

## LCQ3: Converting the Old Course of the Fanling Golf Course into a public golf course

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (July 5):

Question:

It has been reported that at the recent public hearing of the Town Planning Board on the development of part of the Fanling Golf Course (FGC) site, the Government's representatives expressly pointed out that it was the Government's target to provide about 300 000 public housing units in the next 10 years, and the land identified could build about 360 000 units, which was about 59 000 units more than the target, and such units included about 12 000 units which were originally planned to be built on the FGC. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council, given that the housing production from the land identified exceeds the target, whether the Government has studied converting the Old Course of the FGC into a public golf course, so as to benefit the general public; if it has not, of the reasons for that, and whether it will conduct a study in future?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Member is as follows:

The shortage of land and housing supply is a lingering problem in Hong Kong. Currently, the average waiting time for public rental housing still exceeds five years, so the Government has to make all-out efforts and should by no means take the problem lightly. Planning and formation of land is a task involving a long cycle and some uncertainties. During the process, variations arising from technical assessments, compensation and rehousing issues associated with land resumption and clearance, public opinions, various approval requirements, difficulties in works execution, etc, may be encountered. For this reason, so long as conditions allow, we have to plan for a higher supply over the quantity demanded to provide buffer so that the housing production target can still be met even if individual projects fall short of the original plan.

Although land has been identified to provide some 360 000 public housing units in the next decade which exceed the estimated demand for some 301 000 units in the same period of time, individual projects may not be able to be implemented timely or provide the housing units as planned due to the

aforementioned factors. Therefore, we have to press ahead with all projects in full strength and should not give up any of them too lightly.

Making use a small part of the Fanling Golf Course (FGC) site for public housing development is one of such projects. The earlier approval for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report by the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) is attached with some conditions. In view of this, the Planning Department proposed to the Town Planning Board last month to temporarily rezone the proposed housing development site to "Undetermined", so as to allow the Civil Engineering and Development Department and relevant departments to follow up on the conditions attached to the EIA report, including reviewing the layout design, building height and development density of the housing development; revising the layout design report; preparing a detailed landscape and visual design report; and submitting the relevant reports to the DEP for approval again.

The 32-hectare of land east of Fan Kam Road of the FGC is under short term tenancy, which will be reverted to the Government on September 1 upon expiry of the tenancy by end August. Despite the need to review the development scale and layout of the about 9.5 ha of land for housing development at the northernmost portion of this 32 ha of land to satisfy the approval conditions of the EIA, this housing project is on government land and does not involve any clearance and rehousing issues. Unlike the majority of other development projects which require resumption of private lands and clearance of existing land users, this project remains time-competitive and is still one of our supplying projects for the next decade.

From September 1, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will take over the management of this 32 ha of land, and the majority (about 22 ha) will be used for conservation and passive recreational use for public enjoyment. The remaining portion of land reserved for public housing development will also be managed by the LCSD temporarily. The LCSD will announce details of the opening arrangement later. This 32 ha of land only involves the first to eighth holes of the "Old Course" of the FGC. Given the aforementioned uses, the Government has no intention to use these eight holes as a public golf course.

There are another 10 holes at the "Old Course", with an area of approximately 34 ha. Together with two 18-hole golf courses at the "New Course" and the "Eden Course", they belong to about 140 ha of land west of Fan Kam Road of the FGC. When the Government announced in early 2019 its acceptance of the report of the Task Force on Land Supply, we have clearly stated that there was no plan to alter the use of this 140-ha land. This position has hitherto remained unchanged.

The Government, taking into account the number of golf courses, considers that there is currently no pressing need for having another public golf course. In fact, the Government has previously introduced clauses in the renewed private recreational lease of the 140-ha of land west of Fan Kam Road, requiring the Hong Kong Golf Club to further open up the FGC's sports and recreational facilities for use by more members of the public.