

立法會

Legislative Council

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Bills Committee on Northern Metropolis Development Bill

Background brief

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Northern Metropolis Development Bill (“the Bill”) and gives a brief account of the major views and concerns expressed by Members on the relevant legislative proposals.

Background

2. The development of the Northern Metropolis (“NM”) has entered into the stage under which construction will proceed in full swing and enterprises will start to settle into the area. To expedite the works progress and flexibly respond to changes in the economic and social circumstances, the Government has formulated the Bill as the primary legislation to specify the scope of various facilitation measures and empower the Chief Executive in Council (“CE in C”) to make subsidiary legislation to further provide for the relevant implementation details. The scope of the measures covers six major areas, including (a) streamlining town planning procedures; (b) expediting compensation payment for land resumed; (c) facilitating innovation and sustainability in construction works; (d) streamlining construction noise permit (“CNP”) applications; (e) facilitating and regulating cross-boundary flows of factors of production; and (f) establishing statutory corporations for designated areas.

3. The first batch of the draft subsidiary legislation to be submitted covers the first four items mentioned above, as well as the cross-boundary flow of persons relating to the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park under item (e). The remaining areas and details, including cross-boundary flows of data, materials and capital, as well as arrangements for the establishment of statutory corporations, are not included in the first batch, and will be addressed by the Government at a later date depending on progress.

Northern Metropolis Development Bill

4. The Bill, which received its First Reading at the Council meeting of 8 July 2026, seeks to:

- (a) declare certain areas as NM;
- (b) provide for measures for facilitating the development of NM;
- (c) empower CE in C to make subsidiary legislation for related purposes; and
- (d) provide for related matters.

5. Details of the main provisions of the Bill are set out in paragraph 37 of the [Legislative Council Brief](#) issued on 3 July 2026, and in paragraphs 4 to 17 of the [Legislative Council \(“LegCo”\) Legal Service Division Report](#) on the Bill. If the Bill is passed, the provisions concerning the declaration of areas as NM will come into operation on the day on which it is published in the Gazette as an Ordinance; other provisions will come into operation on a day to be appointed by a notice to be published in the Gazette unless there are technical reasons calling for deviation, which will also be the date on which the relevant subsidiary legislation comes into operation.

Members’ major views and concerns

6. The Administration briefed the Panel on Development (“the Panel”) on 24 March and 23 June 2026 on the proposal to enact dedicated legislation for NM. The Panel supported the Administration’s introduction of the Bill into LegCo as soon as possible. The major views and concerns expressed by Members on the legislative proposals are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Scope of application of the legislation

7. Members asked whether the scope of application of the legislation could be extended to **areas outside NM** (such as Sai Kung, Tseung Kwan O and other rural areas), and whether the delineation of areas and naming within NM could be made clearer to enhance public awareness. Some Members also asked **whether the legislation provided sufficient flexibility** to allow for the inclusion of adjacent streets or locations in the development areas in the future.

8. The Administration advised that, in determining the areas of NM, **boundaries** of the **North District** and **Yuen Long District** as declared under the District Councils Ordinance (Cap. 547) would form the basis; if there were discrepancies between the boundaries of the said two Districts under the District Councils Ordinance and the boundaries of outline zoning plans (“OZPs”) prepared under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) falling within the area of the said two Districts, the entire relevant OZPs **including small portions falling outside the said two Districts** would be covered. On the contrary, if the relevant OZPs largely covered areas outside the said two Districts, **the small portions falling under the said two Districts would not be included in NM**. The Administration had conducted a detailed review and confirmed that most of these excluded areas were zones that could not be developed, such as hillsides.

Planning and lands

9. Regarding the Government’s proposal to **extend the period of temporary uses on individual NM sites from three years to seven years**, Members expressed concern that this might in effect encourage brownfield operations to occupy land for extended periods, thereby hindering the planning and development of high value-added industries. Regarding procedural efficiency, Members relayed that the time taken to assess land premium payments was excessively long and suggested **introducing qualified surveyors to expedite the process**. At the same time, Members requested the Administration to **clarify the scope of application** and explain whether the streamlined procedures were absolutely inapplicable to applications involving green belts.

