

Land use rezoning matter related to University of Hong Kong's proposed construction of Global Innovation Centre in Pok Fu Lam

With regards to a press release issued by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) relating to its proposed Global Innovation Centre today (October 3), the Development Bureau (DEVB)'s remarks on the land use planning matters related to the proposed development are as follows:

The Government welcomes and agrees for the HKU, as the project proponent, to proceed as proposed in the press release to first review its proposed development to suitably revise its development scale and layout in order to specifically respond to stakeholders' views on environment, transport, visual, and other aspects. The HKU should also enhance its communication with the community and maintain positive interactions with stakeholders, in particular to explain the site selection of Pok Fu Lam as the site and how the proposed development would benefit the neighborhood. The Government would continue to provide appropriate support for the project.

The HKU has positioned the Centre to be an upstream deep technology and interdisciplinary research facility. To take forward the HKU's proposed development, the Town Planning Board (TPB) agreed in March this year to rezone a site of about four hectares in Pok Fu Lam from mainly "Green Belt" ("GB") to "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Global Innovation Centre" ("OU(Global Innovation Centre)"). During the two-month exhibition period of the relevant Outline Zoning Plan, the TPB received more than 3 500 representations expressing views on the location of the proposed development, its impacts on the environment, traffic, visual and other aspects, as well as the consultation arrangements etc. The TPB will conduct hearings to consider the representations in early November in accordance with statutory town planning procedures.

In its paper to be issued for the hearings scheduled for early November, the Planning Department (PlanD) will present the representations received earlier. Also, in view of the HKU's latest decision as announced today, the PlanD intends to recommend to the TPB to amend the zoning of the site from the original proposal of "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" to an interim zoning of "Undetermined". This is to enable the HKU to review and revise its development plan and to consult the community first, before the PlanD proposes to the TPB appropriate land use zoning and the development parameters based on a revised proposal as agreed by concerned government bureaux/departments. The TPB would, after hearing views from representers and responses from the Government in November, consider whether to accept the interim zoning of "Undetermined" for the site.

"Undetermined" is an interim land use zoning, which will allow the HKU to review its original plan and adjust it in response to views as expressed by stakeholders. The long-term use and development parameters of the site would be determined after the HKU's submission of a revised proposal, which would go through public consultation and the Government's examination, and be subject to another round of statutory town planning procedures for rezoning. Members of the public would then have the opportunity again to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the TPB directly.

The 2021 Policy Address set out that in order to consolidate Hong Kong's leading position in basic research, the Government has accepted in principle the HKU's proposal to construct the facility for deep technology research in Pok Fu Lam, and hence to reserve a four-hectare site currently zoned "GB" at Pok Fu Lam.