Annex C

Summary of issues discussed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee at the meeting on 12 September 2016

The Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee (EIASC) discussed the following two EIA reports at the meeting on 12 September 2016 The major issues discussed are summarized in the following paragraphs -

(i) EIA report on "Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po"; and

(ii) EIA report on "Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station".

EIA report on "Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po"

Grasslands compensation

2. A Member raised that although the grassland was a widespread habitat in Hong Kong, a larger area of grassland should be compensated within the study area if resources were available. The Project Proponent explained that there would be about 11 hectares of grasslands be lost and these grasslands were largely patchy and of a low ecological value. It would be undesirable to increase the compensation area as it would result in the expansion of the project site. He clarified that grassland was a common habitat in the area and confirmed that all new trees on compensation planting would be planted within the project site.

The need for road widening

3. Some Members expressed doubt towards the need for upgrading the existing Kong Nga Po Road which was expected to generate a large amount of excavation materials and would affect species of conservation interest including *Keteleeria fortunei*. Having considered that the existing Kong Nga Po Road had sharp road bends with steep gradient reaching over 10%, the Project Proponent explained that there was a genuine need to upgrade the road for providing a safer route for those heavy vehicles including container trucks and large vehicles used for police off site road driving training. He mentioned that the upgrading of Kong Nga Po Road accounted for the loss of 1,400 trees,

and while around 18,000 m3 excavation materials would be generated, 19,000 m^3 of fill materials would be required for the road improvement works. In order to minimize the ecological impact arising from the project, the standard 1.5 m verge specified under Transport Planning and Design Manual (TPDM) between the carriageway and footpath had been discarded in the project, and the standard 2 m verge was reduced to 1 m along the southern side of the road.

4. The Project Proponent further explained that apart from providing access to the police facilities, the road also served local villagers and would be used for police driving-related training. As such, it was necessary to widen the road with a view to enhance the safety of road users. With a view to conduct in-situ preservation of *Keteleeria fortunei*, as well as reduce tree felling and the generation of excavation materials, a Member suggested the Project Proponent to reconsider reducing the extent of road widening by using passing bays or adopting appropriate traffic control measures, especially at sections where extensive cut / fill slope works were required.

Design of the perimeter wall / boundary walls

5. A Member pointed out that the proposed perimeter wall / boundary wall would obstruct wildlife from travelling between the Northern and Southern areas of the project site. Another Member was concerned that the construction of the perimeter wall / boundary wall would affect surface water runoff to the nearby agricultural lands.

6. Considering that the construction of 5 m high side-walls would require substantial concrete work, a Member advised that hard / concrete paving should be avoided as far as possible and permeable pavings would be a better option.

7. A Member also suggested that the extent of the perimeter wall / boundary wall could be reduced. This could bring about multiple benefits including the reduction of cut and fill slope works, minimization of impact on fauna species of conservation interests, and provision of a wildlife corridor. He was of the view that the extent of road widening could be reduced by using passing bays so as to enable in-situ preservation of the species.

8. The Project Proponent explained that there was a genuine need for the

perimeter wall / boundary wall on safety and noise impact considerations. Apart from providing noise insulation, the 5 m side-walls were erected to create a bullet-resistant barrier for the safe proceedings of police training activities that would take place outside the firing ranges.

9. They further explained that as the project site was located at a relatively high altitude, it would have minimal effect on the surface runoff. While surface runoff would enter the Nam Hang River via pipes along Kong Nga Po Road under normal circumstances, in the event of heavy rainstorms, the underground stormwater storage tank could help serve as a buffer to mitigate the drainage impact created by greater surface runoffs from paved surfaces.

10. Subject to operational needs, the Project Proponent agreed that the extent of the perimeter wall / boundary wall could be reviewed during the detailed study. They would consider the feasibility of retaining a corridor of several metres wide alongside the perimeter wall / boundary wall during the detailed study.

Inert construction and demolition (C&D) materials

11. The Project Proponent advised that 603,000 m^3 and 219,000 m^3 inert C&D materials were estimated to be generated and re-used in situ respectively for the entire project. Regarding the suggestion to use the surplus inert C&D materials for building structures such as earth bunds within the project site, the Project Proponent said it was feasible but would result in a higher footprint.

