

LCQ7: Planning of the third Core Business District proposed to be built

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Fernando Cheung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (November 7):

Question:

In the Policy Address she delivered last month, the Chief Executive put forward the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, proposing the construction of a number of artificial islands with a total area of 1 700 hectares by reclamation in the Central Waters and the development of the third Core Business District of Hong Kong on the artificial islands. It is estimated that 340 000 jobs will be created by such developments. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the projected total area of commercial sites out of the 1 700 hectares of newly formed land, and how it will assess the demand of various industries for such sites;

(2) of the industries envisaged to be developed on the artificial islands; and

(3) given that the Topical Paper No. 15 on the "Conceptual Spatial Framework" under the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" published by the Planning Department in 2016 proposed the provision of about 1 000 hectares of potentially developable area in the East Lantau Metropolis through reclamation and making better use of the land in Mui Wo, and projected that 200 000 jobs could be provided, of the relevant data on industry researches; how the authorities came up with the estimate of 340 000 jobs as mentioned in the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, and the reasons for this figure being substantially higher than the projection made in 2016?

Reply:

President,

The Lantau Tomorrow is a vision spanning two to three decades. It takes time to realise the vision and studies have to be conducted before relevant details could be firmed up. At present, the estimated population and employment figures under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision are only preliminary targets. Specific development parameters, including the overall detailed planning of the new land, could only be firmed up after completion of further studies and relevant procedures. The first phase will focus on the studies for developing the artificial islands of about 1 000 hectares near Kau Yi Chau. As for the remaining artificial islands of about 700 hectares near Hei Ling Chau and the waters south of Cheung Chau, the studies will collect

technical data for future reference in long-term planning, and there is no specific implementation timetable at the moment.

My consolidated response to the various parts of the Dr Hon Fernando Cheung's question is as follows:

Apart from providing land for housing and ancillary facilities, the proposed 1 000-hectare artificial islands near Kau Yi Chau in the central waters will also be developed into the third Core Business District (CBD3). It could complement the Core Business District (CBD) in Central to form a metropolitan business core. At the same time, it could create synergy with the "Aerotropolis", strengthening the position of Lantau as a "Double Gateway" to the world and connecting the cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Extensive space could also be provided for the development of conventional and emerging industries, consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international business centre while facilitating a more balanced development pattern for Hong Kong. With the anticipated overall economic growth of Hong Kong brought about by being a global financial and business hub as well as the continued development of the financial industry as a result of the strong economic policies of the Central People's Government, it is expected that the demand for office space will increase stably.

The CBD3 will not only provide a vast amount of commercial land to cover the continued shortage of Grade A office space in traditional CBDs, but plenty of employment opportunities to help improve the current situation of uneven spatial distribution of homes and employment in Hong Kong. Being the CBD3, sufficient commercial floor area and jobs have to be offered to achieve economies of scale and cluster effect. By making reference to the scale of the CBD in Central, which covers over 170 hectares with a total commercial floor area of about 4.8 million square metres, we initially consider that the land area of the CBD3 should exceed 100 hectares, providing commercial/office floor area of about four million square metres.

The estimate of jobs under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision is a rough projection based on employment figures in the traditional CBD (i.e. Central District) and the ratio of population to jobs in existing new towns. We estimate that the jobs on the artificial islands can reach 340 000, including about 200 000 from the CBD3, and the remaining from community and commercial facilities that support the population, such as hospitals, schools and local shops. This is consistent with the methodology adopted in the estimation of jobs for the East Lantau Metropolis under the conceptual spatial framework of "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030". Specific development parameters under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, including population and employment figures, are still subject to further studies.