

PlanD promulgates recommendations of second phase review on brownfield sites

The Planning Department (PlanD) has promulgated the recommendations of the second phase review on brownfield sites, the Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (March 31).

Among the 290 hectares of brownfield sites reviewed in the second phase:

- (a) 62 ha are being/will be covered by other studies, have development under planning, or are areas already zoned for development; and
- (b) 11 ha have been shortlisted as having potential for public housing development in the short to medium term.

The 62 ha in (a) above include 12 ha incorporated in the revised study boundary for the San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node, which is being planned as a new development area supporting an estimated housing yield of 31 000 units together with economic and community facilities; 18 ha to be covered in a land use review study for the Ngau Tam Mei area to unleash the development opportunities to be brought about by the proposed Northern Link; and some 32 ha falling within areas already zoned for various development uses.

Subject to further study, it is roughly estimated that the 18 ha of scattered brownfield sites in the Ngau Tam Mei area may contribute to the production of a mix of over 6 000 public and private housing units in due course, assuming that the area would all be used for housing developments.

The 11 ha shortlisted for public housing development in (b) above involve four brownfield clusters in Sheung Shui and Yuen Long. When amalgamated with adjacent land parcels, the areas to be examined for public housing are about 31 ha in total (see Annex). At this stage, it is roughly estimated that these four clusters and the adjoining land would produce over 10 000 public housing units in the short to medium term.

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) aims to kick start engineering feasibility studies (EFSs) on these four shortlisted clusters and adjoining land parcels progressively starting from the second quarter of this year to establish the development parameters.

"At this stage, we expect to transform them into spade-ready sites in about six years or less, through completing EFSs, rezoning, detailed design, land resumption, clearance, land decontamination and site formation works, and handing over of sites to the relevant authority for construction of public housing," a spokesperson for the DEVB said.

Taking into account the above review recommendations and other ongoing

efforts to develop brownfield sites already announced, a total of over 860 ha of brownfield sites would be gradually redeveloped for housing and other land uses, accounting for over 54 per cent of all the brownfield sites in the New Territories and reflecting the importance of redeveloping brownfield sites as a key component of the multi-pronged land supply strategy. This aggregate figure has not yet taken into account the 18 ha of scattered brownfield sites that are located in the vicinity of the proposed Ngau Tam Mei Station along the Northern Link and are subject to land use review.

"That said, it would be unrealistic to expect an outright eradication of brownfield sites as they are a source of space for industrial or storage operations that support different industries of our economy and affordable or compatible premises cannot easily be found at developed areas.

"Brownfield sites permissible under the planning regime may continue to be used for open-air operations. On the other hand, we will continue to strengthen enforcement actions under the planning and land regimes against unauthorised brownfield operations," the spokesperson said.

The Government has today circulated a paper reporting the results of the second phase review to the Development Panel of the Legislative Council.

The first phase review covering 160 ha of brownfield sites closer to existing infrastructure was completed in 2019. Eight brownfield clusters, with a total size of 36 ha, and expanded to 63 ha through amalgamation with adjoining parcels, were shortlisted for potential public housing developments capable of producing over 20 000 public housing units based on rough estimates. The CEDD has progressively commenced EFSs for these clusters, located in Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and Tai Po, since June 2020.