12. A Member asked the Project Proponent to review the design of the retaining walls during the detailed study stage, with the aim of reducing the extent of excavation and amount of inert C&D materials generated and exported from site formation.

Preservation of conservation interests

13. A Member asked whether there were focused efforts in detecting the presence of Golden-headed Cisticola within the study area. He considered that as the bird species were usually sensitive to gunshot noises, mitigation measures should be proposed if the Golden-headed Cisticola were found within the project site. He pointed out that the survey transects only followed

existing roads with low coverage of uphill areas at Chow Tin Tsuen and Cheung Po Tau.

14. The Project Proponent said that the project team had specifically looked for the breeding grounds of Golden-headed Cisticola within the project site by the detection of bird calls during the breeding season, but no such breeding grounds were found. They further explained that the roads, including pedestrian paths were the only access to the rugged and vegetated areas.

15. As regards Members' questions regarding the duration and coverage of the field survey period, the Project Proponent said that the dry season only covered the month of March as the wet season was considered to be more important to the concerned habitat. They pointed out that during winter, Golden-headed Cisticola would be widespread to the extent that they could be found not only in grasslands.

16. A Member opined that even if the wet season was more important to the habitat, the dry season should not be overlooked given the strong seasonality of some bird species. The Project Proponent explained that literature review had been conducted which took into account study reports and EIA reports of other relevant projects.

17. Considering *Keteleeria fortunei* was a rare floral species of conservation interest, a Member asked whether the Project Proponent would preserve *Keteleeria fortunei* found on both sides of Kong Nga Po Road in-situ by reducing the extent of the road improvement works. The Project Proponent advised that a detailed vegetation survey for identifying the location and number of *Keteleeria fortunei* that could not be preserved in-situ would be conducted. Regarding the potential noise impact on birds, he explained that there was an existing San Uk Ling Firing Ground in the vicinity of the project site and the project team had specifically looked for the breeding grounds of Golden-headed Cisticola within the project site, but no such breeding grounds were found.

18. As regards the perimeter wall / boundary wall might obstruct the wildlife corridor between habitats at the Northern and Southern areas of the project site, the Project Proponent pointed out that the large availability of

grassland and shrubland habitats within 500 m from the boundary of the project site could serve as a link between different habitats, and there would be periphery tree planting at the project site to serve as a buffer.

19. A Member suggested that species that were more effective in mitigating noise could be explored by periphery planting. He further asked whether there were sufficient space to carry out compensatory planting of 5,869 trees within the project site. The Project Proponent agreed that trees planted at the periphery could help mitigate noise. With reference to the preliminary layout plan, they confirmed that there would be sufficient space to accommodate the trees to be compensated within the project site.

Green paving

20. The Project Proponent said that while the actual design would be reviewed during the detailed study, it was planned for the firing ranges to use green paving. While concrete paving would have to be used in areas for driving training, the Project Proponent advised that there were prevailing policies for green design which stipulated for permeable paving to be used as far as possible.

Recommendations

21. With a view to preserve species of conservation interest including *Keteleeria fortunei* and *Brainea insignis*, the meeting suggested the Project Proponent to avoid widening Kong Nga Po Road at areas where species of conservation interests were found. The use of passing bays or other traffic control measures at suitable locations should be explored where appropriate. The revised layout plan of Kong Nga Po Road should be submitted to the DEP for approval before commencement of the construction works.

22. The Project Proponent shall review the design of the retaining walls so as to reduce the extent of excavation and amount of inert C&D materials generated and exported from site formation. To enhance the noise reduction effect, it was also suggested that noise absorbent lining on the surrounding walls should be used as appropriate.

23. The meeting also suggested the Project Proponent to enhance the ecological connectivity between the Northern and Southern areas of the Project site by adopting a softer and greener design for the perimeter wall / boundary wall.

24. The Project Proponent should consider planting appropriate plant species, which were the larval food plants of butterfly species of conservation interest in the new grassland area. And they should use permeable paving in the project site as far as practicable. If there was a need for using impermeable paving for any areas within the project site, the Project Proponent should justify the need to the satisfaction of the DEP.

