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ACE Paper 15/2022
For advice on 7 November 2022

Report on the 156th Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee considered the EIA report on “**Improvement of Lion Rock Tunnel**” (the Project) submitted under Section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on 17 October 2022. The EIA report was submitted by the Highways Department (HyD) (the Project Proponent).

2. Members are requested to note the views of the EIA Subcommittee and advise on whether the EIA report should be endorsed.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. The existing Lion Rock Tunnel (LRT), with two 2-lane tunnel tubes, is a major trunk road linking traffic between Sha Tin and Kowloon. Being in service for more than 40 years, the existing LRT does not meet the current standards in various aspects including road safety, minimum dimensions and waterproofing, etc. Comprehensive rehabilitation of the two existing tunnel tubes is needed to bring the LRT up to current standards and extend its serviceable life. Temporary closure of one of the existing tunnel tubes for rehabilitation works would not be feasible in view of the heavily trafficked situation and hence a new tunnel tube is necessary. Besides, there is serious traffic congestion at the LRT during peak hours and road improvements along the connecting roads on both Sha Tin and Kowloon sides are thus needed to alleviate the problem.

4. The Project is to rehabilitate and improve the existing tunnel tubes of the LRT and to take this opportunity to enhance the capacity of the tunnel and the connecting roads as far as possible.

5. Please refer to ACE-EIA Paper 8/2022 (*Annex A*) for the details of the EIA project.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

6. Members noted that the EIA report was made available for public inspection during the period from 15 August to 13 September 2022. During the inspection period, a total of 61 public comments, including 1 set with 199 signatures, were received by EPD. All public comments were submitted to Members of the EIA Subcommittee for consideration before its meeting.

7. Relevant extract of the draft minutes of the EIA Subcommittee meeting held on 17 October 2022 is at *Annex B*.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

8. The Director of Environmental Protection (DEP), in consultation with relevant authorities, considered that the EIA report has met the requirements in the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum on EIA Process, for the purpose of its exhibition for public inspection under Section 7(4) of the EIAO.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

9. Having regard to the findings of the EIA report as well as the information provided by the Project Proponent and its consultants at the meeting, the EIA Subcommittee recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA report with the following condition and recommendations –

Condition of Endorsement

The Project Proponent shall devise detailed Compensatory Tree Planting Implementation Plans (the Plans) to compensate the loss of 0.25 ha of woodland within the Lion Rock Country Park (LRCP) in a ratio of no less than 1:1 in terms of area and to compensate the tree loss under the Project in a ratio of no less than 1:1 in terms of number. The Plans shall include planting objectives, planting details including numbers, locations and areas, as well as arrangement and responsibility of maintenance and monitoring of the proposed planting. The Project Proponent shall consult the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation and relevant authority on the Plans prior to submission to the Director of Environmental Protection for approval before the commencement of compensatory tree planting.

Recommendations

The Project Proponent is recommended to –

- (i) explore the possibility to provide compensation for the permanent loss of 0.16 ha of woodland within the LRCP, in liaison with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), as far as practicable;

- (ii) adopt appropriate, innovative, environmental-friendly and bird-friendly noise mitigation measures, including but not limited to the provision of noise barriers and enclosures, to mitigate the road traffic noise impacts arising from the Project. A community liaison group should be set up for maintaining regular communication with the relevant stakeholders with a view to achieving consensus on the design of the noise barriers/enclosures in terms of colour, material and dimension taking into account their landscape and visual impacts;
- (iii) in case of any wild animal nuisance arising from the Project, propose and implement appropriate management and remedial measures, in consultation with the AFCD;
- (iv) explore ways to shorten the construction time with a view to minimising the disturbances and nuisances to the neighbouring residents as far as practicable; and
- (v) minimise the generation of construction and demolition (C&D) materials as well as reuse and recycle the C&D materials and yard waste (e.g. felled trees) on site or in other projects.

10. Members of the EIA Subcommittee have agreed at the meeting that the Project Proponent would not be required to attend the full Council meeting in respect of the EIA report.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
October 2022