

Approved Mid-levels East Outline Zoning Plan amended

The Town Planning Board today (February 2) announced amendments to the approved Mid-levels East Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

The amendments mainly involve (i) rezoning a site at 15 and 24 Stubbs Road and 7 Tung Shan Terrace from "Residential (Group C)1" ("R(C)1"), "Government, Institution or Community (4)" and "Green Belt" to "Residential (Group C)3" and stipulating Sub-areas on the OZP to take forward the decision of the Metro Planning Committee of the Town Planning Board on a Section 12A application for a proposed residential development with a privately-initiated residential care home for the elderly; and (ii) rezoning a site at 18 Stubbs Road from "Comprehensive Development Area" ("CDA") to "Residential (Group C)4" and a strip of Government land from "CDA" and "R(C)1" to area shown as 'Road' to reflect the as-built conditions of various sites.

The Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP are amended to take into account the above amendments. Opportunity is also taken to update the general information of various land use zones and the planning scheme area, where appropriate

The draft Mid-levels East OZP No. S/H12/13, incorporating the amendments, is available for public inspection during office hours at (i) the Secretariat of the Town Planning Board, (ii) the Planning Enquiry Counters, (iii) the Hong Kong District Planning Office and (iv) the Wan Chai Home Affairs Enquiry Centre.

Any person may make written representations in respect of the amendments to the Secretary of the Town Planning Board on or before April 2. Any person who intends to make a representation is advised to read the Town Planning Board Guidelines No. 29C on "Submission and Processing of Representations and Further Representations" (TPB PG-No. 29C).

Submission of a representation should comply with the requirements set out in TPB PG-No. 29C. In particular, the representer should take note of the following:

* If the representer fails to provide his or her full name and the first four alphanumeric characters of his or her Hong Kong identity card or passport number as required under TPB PG-No. 29C, the representation submitted shall be treated as not having been made; and

* The Secretariat of the Town Planning Board reserves the right to require the representer to provide identity proof for verification.

The Guidelines and the submission form are available at the above locations (i) and (ii) and the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Copies of the draft Mid-levels East OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the OZP can be viewed on the Town Planning Board's website (www.tpb.gov.hk).

Four approved outline zoning plans referred back for replacement by new plan/amendments

The Town Planning Board (the Board) announced today (February 2) that the Secretary for Development has referred to the Board the approved San Tin Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) for replacement by a new plan and three approved OZPs for amendments, namely the approved Pak Shek Kok (East) OZP, the approved Tin Shui Wai OZP and the approved Ngau Tam Mei OZP, to reflect the latest land use proposals.

The new plan and the amended OZPs will be exhibited for public inspection under the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The San Tin OZP and the Ngau Tam Mei OZP were last approved by the Chief Executive in Council in December 2006, and the Pak Shek Kok (East) OZP and the Tin Shui Wai OZP were last approved by the Chief Executive in Council in December 2014 and April 2022 respectively.

A dry and warm January with a very cold interlude

With the northeast monsoon over the south China coast generally weaker than normal for most of the time in the month, January 2024 was overall warmer than usual in Hong Kong despite a very cold episode in the latter part of the month. The monthly mean maximum temperature of 20.5 degrees, monthly mean temperature of 17.9 degrees and monthly mean minimum temperature of 15.9 degrees were 1.8 degrees, 1.4 degrees and 1.3 degrees above their corresponding normals and respectively the sixth, one of the sixth and one of the seventh highest on record for January. The month was also drier than usual with a total rainfall of 6.7 millimetres, about 20 per cent of the normal figure of 33.2 millimetres.

Under the influence of the northeast monsoon and the subsequent weak replenishments, apart from a few light rain patches on January 8, 9 and 11, the weather of Hong Kong was generally fine and mild during the day on the first 16 days of the month. It was also very dry during the day on January 13 and 14. With abundant sunshine, the temperature at the Observatory rose to a maximum of 24.8 degrees on the afternoon of January 15, the highest of the month.

Affected by a cloud band over the coast of Guangdong, it was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches on January 17. With the moderation of the northeast monsoon, apart from a few light rain patches at first on January 18, it was generally fine and warm during the day from January 18 to 20. Meanwhile, a cold front over the northern part of southern China moved across the coast of Guangdong on the night of January 20. Locally, winds strengthened gradually from the north and temperatures fell appreciably with sunny intervals the next day. Under the influence of the associated intense winter monsoon and with a broad band of clouds covering southern China, there were a few rain patches with local temperatures falling further on January 22 and 23. The weather became very cold on January 23 with temperatures at the Observatory dropping to a minimum of 6.3 degrees on that morning, the lowest of the month. Moreover, the temperature at Tai Mo Shan fell to a minimum of -2.9 degrees on that day. The weather of Hong Kong remained mainly cloudy and very cold on the morning of January 24. There were also icing reports at Tai Mo Shan on January 23 and 24. After a cold morning on January 25, there were sunny intervals during the day with local temperatures recovering slightly from January 25 to 27. Under the influence of a weak replenishment of the northeast monsoon, local weather turned cold again with a few rain patches on the morning of January 28. Affected by an easterly airstream and an upper-air disturbance, it was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches on January 29 and 30. There were also a few mist patches on January 30. Under the influence of a humid maritime airstream, it was mainly cloudy and foggy with light rain patches on the last day of the month. The visibility in the harbour once fell below 1 000 metres on that morning.

There was no tropical cyclone over the South China Sea and the western North Pacific in January 2024.

Details of issuance and cancellation of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal for January are tabulated in Table 2.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-

contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on February 1 to noon today (February 2), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 224 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 28 667 samples of food imported from Japan (including 19 194 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 8 070 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Traveller jailed for smuggling incense tree wood chips (with photo)

A traveller who illegally exported incense tree wood chips was convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for 30 months by the District Court today (February 2).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that an outbound male traveller heading to the Mainland, aged 38, was intercepted by Customs officers at Shenzhen Bay Control Point, and about 9 kilograms of incense tree (*Aquilaria sinensis*) wood chips was seized from his backpack on March 13, 2023. The estimated market value of the incense wood chips was about \$1,350,000.

Upon investigation by the AFCD, the man was charged with illegally exporting endangered species under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (PESAPO) (Cap. 586). The AFCD also applied to the court for an increased sentence under the Organized and Serious Crime Ordinance (OSCO) (Cap. 455). He was convicted at the court today. The court set 36-month imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing with 12 months' reduction for his guilty plea. The AFCD applied to raise the sentence by 25 per cent in accordance with OSCO. The defendant was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for 30 months.

This is the first time for the AFCD to apply for an enhanced sentence under OSCO for a relevant offence under PESAPO since the inclusion of certain offences under PESAPO to Schedule 1 of OSCO since August 2021.

All *Aquilaria* species, including the native incense tree, are listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and are regulated under PESAPO in Hong Kong.

According to PESAPO, any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance commits an offence and will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction with the specimens forfeited.

The spokesman also pointed out that according to the Forests and Countryside Ordinance (Cap. 96), felling of trees on government land without permission is an offence. The maximum penalty is a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for one year.

The spokesman appealed to the public not to smuggle agarwood or fell incense trees illegally. To enquire about the importation or exportation of endangered species and to report suspected illegal cases, the public can call the AFCD at 1823 or visit the website www.cites.hk.