25. While the concerned uphill areas at Chow Tin Tsuen and Cheung Po Tau were outside the purview of the project, the Project Proponent would be required to conduct a baseline survey on Golden-headed Cisticola before the commencement of site clearance.

EIA report on "Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town Connecting with Long Ping Station" (ACE-EIA Paper 4/2016)

Future connectivity of the corridor

26. Some Members observed that the proposed construction of the footbridge was to link the north and the south and questioned if future extensions of the footbridge in connection to the east and west would be feasible. The Project Proponent indicated that there would be flexibility as to future extension in connection to buildings along the directions of east and west where necessary.

27. A Member suggested that the scale of the Project should be enlarged, because without extensions at other ends of the footbridge, pedestrians may be tempted to continue commuting by at-grade footways.

28. The Project Proponent explained that they had explored the possibility of future extensions of the elevated footbridge. Due to the lightweight nature of the proposed footbridge and the use of material like steel,

the proposed design of a girder bridge in comparison to a triangle truss bridge would be more suitable. This would give flexibility to any future extensions without the need to remove any superstructure.

Visual impact

29. Most of the Members supported the proposal that beautification works were to be conducted to enhance the visual impact of the pedestrian interchanges, they asked if it would be possible to incorporate artistic shapes into the design of the pedestrian interchanges.

30. The Project Proponent advised that there was a separate project on the beautification works at the Yuen Long Town Nullah being undertaken by the Drainage Services Department (DSD). The Project Proponent had consulted DSD on the design concept since the planning stage, with a view to optimize the landscape features of the proposed footbridge together with the nullah.

31. The Project Proponent said that DSD recommended that the visual impact and coverage brought by the proposed footbridge above the nullah should be minimized, in order to be compatible with the beautification works of the Yuen Long Nullah. As such, they proposed to optimize the landscape of the pedestrian interchanges to minimize its obstruction and interference with the key views of the adjacent areas. Apart from the pedestrian interchanges, four viewing platforms would be constructed on the elevated corridor.

32. Some Members considered it important for this elevated corridor to be a feature in the Yuen Long District and suggested the Project Proponent to widen the footbridge or include some observation towers to facilitate pedestrians to enjoy the view, in addition to constructing observation decks at the junctions.

Noise impact

33. Some Members were concerned about the noise impacts and potential water quality impacts associated with the piling works. The Project Proponent explained that they would act in accordance with the acceptable noise levels on general construction works during statutory restricted hours. The use of Powered Mechanical Equipment (PME) for construction works

during restricted hours would require the contractor to apply for a Construction Noise Permit (CNP). They had recommended different mitigation measures in order to minimize the noise impact on nearby residents during construction phase.

34. In order to reduce noise nuisance to nearby residents after midnight, a Member suggested and the Project Proponent agreed to explore the feasibility of adopting active soundscape measures in the proposed Project.

Green measures

35. A Member suggested that the Project Proponent should consider the incorporation of integrated photovoltaic (IPV), other means of renewable energy and/or other green measures into the design of the elevated pedestrian corridor with the aim to achieve carbon neutral within the operation phase of the corridor.

Flood risk

36. To mitigate the Project's impact on drainage performance, the Project proponent explained that a flood wall would be installed to overcome the constraints for construction works during wet seasons. At the moment, foundation construction was targeted to be carried out and completed during the dry seasons as far as practicable.

Recommendations

37. The meeting suggested the Project Proponent to review the architectural and structural design of the proposed elevated pedestrian corridor with a view to enhancing the cityscape aesthetically and exploring the possibilities for it to be a landmark design in the district.

38. With the aim to achieve carbon neutral within the operation phase of the corridor, the Project Proponent shall consider the incorporation of integrated photovoltaic (IPV), other means of renewable energy and/or other green measures into the design of the elevated pedestrian corridor.

39. The Project Proponent shall also explore the use of active soundscape measures and operational pedestrian control and management arrangements to minimize noise impacts associated with the Project and adopt such measures and arrangements where appropriate.

Conclusions

40. The EIA Subcommittee deliberated the captioned EIA reports and recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA reports with conditions and recommendations.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
October 2016