

**Legislative Council Panel on Development**

**PWP Item No. 43CG - Greening Master Plans for the New Territories**

**Follow-up Actions Arising from the Meeting held on 25 June 2019**

The Panel on Development discussed the proposal to upgrade part of 43CG “Greening Master Plans for the New Territories” to Category A to carry out priority greening works in Southwest New Territories (NT) and Northeast NT in the paper submitted to the Legislative Council (CB(1)1081/18-19(06)) at its meeting held on 25 June 2019. The Panel requested the Administration to provide the following information:

1. The Administration’s action in response to the recommendations made in the Director of Audit’s Report No. 72 in respect of the following:
  - (i) the development and implementation of Greening Master Plans (GMPs); and
  - (ii) handover and maintenance of greening works under GMPs; and
2. The Administration’s mechanism of monitoring the work of the contractors engaged for implementing the greening measures under GMPs, including but not limited to the measures to ensure that the contractors would act in compliance with the technical circulars/guidelines on proper planting practices issued by the Administration (please provide the technical circulars/guidelines on proper planting practices), and the work requirements in the works contracts.

This paper provides the Administration’s response.

1. In the light of Audit recommendations and departments' past experience, and making reference to landscape good practices, the Administration will implement the following improvement measures in taking forward the remaining GMPs for Southwest New Territories (NT) and Northeast NT.

(i) Development and implementation of GMPs

In addition to checking, reviewing and assessing underground utility records, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) has also asked their consultants to step up site investigation works, including excavating more trial pits or making wider use of no-dig detection methods, to understand the underground conditions more comprehensively so as to enhance the success of planting. The proposed GMPs have the support of the District Councils (DCs) concerned. To take into account the latest district developments, CEDD will listen to the views of relevant DC Members on the detailed implementation arrangements.

On plant species selection, we will consult experts and liaise with the maintenance departments to set the reference planting ratio for theme trees and native plant species. The theme trees will be planted at suitable locations (e.g. in groups along selected streets) with other tree species planted nearby to achieve a holistic greening effect. In addition, shrubs and suitable native plant species will also be planted to enrich the landscape, increase ecological value, and promote plant diversity.

CEDD has referred to the "Street Tree Selection Guide" issued by the Development Bureau in formulating the planting design under the remaining GMPs. CEDD has considered the condition of the planting locations, the views of local stakeholders, the requirements for maintenance, etc. to select suitable plant species in accordance with the "Right Tree, Right Place" principle. For instance, wind-resistant species for planting will be used at gusty locations to reduce the risk of branch failure or tree collapse due to strong wind.

Apart from the Audit recommendations, CEDD will enhance the planting design by expanding the tree pits along the pavement for tree planting as far as practicable. For example, we will try to form a continuous planting strip by connecting two or more adjacent tree pits to create larger underground space with suitable soil for root growth. This can facilitate better root development, which would in turn improve tree stability and resistance against strong wind. Moreover, we will add Biochar and mature compost into the soil mix to improve soil quality for healthy tree growth.

(ii) Handover and maintenance of greening works under GMPs

CEDD has strengthened communication with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to share experience in the maintenance of plants to facilitate the formulation of greening works under the GMPs. CEDD and LCSD have jointly devised a common handover record form, covering adequate details of GMP trees and shrubs to facilitate follow-up maintenance works by LCSD after the handover. CEDD will verify the completed works with LCSD during their joint site inspections to ensure that all greening works implemented under the remaining GMPs are accurately and completely recorded in the mutually agreed handover record form.

LCSD will enhance its Tree Data Bank System (TDBS) and input therein, for monitoring purpose, all information on trees planted under GMP and handed over to LCSD for regular maintenance. As for shrubs, since it is impractical and not cost-effective to count the shrubs one by one during handover, LCSD will input their planting locations and size of planting areas into TDBS. LCSD will also remind responsible staff to keep the handover records properly and input information of trees and planting areas to the TDBS in future GMPs projects.

Besides, drawing reference to the guidelines on tree planting and maintenance issued by the Development Bureau (DEVB), LCSD

has updated its internal guidelines to ensure timely replanting as appropriate.

2. Mechanism for monitoring greening works contractors

The CEDD follows the “Proper Planting Practices” promulgated by the Development Bureau in formulating the greening works under the GMPs for Southwest NT and Northeast NT, for example, providing adequate growing space for future growth of canopy, selecting and planting good specimens, keeping sufficient space clear of vegetation at the base of trees and avoid plant too deeply, etc. These good practices have been incorporated in the planting design and specifications of the works contracts. Details of these good practices can be browsed at the link below: [https://www.greening.gov.hk/en/tree\\_care/practices.html](https://www.greening.gov.hk/en/tree_care/practices.html)

To ensure compliance, CEDD’s consultants will prepare Quality Site Supervisory Plans and employ resident site staff (including engineers, landscape architects, field officers, inspectors of works etc.) with relevant professional qualifications (including arboricultural qualifications) and experience to ensure the implementation of the greening works in accordance with the contract requirements. Resident site staff will check the tree stocks and soil mix provided by contractors, and supervise contractors’ planting and establishment works on site.

CEDD will monitor the performance of the consultants and contractors, particularly in assessing the qualifications of the key personnel, reviewing works progress, and providing timely assistance to solve problems encountered during the implementation of the greening works. CEDD officers (including engineers, landscape architects and field officers) will also regularly inspect the works and conduct checks on materials and workmanship to ensure proper application of Biochar in soil mix and proper planting practices.