10. The Administration advised that the streamlined procedures **did not apply to green belts**. All cases involving green belts must be processed under the existing mechanism. At the same time, the extension of the period of temporary uses was not an automatic renewal but remained subject to gatekeeping by the Town Planning Board, aiming to provide transitional space for brownfield sites, encourage “**1.5-level development**”, and promote the upgrading and transformation of industries. Regarding the approval of land premium payments, the Administration would explore having professional surveyors conducted initial assessments to save manpower, but emphasized that as public money was involved, a sample-based approach was not appropriate. Moreover, a task force within the Development Bureau was continuously reviewing various measures to remove barriers, including considering the wider adoption of standard exemption fees.

Expediting construction works

11. Members welcomed the Administration's adoption and introduction of **Mainland construction technologies or materials** to help accelerate construction works in NM, but expressed concern that the considerations for exemptions, such as sustainability and functionality, were too broad. Members asked whether the Administration would establish **clearer, quantifiable statutory indicators** (such as carbon emission intensity and energy efficiency ratings). Some Members also suggested extending these streamlined arrangements to government works departments and including non-traditional structures (such as smart car parks) in the scope.

12. The Administration responded that it had taken public views on board and incorporated factors such as sustainability and functionality into the considerations for exemptions. It also stated that **it was not appropriate to set too many rigid indicators in order to retain flexibility in approvals**, and that the relevant decisions would subsequently be announced for the industry's reference. Furthermore, as government public works projects were not governed by the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123), Heads of Departments might adopt innovative technologies through administrative guidelines, while inter-departmental approvals and standardized plans relating to smart car parks could be resolved through coordination at departmental level, without the need for additional authorization under dedicated legislation.

Streamlining the procedures for construction noise permit applications

13. Some Members expressed concern that as there were already housing estates occupied and several indigenous villages in the vicinity of projects such as Hung Shui Kiu ("HSK") Station and the Northern Link ("NOL") Main Line, the introduction of streamlined procedures might **cause unease among residents**, particularly as established timetables were already available for the relevant works under the existing mechanism. Some Members suggested excluding HSK Station and the NOL Main Line from the scope of application to avoid causing undue concern among nearby residents.

14. The Administration replied that the streamlined measures were intended to **rationalize application requirements** rather than relax noise standards. Safeguards would be put in place through real-time noise monitoring, enhanced community engagement and maintaining the existing inspection and prosecution mechanisms, etc. During the approval process, the Administration would still require applicants to submit feasible proposals regarding the **distance between mitigation measures and residential areas**.

Regarding the scope of application, in addition to industry-led areas such as HSK and San Tin Technopole (“STT”), the Sandy Ridge Data Facility Cluster had been included. Although established timetables were already available for projects such as NOL, the streamlined measures could further accelerate the progress, and therefore these projects should not be excluded from the scope of application.

Cross-boundary flows of factors of production

15. Members expressed concern about **the specific implementation timetables and roadmaps** for the flows of data, materials and capital, and proposed **extending the “white list” arrangement to STT**, while prioritizing **coordination with the development of the Sandy Ridge Data Facility Cluster**. Some Members were also concerned about **the qualifications of construction machinery operators and occupational safety and health** issues with respect to cross-boundary works, as well as the specific arrangements concerning the cross-boundary tunnel works for the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link involving Mainland construction workers and innovative technologies.

16. The Government stated that the “white list” was primarily designed to facilitate specific individuals who frequently travelled between the two parks in Hetao, allowing them to engage in lawful activities in Hong Kong after entry. **Consideration might be given to extending it to STT** in the future. Regarding the flows of data and materials, the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments had submitted proposals to relevant authorities of the country and progress had been made. They were currently collecting the cross-boundary demand for data and bio-samples of enterprises that had set up operations, with the aim of **launching a pilot scheme within the year**. As for the flow of capital, the Administration was actively discussing the matter with relevant Mainland authorities. Moreover, to prevent cross-boundary railway works from being interrupted at the boundary due to the replacement of equipment or components, the Administration had permitted the use of **Guobiao-compliant equipment**, while maintaining strict oversight in environmental protection and occupational safety and health. Arrangements for operators would follow the existing well-established administrative mechanism, ensuring compliance with Hong Kong’s occupational safety and health and insurance regulations.

