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ACE Paper 19/2009

For advice on 9 November 2009

Report on the 111th Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

INTRODUCTION

On 19 October 2009, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee considered the EIA report on “West New Territories (WENT) Landfill Extensions” submitted by the Environmental Infrastructure Division of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) (ACE-EIA Paper 12/2009 refers).

ADVICE SOUGHT

2. Members are requested to consider the views of the Subcommittee and advise on the EIA report.

THE PROJECT

Need for the project

3. The EIA report points out that about 5 million tones of waste are disposed of each year at the three strategic landfills in Hong Kong currently, including the WENT Landfill, the South East New Territories (SENT) Landfill and the North East New Territories (NENT) Landfill.

4. In order to maintain the continuity of landfill capacity for disposal of waste, the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) commissioned a study in 2000. The study was completed in 2003 and proposed a strategic plan for the development of landfill extension and new sites for the disposal of solid waste in the next 50 years. The WENT Landfill Extensions form an integral part of the strategic plan.

Description of the project

5. The project involves developing an extension site for the existing WENT Landfill. It will have an area of about 200 ha and a filling capacity of about 81 Mm³ lying between the existing WENT Landfill and the Black Point Power Station at Nim Wan. Location of the project is shown in the figure at **Annex A**. The project will mainly involve the following tasks –

- (i) site formation and preparation;
- (ii) installation of a liner system to prevent contamination of land and water resources;
- (iii) installation of leachate collection, treatment and disposal facilities;
- (iv) installation of gas collection, utilization and management facilities;
- (v) provision of utilities, drainage and road network;
- (vi) operation of the landfill;
- (vii) restoration and aftercare in subsequent stages; and
- (viii) implementation of measures to mitigate environmental impacts as well as environmental monitoring and audit.

6. The project constitutes a designated project by virtue of the following items in Schedule 2 of the EIA Ordinance –

- (i) Item G.1, Part I – A landfill for waste as defined in the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354); and
- (ii) Item 8, Part II – The decommissioning of a waste disposal facility for pulverized fuel ash, furnace bottom ash or gypsum.

Consideration of alternative options

7. During the EIA study, five broad layout options were considered, with environmental factors taken into consideration for recommending the preferred option.

8. The recommended layout of the project will involve a balanced cut and fill approach and no disposal of excavated materials is anticipated. The recommended layout is also remote from the nearby residential developments, which are located about 1 km away from the site.

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

9. Members noted that the public inspection period of the EIA report was from 25 August 2009 to 23 September 2009. Public comments received by the EPD were circulated to Members before the meeting for reference. Separately, the written response of project proponent to some Members' questions and comments was circulated to Subcommittee Members before the Subcommittee meeting for information.

10. A summary of issues discussed by the Subcommittee is at **Annex B**.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

11. Having regard to the findings and recommendations of the EIA report and information provided by the project proponent, Members agreed to recommend to the full Council that the EIA report could be endorsed with the following proposed conditions –

- (a) prior to the commencement of construction of the project, the project proponent should submit a habitat creation, transplantation and management plan to the DEP for approval in consultation with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. The plan should at least include (i) increasing the number and size of the compensatory freshwater ponds to at least 8 ha and advancing the timing of establishing the ponds to no later than the first year of the commencement of construction of the project, and (ii) the transplantation of Pitcher Plant (*Nepenthes mirabilis*), Bamboo Orchid (*Arundina graminifolia*), Incense Tree (*Aquilaria sinensis*) and other plants of conservation interest which would be affected by the project;
- (b) before the commencement of construction of the project, the project proponent should put in place a contingency plan for any possible exceedances of the action and limit levels of odour impact as stipulated in the Environmental Monitoring and Audit (EM&A) Manual. The contingency plan should include actions of relevant parties and mitigation measures to be taken such as reducing the number of tipping areas, moving tipping areas further away from concerned sensitive receivers and increasing the thickness of covering soil;

- (c) the project proponent should, in consultation with the DEP, double the frequency of monitoring of Total Suspended Particulates (TSP) level as stipulated in the EM&A Manual. Extra mitigation measures including stoppage of works if necessary, should be implemented when exceedances of TSP levels occur, so as to mitigate any upsurge of TSP levels; and
- (d) to enhance transparency and communication with the public, the project proponent should set up a Community Liaison Group involving relevant stakeholders and should take a proactive approach to disseminate information to the local community, promote community cooperation and participation and implement suitable local environmental enhancement works. All relevant information of the project, including the detailed design, the progress of construction and operation and environmental monitoring and audit results, should be provided to the Community Liaison Group. The project proponent should make the minutes of the Community Liaison Group meetings and all papers and documents available to the public.

12. The Council also recommended the EPD to consider setting up an air quality monitoring station in the Tuen Mun district as currently the background data for air quality impact assessment in the district has to be taken from other districts.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
October 2009