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ACE Paper 9/2016
For advice on 13 June 2016

**Report on the 132nd
Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting**

PURPOSE

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee (EIASC) considered the EIA report on “Site Formation and Associated Infrastructural Works for Development of Columbarium, Crematorium and Related Facilities at Sandy Ridge Cemetery” (the Project submitted under section 6(2) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) at the meeting on 20 May 2016. The project constitutes a designated project under Schedule 2 of 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 EIA Subcommittee at paragraph 10 below and advise on the way forward for handling the EIA report.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

3. With a growing and ageing population, there is a genuine need for new crematorium and columbarium (C&C) facilities in Hong Kong. The existing Sandy Ridge Cemetery was constructed in 1949 and remained in use as a cemetery since then. In July 2010, the Sandy Ridge Cemetery site was identified as one of the 24 potential sites for columbarium development to meet the growing territorial demand beyond 2024.

4. The Project is to carry out site formation and associated infrastructural works for the development of C&C facilities at Sandy Ridge Cemetery. The proposed C&C facilities will provide about 200,000 niches, a crematorium with 10 cremators and associated facilities including a funeral parlour and visitor service centre to cater for the growing public demand.

5. According to the EIA report, the Project will fully comply with the EIAO requirements with no adverse residual environmental impacts. There are also opportunities, at the Project's design, construction and operation stages, for incorporating positive environmental elements into the Project. These opportunities include:

- (i) provision of shuttle bus services at MTR stations (by other party) during festive period to minimize air quality impacts from additional road traffic;
- (ii) provision of public sewerage network and stormwater drainage system to improve water quality of watercourses in the area;
- (iii) maintaining the groundwater flow to minimize the hydrological impacts on wet woodland; and
- (iv) improvement to the environment of the dwellings affected by traffic noise along Sha Ling Road and Lin Ma Hang Road through the use of noise barriers and low noise road surfacing materials.

6. Please refer to the ACE-EIA Paper 2/2016 at **Annex A** for details of the Project.

VIEWS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

7. 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

8. During the public inspection period of the EIA report from 5 April to 4 May 2016, a total of 4 public comments have been received by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the gist of the comments were issued to EIA Subcommittee Members on 12 May 2016, with copies to non-Subcommittee Members.

9. A summary of the key issues discussed at the EIA Subcommittee meeting, including responses to the questions/concerns raised by individual Members at the meeting and the supplementary information provided by the Project Proponent after the meeting is at **Annex B**.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

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

Conditions of Endorsement

The Project Proponent shall–

The need for and extent of the road widening works

- (a) In consultation with the relevant government departments, review the need for and extent of the widening of the existing Lin Ma Hang Road and Sha Ling Road with a view to restricting the carriageway to 6-metre wide, with the use of passing lane and / or passing bay where necessary and to provide pedestrian walkway on one side of the road only;
- (b) Alternative methods of design and construction of the viaduct to span across the river course should be used such that no structures, both temporary and permanent, would affect or impact on the water course in the works area;

Ecological aspects

- (c) To include a Monitoring and Survey Plan for Golden-headed Cisticola as part of the Environmental Monitoring and Audit (EM&A) programme, which should include an Action Plan in response to any irregularities identified, to the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (DAFC) for approval; and
- (d) To identify and quantify the area of woodland loss with moderate or high ecological value and provide at least 1:1 compensatory woodland planting and submit a detailed Compensation Planting Plan to the DAFC for approval. Suitable experts 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 compensation in the long term;

Recommendations

- (e) Effective and innovative measures to promote the use of green transport including the use of electric buses should be explored and implemented as far as practicable;
- (f) Effective measures should be explored to promote walkability and to encourage visitors to reach the columbarium, crematorium and related facilities on foot;
- (g) For the purpose of further reducing traffic noise and to minimize the use of visually intrusive noise barriers, low noise road surfacing materials should be used wherever practicable;
- (h) Surplus inert construction and demolition materials generated from the project should be re-used as far as practicable. Alternative construction sites in addition to the proposed sites at Tung Chung and the third runway of the Hong Kong International Airport should be explored for reuse of the excavated materials; and
- (i) The effectiveness and hence the need of the proposed Grassland Reinstatement Plan for enhancing the ecological compensation of the grassland should be reviewed.

11. Members are invited to consider whether the recommendations in paragraph 10 above should be approved.

12. EIA Subcommittee has agreed that the Project Proponent and its consultant team are not required to attend the full Council meeting if they agreed with all of the conditions. Otherwise, the Project Proponent would be invited to make further justifications against the condition(s) they disagree with at the full Council meeting. The justifications provided by the Project Proponent against condition (a) in paragraph 10 above are appended **at Annex C**.

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
June 2016