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30 May 2019

Clerk to Public Works Subcommittee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

(Attn: Ms Doris WY LO)

Dear Ms LO,

**Studies related to Artificial Islands in the Central Waters
[PWSC(2019-20)5]**

In respect of the letter [Legislative Council (LegCo) paper PWSC217/18-19(01)] regarding the subject matter that the LegCo Member Hon CHU Hoi-dick submitted to the LegCo Secretariat on 17 May 2019, the Development Bureau hereby provides our responses as enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Original signed
(Jacky WU)
for Secretary for Development

C.C.

Director of Planning (Attn: Mr LUI Wing-cho)

Director of Civil Engineering and Development (Attn: Mr Andy LOK)

Re: Studies related to Artificial Islands in the Central Waters

In respect of the letter [Legislative Council (LegCo) paper PWSC217/18-19(01)] regarding the subject matter that the LegCo Member Hon CHU Hoi-dick submitted to the LegCo Secretariat on 17 May 2019, the Development Bureau hereby provides responses.

Response to questions under the subject of “On Feasibility Study”

Generally speaking, feasibility studies and initial planning will be conducted for a works project to decide on its initial feasibility and the scope of works (e.g. road alignment and other restrictions, etc.). At this stage, the initial planning and environmental impacts of the project will be studied preliminarily; and the next stage will generally involve the initial design of the project and the undertaking of statutory environmental impact assessment procedures with a view to ascertaining that the project is environmentally acceptable.

The arrangement of carrying out works in phases as such is not unchangeable. Subject to the conditions of individual public works project, if the project team is confident about the implementation of the project based on its experience and professional knowledge, the works mentioned above can be combined to enhance efficiency.

Hong Kong is facing an acute shortage of land supply. The Task Force on Land Supply (TFLS) pointed out in its Report published in 2018 that there is a pressing need to increase land supply. Preliminary studies and planning for different land supply options shall be kicked start as soon as possible and relevant process shall be streamlined to ensure timely supply of land. We have committed to expedite the Studies related to Artificial Islands in the Central Waters (the Study) in the responses to the TFLS. Having considered the analyses and findings of past relevant technical studies (including the Enhancing Land Supply Strategy Study and the subsequent relevant studies), we consider that we are now equipped with the conditions required for carrying out a detailed planning and engineering (P&E) study for the Kau Yi Chau (KYC) Artificial Islands and conducting a transport infrastructure study for the

associated strategic road and rail networks.

We will conduct assessments on various aspects (including social/economic aspect, environment, fisheries, navigation, traffic, etc.) in the Study and will suggest appropriate mitigation measures in respect of the relevant impacts, consult the affected parties as well as ensure the Study meets the requirements of the relevant legislation including the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance.

It is not a usual practice for the Government to provide the construction cost for a large-scale development project before carrying out a P&E study. Nevertheless, after the announcement of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision (the Vision), we noted that members of the public were very concerned about the financial implications of the newly added public works projects (particularly the plan of forming KYC Artificial Islands by reclamation) to the Government. With a view to addressing and alleviating the concerns in the community, we have, on an exceptional basis, provided a ballpark estimate of the construction cost of the key projects under the Vision in the LegCo paper CB(1)729/18-19(03) submitted to the Panel on Development in March this year.

On the financial front, the Government has all along put in place a stringent audit and monitoring mechanism for the approval of funding for public works and the use of public funds. We will carry out relevant assessments, including construction cost, land value and the direct contribution to the economy, in respect of the recommended development proposal in the Study. We will take into account the relevant factors such as the fiscal sustainability and the financial capability of the Government, properly manage fiscal risk and to ensure that the project expenditure is fiscally affordable for the Government.

Response to part (1) of questions under the subject of “On Transport Connections”

We will carry out a transport infrastructure study in the Study to decide on the road and rail options required (such as alignment, other supporting facilities, etc.) and their technical feasibility (including traffic impact assessment).

The Transport Department (TD) is planning to commence a study to review the toll policy for the Government's existing or under-constructed tolled tunnels and the Tsing Ma and Tsing Sha Control Areas. Although the study of TD does not cover the major roads under the Vision, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and TD will maintain close communications in conducting the Study; and the transport infrastructure study will be conducted according to the latest prevailing toll policy.

Response to part (2) of questions under the subject of “On Transport Connections”

CEDD preliminarily assessed that the formation of KYC Artificial Islands does not require narrowing or rerouting of the existing principal fairways. Some of the existing ferry routes or anchorages may need to be rerouted or relocated yet there are no insurmountable problems. Nevertheless, we shall assess in detail the impacts of reclamation and the associated infrastructure on port operation, marine traffic and fairway safety as well as the ferry routes in the detailed P&E study for the KYC Artificial Islands. We will consult the relevant stakeholders about the findings of the study in due course.

Response to questions under the subject of “Climate Change Impact Assessment”

To address climate change, the Government set up the Steering Committee on Climate Change, which is chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, in 2016 to steer and co-ordinate the work of government departments on climate change. As regards marine infrastructure works, CEDD has updated the Port Works Design Manual (PWDM) in early 2018, taking into account the future climate change projection given in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change set up under the United Nations. According to the updated PWDM, mean sea level in Hong Kong in 2030 – 2039 is expected to rise by about 0.13 m as compared with 2018.

To enhance the resilience against extreme weather, we will make reference to the latest design standards when designing the KYC Artificial Islands under the

coming engineering studies, and where necessary, provide breakwater, wave breakers and reserve non-building zones along the shorelines as buffer.

We estimate that the implementation of the above measures should not have significant impact on the overall construction cost.

Development Bureau
May 2019