Expediting compensation payment for land resumed

17. Members noted that if the compensation amount was in dispute, the Government might make a provisional payment pending resolution of the dispute. Members expressed concern that **the three-month time limit** for

the concerned parties to accept the provisional payment offer **lacked flexibility**, fearing that owners involved in estates handling or cases where vacancies for managers of Tsos/Tongs existed might be unable to receive the payment in a timely manner.

18. The Administration noted Members' views and pointed out that two key refinements had been made: firstly, **the six-month time limit for referring compensation cases to the Lands Tribunal had been removed** to prevent owners from filing claims en masse out of fear of missing the deadline, thereby triggering unnecessary litigation; secondly, the Director of Lands had been empowered to **extend the three-month time limit for accepting the provisional payment offer at his discretion**, taking into account individual special circumstances, in order to flexibly deal with practical cases such as where an owner had passed away and it took time to handle estates, or where vacancies for managers of Tsos/Tongs existed and the by-election procedures were already underway.

Financial operations of statutory park corporations

19. Regarding the statutory corporations to be **established under the dedicated legislation** and wholly owned by the Government, Members expressed concern as to whether the financial operations of the statutory park corporations would be strictly governed by the principles of **self-financing** and **balanced budget**. Members also enquired about the mechanisms put in place by the Administration to **safeguard the corporations' financial independence** should the payback period for initial investments be lengthy or should the corporations face operating losses, so as to prevent the financial burden from being passed on to the Treasury and to avoid repeatedly seeking approval from LegCo for supplementary budgets.

20. The Administration stated that it had established **the Hung Shui Kiu Industry Park Company Limited** and **the San Tin Technopole Company Limited** in January and June of this year respectively, and both were companies incorporated under the Companies Ordinance and **non-statutory bodies**. The Government currently had no concrete plans to establish statutory corporations, but to prepare for future needs, it proposed to take the opportunity of this legislative exercise to make empowering provision in the primary legislation, so that CE-in-C could establish statutory corporations through subsidiary legislation should the need arise in the future. If there were plans for their establishment in the future, the relevant policy bureaux would draw on the operational models of existing statutory corporations wholly owned by the Government. The Government might provide land or financial support during the initial stage of establishment, but in the long run, the corporations must achieve financial self-sufficiency through

self-financing (including borrowing or issuing bonds) and by attracting market investment or adopting the public-private partnership approach. These financial requirements might, if deemed appropriate, be incorporated into the subsidiary legislation governing the establishment of the corporations as statutory provisions.

Relevant papers

21. A list of relevant papers on the LegCo website is in the [Appendix](#).

Council Business Divisions
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Appendix

Bills Committee on Northern Metropolis Development Bill

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	29 January 2026	Agenda item I: Briefing by the Development Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Environment and Ecology Bureau on the Northern Metropolis Minutes of policy briefing
Panel on Development	24 March 2026	Agenda item III: Dedicated legislation to accelerate the development of the Northern Metropolis Minutes of meeting
Finance Committee	16 April 2026	Replies to initial written questions raised by Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2026-2027 (Reply serial numbers: DEVB(PL)010, 077, 089 and 132)
Panel on Development	23 June 2026	Agenda item III: Dedicated legislation to accelerate the development of the Northern Metropolis Minutes of meeting

Council meeting	Paper
21 January 2026	Question 20 : Dedicated legislation for the Northern Metropolis
4 February 2026	Members' motion : Further enhancing the speed and efficiency of developing the Northern Metropolis to promote the better development of Hong Kong's innovation and technology industry Progress report

Policy Pulse	Paper
March 2026	Issue 11 Northern Metropolis: Accelerating development through industry-driven momentum