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ACE Paper 3/2016
For advice on 15 February 2016

Report on the 131st
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee (EIASC) considered the EIA report on “Tung Chung New Town Extension” (the Project) submitted under section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meetings on 18 and 22 January 2016. The project constitutes a designated project under Schedules 2 and 3 under the EIAO. The EIA report was submitted by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) (i.e. the Project Proponent).

2. Members are requested to consider the views of EIASC at paragraph 11 below and advise on the way forward for handling the EIA report.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. Development potential in North Lantau including Tung Chung area has been studied since 1989. With the latest planning parameters and population target, the Tung Chung New Town Extension Study (the Study) focuses on the possible development areas at Tung Chung East (TCE) and Tung Chung West (TCW) to meet the territorial long term housing, economic and social needs; while conserving the natural environment of Tung Chung at the same time.

4. The Study was commissioned jointly by CEDD and Planning Department (PlanD) in 2012 and has adopted a three-stage public engagement programme from 2012 to 2014 to collate views from stakeholders, green groups and local communities. The Project Proponent has incorporated feedbacks and views obtained from the public engagement exercises into the EIA study where applicable.

5. Owing to the territory-wide shortage of housing supply in Hong Kong, Tung Chung has been identified by the recent Policy Addresses as one of the potential areas to contribute to the land supply to meet future housing needs. There are also public aspirations on the development of a sports stadium, post-secondary institutions, a comprehensive cycling network and some other Government, Institution or Community facilities which would require extra land in Tung Chung. On environmental needs, there are public calls for the conservation of Tung Chung, in particular TCW which is characterized by its rich natural and heritage resources. Hence, in addition to the objective of providing land to fulfill the future housing, economic and social development needs, the Project also aims to conserve the natural environment of Tung Chung and to enhance its biodiversity.

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

- (i) dechannelisation and revitalization of a channelised section of Tung Chung Stream, about 400 metres of the stream would become a river park to enhance its ecological value;
- (ii) recreation of buffer zones of no less than 30 metres in width, as far as practicable, as Conservation Areas, and polders as necessary, alongside the eastern and western branches of Tung Chung Stream to provide better protection;
- (iii) provision of a public sewerage network for unsewered villages in TCW to improve the water quality in Tung Chung Stream;
- (iv) provision of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System which comprises a series of regional stormwater attenuation and treatment ponds to enhance filtering of pollutants in surface runoff along both existing and proposed paved areas before entering Tung Chung Stream which is of high ecological value; and
- (v) preservation of various parts of Tung Chung Valley through designating the Recommended Outline Development Plan by Conservation Area, Coastal Protection Area, Green Belt and agricultural zoning.

7. Please refer to the ACE-EIA Paper 1/2016 at **Annex A** for details of the Project.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

VIEWS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

9. During the public inspection period of the EIA report from 4 December 2015 to 2 January 2016, a total of 2,306 public comments have been received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the gist of the comments were issued to EIASC Members for reference on 13 January 2016, with copies to non-Subcommittee Members.

10. A summary of the issues discussed by EIASC at the meetings on 18 and 22 January 2016 on the Project is at **Annex B**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

11. Having regard to the findings of the EIA report and the supplementary information provided by the Project Proponent, EIASC recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA report with the following conditions and recommendations –

Conditions of Endorsement

The Project Proponent should -

Ecology

- (a) submit a Works Vessel Travel Route Plan (the Plan) to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) for approval before commencement of construction of the reclamation works at Tung Chung East. The Plan should set out the normal operational routings of the construction works marine vessels which should be restricted from travelling within the proposed Brothers Marine Park as far as practicable and the hotspots of the Chinese White Dolphins (CWDs) near Sha Chau and Lung Ku Chau Marine Park, along the Urmston Road. The Plan should set out any special circumstances (e.g. inclement weather,

marine safety, etc.) that require deviations from the normal operational routings, and the approval mechanism involving the Environmental Team Leader and the Independent Environmental Checker for the purpose. The Plan should also set out ways to minimize trips of works vessels to and from the works site and to cap the number of works vessels to a maximum of 56 and 10 round trips on a daily and hourly basis respectively. All works vessels should be equipped with Global Positioning System for real time tracking and monitoring of their travel routings and anchorage points. The Plan should also include the penalty on the contractors for violating this Plan for the first time as well as repeated violations. The Plan should be made effective through all relevant contracts of the construction works of this project.

