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For discussion on 14 December 2009

**Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area
Draft Development Plan**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to seek Members' views on the Draft Development Plan proposed in the consultancy study entitled "Land Use Planning for the Closed Area" (the Study).

BACKGROUND

2. On 18 June 2008, Planning Department consulted the Council on the Draft Concept Plan (ACE Paper 18/2008). The Stage 1 Community Engagement on the Draft Concept Plan proposed under the Study also took place from May to August 2008. A series of community engagement activities were undertaken for different stakeholders including local residents, rural committees, district councils, Heung Yee Kuk, Town Planning Board, green groups, academic and professional institutes as well as the Shenzhen authorities. Three public forums were also held at different venues to gauge the public views. Each forum was well attended by over 100 participants of different background. In addition, a total of 74 written submissions were received. A copy of the Stage 1 Community Engagement Report is enclosed at **Appendix 1**.

MAJOR PUBLIC VIEWS

3. The major public views gathered during the Stage 1 Community Engagement are summarized as follows:

- (a) The respondents generally supported the vision of promoting the Study Area

as “A Belt of Conservation, Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Uses between Hong Kong and Shenzhen” and agreed to the three proposed development themes, i.e. “Strengthening Nature Conservation”, “Conserving Cultural Heritage Resources” and “Promoting Sustainable Uses”.

- (b) While there were some concerns on the possible adverse environmental and ecological impacts on the Study Area upon the release of the Closed Area, some considered that more development opportunities should be explored to enhance local economy and revitalize the local community. Others considered it necessary to strike a proper balance between conservation and development.
- (c) Some suggested that in view of its close proximity to Shenzhen, the development in the Closed Area should enhance Hong Kong’s integration with Shenzhen.
- (d) Some opined that the rights of landowners and indigenous villagers should be respected and sufficient land should be reserved to meet the demand for small houses. Sufficient infrastructure facilities should also be provided to meet the daily needs of the local residents.
- (e) There should be an effective mechanism to ensure conservation of both the natural landscape and the cultural heritage resources.

DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

4. Based on the public comments and suggestions received, the proposals of the Draft Concept Plan were refined and further developed. Taking into account the results of the broad technical and strategic environmental assessments, the Draft Development Plan is prepared for the Stage 2 Community Engagement. A copy of the Stage 2 Community Engagement Digest (the Digest) is enclosed at **Appendix 2**.

5. While areas immediately to the north of the Study Area in Shenzhen are highly urbanized and areas to its south are mainly the developed new towns and the proposed new development areas, the Study Area in contrast remains undisturbed and is ecologically or environmentally sensitive due to its remote location and restricted status. The Draft Development Plan therefore aims to provide a sustainable planning framework with a view to balancing the needs for development and conservation while respecting the existing rural settings, local traditions and ways of life. Whilst the Study Area will generally be maintained as a belt of conservation, cultural heritage and

sustainable uses, it can broadly be divided into three portions:

- (a) the western portion (page 6 of the Digest) is endowed with ecological and natural assets, hence the proposals in this portion focus on conservation and recreational uses, including the protection of wetland and fish ponds at San Tin and Hoo Hok Wai. On the hill slopes of Ma Tso Lung, an eco-lodge development is proposed to take advantage of its location overlooking the extensive fishponds/wetland of Hoo Hok Wai. This would be the first of its kind in Hong Kong. Guidelines will be drawn up to guide the development, which could also apply to other parts of the Study Area as well as other areas in Hong Kong;
- (b) the central portion (pages 10 and 11 of the Digest) is scattered with villages with rich cultural heritage and agricultural land. The Draft Development Plan proposes to preserve and strengthen these cultural and natural resources while allowing for residential and tourist-related developments. Leisure farming and various recreational activities, and low-density residential developments are proposed for this area; and
- (c) the eastern portion (pages 16 and 17 of the Digest), similar to the western portion, is of high conservation value, landscape quality and recreational potential. The potential country park at Robin's Nest, including the Lin Ma Hang Lead Mines, will form part of the ecological corridor between Pat Sin Leng in the North East New Territories and Wutongshan in Shenzhen.

6. Through the connection of existing trails and the provision of related facilities, a hiking trail of approximately 30 km linking up ecological attractions, cultural attractions, activity centres and accommodation sites within the Study Area can be formed. This will enhance the overall attractiveness of recreation and tourism, bring vibrancy to the area and boost the local economy.

7. To capitalize on the strategic locations in the proximity of the Boundary Control Points, developments are also proposed along major cross-boundary transport corridors linking Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Lok Ma Chau Development Corridor has the potential to provide for commercial, shopping and entertainment facilities to support the development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop. The Man Kam To Development Corridor in the vicinity of the North East New Territories New Development Areas may be developed for cross-boundary supporting uses such as wholesale centres, showrooms, retail outlets, commercial uses and services to meet the needs of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen residents. Similar uses can be developed

along the strategic road leading to the new Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in the long term.

8. The land use framework proposed in the Draft Development Plan would bring business and employment opportunities and hence benefit the local economy. Conservation of the existing natural and cultural resources would promote eco-tourism, leisure farming and related developments which would be an attraction to residents of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen. With the provision of improved infrastructure and development opportunities, the living quality of the local community would be enhanced.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

9. The Study adopts a two-stage community engagement programme, with Stage 1 on the Draft Concept Plan and Stage 2 on the Draft Development Plan. After the Stage 1 Community Engagement, continuous engagement with the locals and operators of tourism industry and leisure farms has been maintained. An online discussion forum was also set up in August 2008 to facilitate public discussions on the Study.

10. During the Stage 2 Community Engagement, briefing sessions will be arranged for relevant stakeholders including the local communities, rural committees, district councils, Heung Yee Kuk, Country Parks Committee, Town Planning Board and the LegCo Development Panel. Those interested groups, non-governmental organizations, academic and professional bodies expressing interests in the Study in the previous stage will also be consulted. Two public forums at Yuen Long and North districts will be organized to engage the local villagers and the general public. The Stage 2 Community Engagement is expected to last about two months between October and December 2009.

WAY FORWARD

11. Taking into account the public views to be received during the Stage 2 Community Engagement, we will refine the technical assessments and proposals, where necessary, and formulate a Recommended Development Plan. The Study is scheduled for completion in 2010. The Recommended Development Plan will serve as a basis for the timely preparation of statutory town plans which will provide the necessary planning control in the Closed Area before the new boundary of the Closed Area comes into effect.

ADVICE SOUGHT

12. Members are invited to note the Stage 1 Community Engagement Report at **Appendix 1** and comment on the Draft Development Plan at **Appendix 2**.

Planning Department
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