

Development Bureau's response on matters of Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Area

In response to media enquiries, the Development Bureau (DEVB) responded today (December 9) as follows:

The funding for the main works of the First Phase development of the Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Area (KTN/FLN NDA) was approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in May this year. Subsequently, the Lands Department commenced the statutory land resumption procedures on September 26 by posting land resumption notices on the private land within the works area to inform relevant landowners that the said land will revert to the Government on December 27.

As the DEVB stressed repeatedly, the above reversion date is only the date on which the ownership of the private land concerned reverts to the Government. It is not the departure deadline of the affected households, businesses or farmers. Persons affected by the First Phase development will depart the development area by phase. Taking households as an example, their departure deadlines, which range from end-March 2020 to the second half of 2022, are set with regard to the project requirements of the NDAs. Starting from late July this year, the Lands Department has issued a letter to individual households to inform each household of its departure deadline.

On the rehousing aspect, as at end-October this year, around 220 eligible households have been allocated with rehousing flats by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) (majority being units within the Po Shek Wu Estate in the North District), and have recently been moving in; around 150 rehousing applications are being processed or pending submission of further information, and are being followed up by the relevant departments; the remainder of around 140 households are not eligible for rehousing based on existing information, due to major circumstances including: the household owns domestic property in Hong Kong, the structure currently occupied by the household is totally unauthorised (i.e. structures not registered in squatter control survey or not covered by any land instrument), or the household is an existing tenant of public housing. Separately, around 20 households opt for cash compensation in lieu of rehousing, and their cases are being processed by the Lands Department. Households registered in the freezing survey will be offered the domestic removal allowance irrespective of their eligibility for rehousing or compensation. Moreover, although the Remaining Phase development does not have a concrete timetable at present and the departure timeline of the affectees is expected to be 2023 or after, around 150 eligible households which are affected by the Remaining Phase development and have applied for early departure and surrender of their squatter structures have started to receive offers of rehousing units by the HA and HKHS, and are moving in.

In addition to the payment of ex-gratia allowance, the eligible affected farmers could consider continuing farming under the Special Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme (SALRS) or at the future Agricultural Park (Agri-Park). Up till now, amongst the some 30 farmers affected by the First Phase development, 11 of them have indicated the intention to join the SALRS, whereas two intended to join the Agri-Park and five intended not to continue farming. In order to strive for making the SALRS sites ready for farming when the affected farmers move out in phases starting from the latter half of 2020, we encourage the farmers to indicate their farming intention before December 13 so that we could timely undertake the required follow-up works. In other words, the mentioned date is not a hard deadline for the SALRS application.

According to the Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), there are about 300 licensed dogs in the NDA. Rehoused households who intend to keep their dog(s) in their rehousing flats could apply to the HA under the existing mechanism of keeping companion dog. As at now, the HA has received three applications for keeping companion dogs in Po Shek Wu Estate, amongst which one was approved and two are being processed. In August, we with the support of the Animal Welfare Organisations (AWOs) undertook publicity in the NDA to promote the arrangement for receiving the affected animals. Subsequently, there are affected households handed their pets to the AWOs. Besides, by way of providing financial subsidies, we encourage AWOs to establish animal rehoming centre on government land to help receiving the animals affected by the NDA project. Up till now, subsidy has been granted to one animal rehoming centre which is targeted to operate in the first half of 2020.

The DEVB will continue co-ordinating with the relevant departments and organisations, including the Civil Engineering and Development Department, Lands Department, HA, HKHS, AFCD and Social Welfare Department, etc, to make our best endeavour to handle the matters arising from the NDA project. We will also maintain communication with and offer assistance to the affected households through the NDA Social Service Team.