- (b) submit a detailed Eco-shoreline Implementation Plan (the Plan) to the DEP for approval before commencement of construction of the eco-shoreline. The Plan should include a robust and innovative eco-shoreline design with clear objectives of enhancing its ecological, landscape, visual and other functions. The Plan should also include detailed management arrangements and a monitoring programme with indicators for success.
- (c) provide, as far as practicable, buffer zones of no less than 30 metres in width on either side of the stream as “Conservation Area” zone, as well as “Other Specified Uses (Polder)” zone and “Other Specified Uses (River Park)” zone as necessary, alongside the eastern and western branches of the Tung Chung Stream for its protection.
- (d) submit a Habitat Enhancement and Translocation Plan (the Plan) for the Romer’s Tree Frogs (RTF) that would be affected by the Project, to the DEP for approval. The Plan should set out the methodology for capture, translocation and post-release monitoring of RTF, an implementation programme and suitable receptor sites with recommended measures for enhancing the habitats for RTF at the receptor sites.
- (e) submit a detailed Compensatory Planting Plan to the DEP for approval. Qualified professional should be engaged to advise on aspects of plant species selection, planting scheme and schedule (including sourcing or

nursery propagation of the required species), fire control, and post-planting monitoring and maintenance. Action targets should be set using percentage canopy cover formation for each planting plot to ensure effective woodland establishment in the long term.

Recommendations

The Government should take a precautionary approach to address the public concern on the cumulative impacts of the major works projects being planned and implemented in the Lantau waters. There is an urgent need for more holistic and effective measures to be implemented for the protection and enhancement of the habitats of CWDs. These measures should include but not be limited to further expanding marine protected areas in the Lantau waters to cover the core habitats of CWDs. In view of the various projects that may cause loss and/or disturbance to the CWD habitats, these measures should be implemented as soon as possible.

Ecology

- (f) To ensure Tung Chung Stream would be adequately protected during the construction and operational phases, the following measures should be taken:
 - (i) revitalize the channelized section of Tung Chung Stream and construct the polders in advance of site formation and infrastructure works in the Tung Chung West area;
 - (ii) set up a surveillance team, independent from the contractors of the works contracts, to report on illegal dumping in Tung Chung Valley throughout the construction phase; and
 - (iii) review and explore the feasibility of strengthening management along Tung Chung Stream, including restricting access of vehicles alongside the stream and on the polders.
- (g) The extent of the public infrastructure works should be reviewed and refined to further minimize the destruction of Fung Shui Woods as far as practicable.
- (h) The proposed “Village-type Development” zone should be reviewed and revised so as to avoid including ecologically important Fung Shui Woods and mature secondary woodlands as far as practicable.

Air Quality

- (i) Effective and innovative measures, including the use of low carbon transport systems and electric buses, coating building surfaces and road pavements with additives to help reduce nitrogen oxides should be explored and implemented as far as practicable.
- (j) Bicycle parking facilities should be provided at residential buildings, railway stations and other activity centers, including shopping centers.
- (k) An Air Ventilation Assessment study should be conducted to ensure there is no adverse impact from polluting sources and ensure better urban air ventilation.

Noise

- (l) For the purpose of further reducing traffic noise affecting sensitive development uses and to minimize the use of wind-screening and visually intrusive noise barriers, landscaped earth berms, low noise road surfacing materials should be used wherever practicable and low noise bridge joints design should be adopted for all public roads in the Project areas.
- (m) In the event of a significant slippage in the implementation programme of the proposed Three Runway System project resulting that certain land areas in Tung Chung East would fall within the Noise Exposure Forecast 25 contour, the land use designation inside the contour shall be changed to commercial or other non-sensitive uses.

Waste Management

- (n) The use of local fill materials for the reclamation works should be maximized as far as practicable.

Landscape and Visual

- (o) The schematic polder design should harmonize and be compatible with the natural setting of Tung Chung Valley. Qualified professionals with expertise in riparian ecology should be engaged for proper planning and implementation of the proposed landscape planting.

- (p) To alleviate the landscape and visual impact of the high-rise residential buildings to the south of Fong Yuen, the feasibility of relocation or reducing the heights of the planned buildings should be explored to avoid blocking the inner valley view and the ridge line.

Others

- (q) To enhance connectivity and walkability of the entire Tung Chung New Town Extension, a continuous vehicle-free pedestrian walkway connecting Tung Chung East and the River Park at Tung Chung Stream should be considered and provided where practicable.
- (r) The need for a marina should be reviewed. Its suitability and attractiveness at the proposed location is questionable. It would also induce additional marine traffic and potentially adverse environmental implications, impacting on CWDs.
- (s) Targets should be set for the planning of the new town extension to become a smart and low carbon city. Green infrastructure should be provided e.g. sea water cooling plants, renewable energy, use of recovered heat, careful choice of plant location to reduce pump and fan energy. Adopting appropriate BEAM plus assessment schemes such as neighborhood for planning.

12. EIASC has also agreed that the Project Proponent and its consultant team do not need to attend the full Council meeting on 15 February 2016.

**EIA subcommittee Secretariat
February 2016**