

Transcript of remarks by SDEV at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (December 10):

Reporter: Could you just briefly explain why you think the streamlined procedures will not undermine the functions of LegCo?

Secretary for Development: I truly believe that our streamlined proposals will not pre-empt the power of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in terms of whether or not we should proceed with a particular development project. This is because experience tells us that by the time we approach the LegCo Finance Committee for funding to proceed with the works, by that stage, which is rather a final stage, normally the concerns of the LegCo members will be on technical details, like whether we have sufficient facilities to support the new population, whether the timing of the whole construction schedule is reasonable, and whether we have done our best to respond to the concerns of the local residents affected. These are normally the concerns. And normally, if LegCo members really do not want the government to proceed with a certain development project requiring resumption, they will actually voice out their concerns years before we proceed to that stage of seeking funding approval. For example, if we are going to propose that we are going to develop a new town called Yuen Long South, then a few years before we seek the funding approval for works, we would have gone to the LegCo Development Panel to share with LegCo members our initial idea of the development parameters and how we propose to use the land. And secondly, often we also need their approval for funding for us to proceed with a detailed study when we are talking about a large-scale project. So by the time we approach them on the study, if they really do not want us to proceed, they would already have voiced out their concerns. And most importantly, when we talk about resumption, we have a block vote, that is a vote of funds which the Finance Committee approves each year, for us to deal with compensation, we use that fund to pay out compensation to those affected. And Finance Committee will ask questions on what sort of projects, what sort of resumption projects we have in mind for the next year, so at that point we will also be accountable for what we are going to do, and LegCo members will certainly voice out their objections if they see problems of our proceeding.

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