31-3-c.pdf>

(Provided by Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau on 16 February 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170218pwsc-61-2-c.pdf>

(Provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 17 February 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170222pwsc-74-2-c.pdf>

(Provided by Transport and Housing Bureau in February 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170218pwsc-88-1-c.pdf>

(Provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 23 February 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170222pwsc-93-1-c.pdf>

(Provided by Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau on 23 February 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170218pwsc-95-1-c.pdf>

(Provided by Transport and Housing Bureau in March 2017)  
<https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/chinese/fc/pwsc/papers/pwsc20170218pwsc-98-1-c.pdf>

- (ix) Document provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 6 November 2017 regarding

the Public Works Programme Item No. B780CL – Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/chinese/panels/hq/papers/hg20171106cb1-155-4-c.pdf>

- (x) Document provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 30 November 2017 for the issues raised in the Panel on Housing meeting on 6 November 2017  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/chinese/panels/hq/papers/hg20171106cb1-308-1-c.pdf>
- (xi) Responses provided by Transport and Housing Bureau on 5 January 2018 for Hon. Eddie CHU's letter of 30 November 2017 on the Public Works Programme Item No. B780CL – Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long  
Letter:  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/chinese/panels/hq/papers/hgcb1-310-1-c.pdf>  
Responses:  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/chinese/panels/hq/papers/hgcb1-435-1-c.pdf>