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ACE Paper 18/2021
For advice on 11 October 2021

**Report on the 149th Environmental Impact Assessment
Subcommittee Meeting**

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee considered the EIA report on “Relocation of Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs to Caverns” (the Project) submitted under Section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on Monday, 13 September 2021. The EIA report was submitted by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) (the Project Proponent).

2. Members are requested to note the views of the EIA Subcommittee and advise whether the EIA report should be endorsed or not.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. In 2011-12 Policy Address, the Government announced to adopt a multi-pronged approach to expand the land resources, including actively explore the use of rock caverns to re-provision existing public facilities and release such sites for housing and other uses. The Project Proponent commenced a detailed feasibility study in December 2014 and confirmed that relocating the Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs (DHSRs) and associated facilities to caverns was technically feasible.

4. The relocation of the service reservoirs and the associated facilities would generate social benefits from the release of about four hectares of land to address the territorial housing needs and the local community needs.

5. Please refer to ACE-EIA Paper 2/2021 (*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 27 July to 25 August 2021. During the inspection period, two sets of public comments had been received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). The main concerns raised by the public were on the potential ecological impacts to the Lion Rock Country Park, discharge to watercourses during construction, landscape impact and construction safety arising from the project. The public comments and the gist of the public comments for the EIA report were issued to EIA Subcommittee Members on 8 September 2021 for reference, with copies to non-EIA Subcommittee Members for information.

7. Relevant extract of the draft minutes of the EIA Subcommittee meeting held on 13 September 2021 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 (TM), for the purpose of its exhibition for public inspection under Section 7(4) of the EIAO on 13 July 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

9. Having regard to the findings of the EIA report as well as the information provided by the Project Proponent 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 clarify and elaborate on the discrepancies in records of watercourses within the project area between different chapters of the EIA Report. The detailed assessment and justifications for not conducting ecological surveys at some of the watercourses concerned should be submitted to the satisfaction of the DEP and the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation before approval of the EIA report by DEP.

Recommendations

The Project Proponent is recommended to –

- (i) adopt the most efficient design and equipment for real-time tracking and monitoring of the air quality within the proposed caverns, including

but not limited to the level of radon gas, with a view to optimising the efficiency of the ventilation / filtration in the project site and safeguarding the personnel working in the caverns;

- (ii) devise a comprehensive risk management plan with a view to mitigating occupational safety and health hazards such as flooding or fire risks in the caverns during the construction and operation phases;
- (iii) adopt necessary precautionary measures to prevent any wildlife from inhabiting the caverns and take appropriate remedial actions should any wildlife be found in the caverns during the construction and operation phases;
- (iv) explore ways to facilitate the reuse and recycle of the wood generated from the felled trees in the project area as far as practicable; and
- (v) explore and consider the use of appropriate and additional tree species, in particular native and canopy species, for compensatory planting in the project area.

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 2021**