

Land and Development Advisory Committee holds meeting

At its meeting today (November 2), the Land and Development Advisory Committee was briefed on the major initiatives under the Development Bureau (DEVB) in the 2023 Policy Address and the Northern Metropolis Action Agenda.

Members supported the policy direction of the DEVB's initiatives in the 2023 Policy Address to continue with "enhancing quantity", "enhancing speed and efficiency", and "enhancing quality". Members noted that –

(a) On "enhancing quantity", the supply of developable land in the next ten years will reach 3 370 hectares, representing an increase of 90 hectares as compared to the ten-year supply forecast last year. To deliver the land supply target, the DEVB would forge ahead with the Northern Metropolis and the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands, and optimise the use of existing land.

(b) On "enhancing speed and efficiency", following the legislative amendments to streamline statutory development procedures which came into effect on September 1, the DEVB would introduce another bill to the Legislative Council (LegCo) this year to streamline the procedures for extension of land leases. The DEVB would also roll out other administrative streamlining measures such as extending the standard rates arrangement for settling land premiums, and relax the gross floor area exemption to provide flexibility for carparks to be provided aboveground.

(c) On "enhancing quality", to address urban decay and building safety, the DEVB would introduce an amendment bill to LegCo this year to streamline and update the compulsory sale regime, with lower application thresholds targeting at older buildings in districts with more pressing need for redevelopment. Enforcement actions and support for building repairs would be stepped up to enhance building safety. The Buildings Ordinance would be reviewed to strengthen enforcement power and enhance safety of building works, with a view to putting forth amendment proposals within 2024.

Members welcomed the initiatives to step up enforcement powers and registration and disciplinary systems for contractors under the Buildings Ordinance. They suggested the Government to also consider the room for improving/streamlining the administration of the appeal procedures under the Buildings Ordinance, and consult the industry on the proposals. Regarding the lowering of compulsory sale thresholds targeting for designated areas, while noting the policy consideration to channel private sector resources to pursuing redevelopment projects in older districts, members suggested the Government to take into account possible public concerns on disparity arrangement across districts. Members also encouraged the Government to make good use of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands to promote Hong Kong as a vibrant and forward-looking city. The land use review for the Hung Hom Station and nearby sites, as well as the study to encourage private

developments to adopt more elderly-friendly building designs, were supported. Members expressed appreciation to the Government's efforts in implementing streamlining measures for development process in the past year, and looked forward to making contributions to the on-going streamlining exercise.

Members were also briefed by the DEVB's Northern Metropolis Co-ordination Office on the Northern Metropolis Action Agenda promulgated on October 30. Members were supportive of the development blueprint of the Northern Metropolis as set out in the Action Agenda which presented a clearer positioning of the four major zones, major developments, conservation projects, development programme, etc, and contained a specific chapter on how the Government would plan and provide land based on the needs of different industries, in line with the "industry-driven" development approach.

Members agreed that more flexibility should be provided in the land use zonings in the Northern Metropolis to support its evolving development needs, particularly the San Tin Technopole. They supported the "industry-driven" spatial planning that allowed the Northern Metropolis to leverage its locational advantages to grow new and emerging industries including innovation and technology and create synergy with the Mainland. Of equal importance was to build livable communities with good urban design, quality open space and well-designed regional park, as well as state-of-art performing venues to enrich civic life. Members welcomed the idea of building a university town in the Northern Metropolis, which would be conducive to Hong Kong's development as an education hub and facilitate more exchange of talents with the Greater Bay Area and overseas countries. Members suggested that the Government take into account the operational needs of individual industries in detailed planning, and provide necessary support to those affected by the development, including brownfield operators. Members also welcomed the establishment of an exhibition centre to promote the Northern Metropolis and other major development projects.

The DEVB would take into account Members' views when taking forward the various initiatives and work with different sectors to implement them as soon as possible.