

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 15):

Chairman,

In the 2021-22 financial year, the priority tasks on the Planning and Lands portfolio under the purview of the Development Bureau (DEVB) are:

- (a) Land supply;
- (b) Safety of drainage systems of buildings; and
- (c) Building a liveable city.

Land Supply

On land supply, we will continue to pursue the multi-pronged land supply strategy. At present, we are pressing ahead with the development of the Tung Chung New Town Extension and the Kwu Tung North/Fanling North, Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen and Yuen Long South New Development Areas (NDAs). The first batch of public housing units is targeted for gradual completion from 2024 to 2028.

Over the past few years, we have identified 210 sites with potential for housing development. Rezoning has been completed or commenced for 70 per cent of them. It is estimated that about 40 per cent of the public housing units to be completed in the next 10 years will come from these rezoned sites.

For brownfield sites, we have promulgated the results of the second-phase review on scattered brownfield sites. In the two-phase review, we have shortlisted a total of 12 brownfield clusters for higher density public housing development in the short to medium term. Taking into account these brownfield clusters, the NDAs, and other ongoing efforts to develop brownfield sites already announced, a total of over 860 hectares of brownfield sites would be gradually developed for housing and other land uses, accounting for over 50 per cent of the total brownfield area in Hong Kong.

Furthermore, we will soon apply for funding from the LegCo for investigation and design of the San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node, and will commence as soon as possible a planning and engineering study for the remaining phase of development of New Territories North (NTN) (covering NTN

New Town and the Man Kam To Logistics Corridor).

Apart from implementing various land supply projects, we are committed to expediting land supply process by streamlining procedures. To this end, the Development Projects Facilitation Office was established under the DEVB in December last year to facilitate the processing of planning, lease modification/land exchange applications and more for larger-scale private residential development projects leading up to the commencement of works, with a view to ensuring effective processing of development applications.

Moreover, the remit of the steering group tasked with streamlining development control under the DEVB has been expanded to cover approving departments other than those under the DEVB, with a view to reviewing more comprehensively different aspects involved in the development approval process.

Safety of Drainage Systems of Buildings

On the safety of draining systems of buildings, in response to rising public concerns, we have sought funding of \$1 billion through the Appropriation Bill 2021 to establish the Building Drainage System Repair Subsidy Scheme. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Members' support at the Panel on Development earlier regarding the scheme. Subject to funding approval, we will launch the scheme in May this year. It is expected that the funding scheme would benefit owners of over 3 000 old domestic buildings in repairing or upgrading the drainage systems of their buildings. The Buildings Department will issue a practice note this month to promulgate various enhancements concerning drainage systems; the industry and owners are encouraged to adopt the new design standards in repair works.

Building a Liveable City

On building a liveable city, a major programme launched this year is the Invigorating Island South initiative, which aims at developing the Southern District into a better place to live, work and have fun. The Invigorating Island South Office under the DEVB commenced operation in February this year. It is now actively listening to local views for formulating a work plan on the way ahead.

In addition, we will continue to pursue harbourfront enhancement with the earmarked funding of \$6.5 billion. We will adopt an incremental approach so that harbourfront sites may be opened as early as possible. We will also seek funding from the LegCo for commencing the construction works of two major projects, namely the boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor and the harbourfront park at Eastern Street North in Sai Ying Pun this year.

Thank you.