

Opening remarks by SDEV on planning and lands policy areas at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, on planning and lands policy areas at the special meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee today (April 13):

Chairman,

In the 2022-23 financial year, the priority tasks on the Planning and Lands portfolio under the purview of the Development Bureau (DEVB) are:

- (a) Land supply;
- (b) Streamlining development-related procedures; and
- (c) Building a liveable city.

Land Supply

At present, we are pressing ahead with various New Development Area (NDA) projects. The 130-hectare reclamation works in the Tung Chung East extension area have been progressing well since the commencement of works in end-2017. Since 2020, six formed sites have been made available for development. For NDAs, including Fanling North/Kwu Tung North and Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen, the site formation works for their first-phase development commenced in 2019 and 2020 respectively, with delivery of land for housing production in phases from 2021. We will soon seek funding approval from the LegCo for the first batch of site formation and infrastructure works for the Yuen Long South Development.

As regards the new land development projects proposed under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy, we commenced in October 2021 the studies for the San Tin Technopole and the Lo Wu/Man Kam To Comprehensive Development Node, which are anticipated to complete in two to three years. For the expansion of the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen NDA to cover the Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai areas and the expansion of the Kwu Tung North NDA to cover the Ma Tso Lung area, the relevant studies will commence within this year and are expected to complete in about 24 months.

In addition to the studies related to the artificial islands in the Central Waters we are pressing ahead with, we aim to seek funding approval from the LegCo within this year to start the planning and engineering study for the Lung Kwu Tan reclamation and the Tuen Mun West area. It is hoped that the reclamation projects can commence in 2027 or even earlier.

To make optimal use of scarce land resources, we are reviewing various sites with different planned uses. We commenced a new round of review on

"Green Belt (GB)" sites to examine the potential of around 300 hectares of land zoned "GB" for housing or other uses. Subject to the preliminary findings to be available in the middle of this year, technical studies to further ascertain the feasibility of development will follow.

Streamlining Procedures

On streamlining procedures, our work will cover legislative amendments and streamlining of administrative procedures. Regarding legislative amendments, we submitted the legislative proposals to the LegCo Panel on Development on March 22. I would like to express my gratitude to members again for their support for the overall direction and the many valuable comments on the proposals. We seek to introduce the amendment bills to the LegCo within this year.

Building a Liveable City

As for building a liveable city, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has, in recent years, introduced the "planning-led" approach in pursuing urban renewal. The District Study for Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok (YMDS) completed in 2021 has mapped out the "district-based" Master Urban Renewal Concept Plans with development nodes and new planning tools. We are making preparation to initiate the first batch of amendments to the relevant Outline Zoning Plans and come up with the planning guidelines within this year. Based on the experience gained from the YMDS, the URA will soon conduct similar district planning studies for Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po.

In the face of the rapid ageing of building stock, we need to tap private market forces to expedite urban renewal. In this connection, we are examining ways to lower the compulsory sale thresholds and improve the operation of the regime under the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance. We are striving to come up with proposals around the third quarter of this year.

Lastly, on harbourfront development, we will continue to open up new harbourfront promenades and open space, as well as strive to improve harbourfront facilities, including opening up the Hoi Sham Park Extension in Kowloon City and the first promenade section at the Kai Tak former runway, which is implemented under private development, within this year as soon as possible. I would also like to extend my thanks to members of the Public Works Subcommittee for their recent support for the funding for the project Open space at Eastern Street North, Sai Ying Pun.

Chairman, the above is a brief report. We will be happy to respond to any further questions that Members may wish to raise.