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ACE Paper 13/2016

For advice on 3 October 2016

**Report on the 133rd
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting**

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee (EIASC) considered the following two EIA reports submitted under section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on 12 September 2016 –

- (i) Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po (ACE-EIA Paper 3/2016 at ***Annex A*** refers); and
 - (ii) Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station (ACE-EIA Paper 4/2016 at ***Annex B*** refers).
2. The above EIA reports were submitted by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and Highways Department (HyD) respectively.
3. Members are requested to consider the views of EIA Subcommittee at paragraphs 12 below and advise on the way forward for handling the EIA reports.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECTS

(A) Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po

4. Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) operates a number of existing police training facilities in Hong Kong as part of its Hong Kong Police College. These existing police facilities are currently scattered throughout Hong Kong. The “Land Use Planning for the Closed Area” study in 2010 suggested to further review the development potential of land released from the Closed Area, including Kong Nga Po (KNP), a rural area in the North District. CEDD carried out further review over the relevant planning, environmental and overall

development factors and concluded that, in comparison with potential low-density residential development, the provision of police training facilities at KNP would be more desirable.

5. Because of the nearby existing San Uk Ling Firing Range, the KNP site itself is considered suitable for the proposed facilities. By co-locating these police facilities to a centralized location in KNP, the overall environmental impacts and the overall number of sensitive receivers affected would be reduced. According to the concerned EIA report, the Project will fully comply with the EIAO requirements with no adverse residual environmental impacts. Furthermore, the Project would include provision of public sewerage network and stormwater drainage system to improve water quality of watercourses in the area.

(B) Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station

6. In recent years, there has been rapid growth in large-scale residential and integrated developments in Yuen Long Town and its surrounding areas. These new developments and the increase in population have exacerbated the congestion problem in Yuen Long Town and resulted in surging demand for safe and convenient pedestrian facilities. The Chief Executive pledged in his 2008 to 2009 Policy Address to improve the pedestrian environment in business districts, shopping centres and leisure areas with heavy pedestrian flows, with a view to minimizing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and improving roadside air quality. Among other areas with heavy pedestrian flows, Yuen Long Town is selected as one of the key locations.

7. The elevated pedestrian corridor is proposed to improve the pedestrian environment in the area. The Project will provide a north-south pedestrian corridor within Yuen Long Town, easy access to the West Rail Long Ping Station and convenient pedestrian crossing facilities across busy roads within Yuen Long Town Centre. It will alleviate both the pedestrian congestion situation and the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. The Yuen Long District Council and the public showed support to the Project during the public engagement exercise in 2013.

8. According to the concerned EIA report, the major environmental benefits associated with the Project in place include:

- (i) with diversion of pedestrian from the at-grade footpaths to the proposed pedestrian corridor, potential nuisance from vehicular emission and traffic noise can be minimized; and
- (ii) with the provision of landscape and streetscape works under the Project, visual and landscape resources along the nullah at street level will be

enhanced and this would provide beneficial visual impact to the pedestrian.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

9. The Director of Environmental Protection (DEP), in conjunction with the relevant authorities, considered that the two EIA reports have met the respective requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the Technical Memorandum on EIA Process. Comments from the public and the ACE will be taken into account by DEP in deciding whether or not to approve the EIA reports under the EIAO.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

10. Public inspection period of the EIA report on “Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po” was from 4 August to 2 September 2016 and that for “Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station” was from 5 August to 3 September 2016. Public comments on the two projects received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) during the inspection periods and the gist of the public comments were issued to EIA Subcommittee Members on 7 September 2016 for reference before the meeting, with copies to non-Subcommittee Members for information.

11. A summary of the key issues discussed at the EIA Subcommittee meeting on the two EIA reports on 12 September 2016 is at *Annex C*.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

12. Having regard to the findings of the two EIA reports as well as the responses provided by the respective Project Proponents at the meeting, the EIA Subcommittee recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA reports with the following conditions and recommendations –

(A) Police Facilities in Kong Nga Po

Conditions of Endorsement

The Project Proponent shall—

- (a) minimize ecological disturbances in the road improvement works along Kong Nga Po Road, with a view to preserving individuals of *Keteleeria fortunei* (油杉) and other species of conservation interest. To this end, use of passing bays or traffic control measures at suitable locations in lieu of road widening should be explored and adopted where appropriate. The revised layout plan of Kong Nga Po Road shall be submitted to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) for approval before commencement of the construction works;
- (b) minimize impact on butterfly species of conservation interest. The re-establishment of the new grassland areas in the Project site should be enhanced, through planting of appropriate plant species which are the larval food plants of butterfly species of conservation interest such as Small Three-Ring, in order to benefit these species;
- (c) use permeable pavings to minimize surface runoff and to retain stormwater for landscaping and irrigation in the Project site as far as practicable. A layout plan showing the area and details of permeable pavings shall be submitted to the DEP for approval before commencement of the construction works;
- (d) conduct a baseline survey for Golden-headed Cisticola covering the remote grasslands in the ecological assessment area, i.e. within a distance of 500 metres from the boundary of the Project site. At least one month before start of site clearance, a report on the survey results, and appropriate measures to reduce the impacts to be adopted if necessary, shall be submitted to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) for approval.

Recommendations

- (e) To review the design of the retaining walls so as to reduce the extent of excavation and amount of inert construction and demolition materials generated and exported from the site formation; and
- (f) To enhance the ecological connectivity between the Northern and Southern areas of the Project site by adopting a softer and greener design for the proposed boundary wall; and
- (g) To enhance the noise reduction effect by considering using noise absorbent lining on the surrounding walls.

(B) Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station

Recommendations:

- (a) 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. The review shall also take into consideration the future enhanced 'river' below;
- (b) To 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; and
- (c) To 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.

13. EIA Subcommittee has agreed that Project Proponents and the consultant teams for the two EIA reports are not required to attend the full Council meeting on 3 October 2016.

**EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
October 2016**