

Land and Development Advisory Committee holds meeting

At its meeting today (April 4), the Land and Development Advisory Committee was briefed by the Development Bureau (DEVB) on its package of proposals on legislative amendments to streamline and modernise development-related statutory processes.

To expedite the supply of developable land, the DEVB is reviewing the statutory processes under the relevant legislation on town planning, land resumption, reclamation, road works, etc, along five directions, namely: (a) to streamline and shorten certain statutory time limits; (b) to avoid repetitive procedures of a similar nature; (c) to provide an express mandate for government departments to proceed with different procedures in parallel; (d) to rationalise obsolete or ambiguous arrangements; and (e) to streamline miscellaneous processes for more effective usage of public resources. Opportunity is also taken to enhance the enforcement-related provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) for more effective protection of rural areas with high ecological value but subject to development pressure and environmental degradation.

Members welcomed the Government's initiative to tackle the statutory aspect of the development processes through streamlining and expediting procedures to meet the community's ever-rising expectations for speedier supply of housing and land. Members supported the proposals in general, and appreciated the efforts to strike an appropriate balance among the various objectives of streamlining, upholding the professional quality of the processes while ensuring public participation. While supporting the direction of streamlining the arrangements for receiving public views under the Town Planning Ordinance, some members suggested that efforts could be made to enhance timely sharing of public views received and that guidelines should be drawn up to provide an objective basis for determining when and how public hearings would be conducted. Members also suggested the Government to engage and communicate with stakeholders in the relevant sectors to garner their support. Apart from statutory processes, members also urged the Government to continue its efforts in streamlining the administrative processes in different stages of land development, such as public engagement arrangements preceding the statutory planning process for large-scale development projects, administrative circulation procedures involving multiple government departments, etc.

The DEVB would fully take these views into account as it continues to refine the legislative proposals, with the target of introducing legislative amendments into the Legislative Council within this year.