

Transcript of remarks by Acting CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (June 26):

Reporter: Mr Cheung, why is the Government withdrawing the Yuen Long footbridge plan from the FC (Finance Committee) agenda, and what is the rationale behind? And also, a second question on the vacant property tax. How are you going to face if there are any legal challenge like challenging the Government's decision on that?

Acting Chief Executive: First of all, the Yuen Long footbridge. In fact, we are not withdrawing the item from the Finance Committee. It's purely that we are really talking about prioritising in order to provide more time to consult. We're not talking about taking it out at all. The need for a footbridge in Yuen Long is not debatable. We all agree, everybody agrees, that there is a need for a footbridge there to facilitate the pedestrian flow and that also there is a need locally in Yuen Long. Of course, there is a difference in opinion between professional bodies and some local groups. The Government, of course, will put up the proposal to the Finance Committee. Now, we are going through a stage because of difference in opinion. I think we need to get together, put our heads together, and consult more thoroughly, explain our position more thoroughly, in order to reach common ground. That's why the Highways Department colleagues will be going down to the Yuen Long District Council at lunchtime to explain fully the circumstances, the rationale, for the proposal and also to try to bridge the gap, as it were, between various parties. We hope to find a way forward that's acceptable to all sides. It's a win-win situation that we are talking about.

On the second question, the vacancy tax, of course, the Chief Executive has promised to update the community on the latest position of vacancy tax by the end of this month. We still have a few days left, so let's be patient.

Reporter: Are you concerning the legal challenges? I was asking about legal challenges.

Acting Chief Executive: We can't comment on hypothetical questions at the moment. Wait until the Government has made the announcement on the issue first. OK?

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)