

Town Planning Board decided to amend the zoning of the proposed housing site at Fanling Golf Course to "Undetermined" temporarily

Town Planning Board (TPB) continued today (July 24) the deliberation on the draft Fanling/Sheung Shui Extension Area Outline Zoning Plan No. S/FSSE/1 (the draft OZP). After thorough deliberation, TPB decided to accept the recommendation of the Planning Department (PlanD) to partially meet some of the representations by amending the zoning of the 9.5 hectare (ha) proposed housing site in the northernmost portion on the draft OZP (involving 3 holes of the Old Course of Fanling Golf Course) from "Residential (Group A)" ("R(A)") to "Undetermined" ("U") temporarily, in order to allow the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) to review the layout design, building height and development density of the public housing development. The zoning of "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Conservation cum Recreation" ("OU(CR)") for the remaining 22 ha of land remains unchanged in accordance with original proposal.

TPB was fully aware of the controversy involved in the draft OZP and had thoroughly considered the 6,787 representations and 51 comments and the oral submissions of about 190 attendees in the five hearing sessions, as well as the views and responses of PlanD and relevant departments, and held discussion in the afternoon today before arriving at the decision.

TPB also noted the Hong Kong Golf Club (the Club) has applied for judicial review in respect of the decision on the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. As stated in the Government's earlier press release, it would not affect the TPB proceeding with the statutory planning procedures. Instead of retaining the current high-density development zoning of "R(A)", TPB considered amending the zoning of the proposed housing site to "U" a more prudent arrangement from planning perspective taking into account the need to address the conditions set out in the EIA approval, for such arrangement could allow CEDD to review the layout design, building height and development intensity of the housing development, and with the subsequent approval of the Director of Environmental Protection on the revised scheme, PlanD could recommend to TPB the appropriate land use zoning and development parameters for the housing site.

Majority of TPB Members agreed that the 9.5 ha of land was suitable for public housing development taking into account that: (i) with the housing site being located at the fringe of Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town and in proximity to Sheung Shui MTR Station and several existing public housing estates in the North District, the proposed public housing development was compatible with the surrounding areas and could benefit from the existing transport and community facilities; (ii) albeit that CEDD was required to

review the layout design, building height and development intensity to satisfy conditions attached to DEP's approval of the EIA report, the various technical assessments conducted for the draft OZP had largely confirmed the overall technical feasibility of the proposed housing development at the site; and (iii) while the original target of population intake in 2029 would be affected, the proposed public housing was still an important source of housing supply in the next decade. Under the multi-pronged land supply strategy, the Government would conduct large-scale resumption of agricultural land and brownfield sites in the Northern Metropolis for development. Unlike these projects which would involve resumption of private land and rehousing/compensation for the current occupiers, the proposed public housing development on this 9.5 ha of government land remained time-competitive for no resumption, clearance or rehousing issues would be involved.

TPB noted that the New Course and Eden Course, each of a standard course with 18 holes, and the Old Course with the remaining 10 holes located to the west of Fan Kam Road, which amount to a total area of 140 ha, will still be kept by the Club, and the New Course and Eden Course will continue to be used for holding international tournament in future. Besides, upon the return of the 32 ha of land to the Government with effect from September 1, 2023, the future management of the area will be put under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The Government has also stated clearly that for future organisation of international tournaments in Fanling Golf Course, based on actual need and if circumstance permits, it is willing to let the Club temporarily use the land (including the 9.5 ha site, if not yet required for housing development) for back up purpose.

The zoning of the 22 ha of land in the southern part of the OZP area for "OU(CR)" is intended for conservation and passive recreational uses which are compatible with the conservation intention. TPB urged the Government to properly conserve the natural landscape and ecological features of the area, and as far as possible, to open the area to public for passive recreational use whilst not affecting the intention for conservation.

TPB will exhibit, under section 6C of the Town Planning Ordinance (the Ordinance), the proposed amendment of rezoning the 9.5 ha of land to "U" on August 4 for public inspection for three weeks during which further representations can be made. Upon receipt of further representations, TPB will consider them in accordance with the Ordinance and, after making a decision, will submit the draft plan to the Chief Executive in Council for approval by the end of the statutory time limit of end November.

Lastly, TPB pointed out that any land supply option would affect certain sector of the community and groups in different extent. The proposal made above has already struck a balance among various demands. With the support and mutual understanding of the society and the stakeholders or groups, the housing land problem could be resolved.