

## **COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD**

### **Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee**

#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 This paper aims to inform Members of the major issues discussed at the Country Parks Committee (CPC) meeting held on 4 June 2024.

#### **2. Implementation of a Large-Scale Floating Solar Farm at Plover Cove Reservoir in Plover Cove Country Park**

2.1 The Government is committed to exploring the wider use of renewable energy at suitable government venues and public facilities, including development of solar energy systems in reservoirs. The Water Supplies Department (WSD) had earlier installed small-scale floating photovoltaic systems at three reservoirs as pilot projects and commissioned a consultancy to conduct a feasibility study on the implementation of a large-scale floating solar farm (FSF) at Plover Cove Reservoir (PCR). It was proposed to implement a large-scale FSF with a power generation capacity of 5 megawatts (MW) at PCR in Plover Cove Country Park (PCCP) (the Project) and the electricity generated would be supplied to the nearby Harbour Island Raw Water Pumping Station. The WSD and the consultant presented at the meeting the impacts of the Project on the environment, country park facilities and visitors, as well as the respective mitigation measures, and sought Members' views on the proposed works to be conducted within the area of PCCP.

2.2 Members generally supported the Project. Members were concerned that the installation of solar panels on the water surface would block out sunlight and affect the ecology of the water body and water quality, while the glare from the solar panels would affect birds and bats. The WSD stated that the whole FSF would only occupy 0.32% of the total surface area of PCR and there would be gaps between the panels to allow the sunlight to penetrate into the water. According to the ecological survey, the proposed areas for placing the solar panels were of a relatively lower ecological value and the Project was expected to have insignificant impact on the aquatic ecosystems. Anti-reflective solar panels would be used in the Project. Based on the experience gained from the three pilot projects, the installation of the solar panels had no adverse impact on birds, but they have instead provided a habitat for the birds. The materials proposed to be used in the Project would also comply with international standards and norms as well as the Waterworks Ordinance to ensure that the water quality would not be affected.

2.3 A Member enquired about the reason for selecting PCR as the site and the land restoration arrangement after completion of the cable laying works. The WSD considered PCR a suitable site, having regard to the distance between the water treatment works/water pumping station and the reservoir, and the presence of other renewable energy facilities in other waterworks installations. The cable laying works would be carried out in phases and the land would be reinstated as early as possible after completion of the works, to ensure that there would be no permanent adverse impacts on the country park. Regarding Members' concerns about the feasibility of expanding the Project to generate more electricity, the WSD stated that various factors needed to be considered and balanced in determining the scale of the Project, including the use of the electricity generated, limitations of the existing grid and construction costs. The evaluation result indicated that adopting a capacity of 5 MW would be most appropriate and could achieve economies of scale. A Member proposed to study the sale of excess electricity generated by the Project to power companies. The WSD said it would continue to study the feasibility of the proposal with the power companies through the Environment and Ecology Bureau.

### **3. Site Evaluation and Recommendation for Setting Up a Tree Top Adventure Facility in Country Parks**

3.1 At its meeting on 21 July 2023, the AFCD and Consultants introduced the baseline review and conceptual designs of the Tree Top Adventure (TTA) facilities in three potential sites in country parks. Upon thorough evaluation of all potential sites, the Consultants recommended establishing a TTA facility at the Pak Tam Chung (PTC) site. The Consultants presented at the meeting a set of criteria for site evaluation, elaborated on the strengths and weaknesses of each potential site, and summarised the views collected from public and stakeholder engagement activities.

3.2 Members raised no objection to the proposal of establishing a TTA facility at the PTC site. In response to a Member's concerns over tree maintenance and the safety of the facility, the Consultants explained that an arborist would conduct assessment of each of the trees concerned. Only a limited number of healthy trees on-site would be used for the TTA facility under the current design. The facility was non-invasive to the trees and would not affect their growth. Besides, a Member was concerned about the carrying capacity of the existing supporting facilities at the PTC site and the possible overlap of the target clientele of the TTA facility with that of Pak Tam Chung Holiday Camp. The AFCD indicated that, according to estimation, the daily attendance at the TTA facility should fall within the carrying capacity of the site. Unlike the positioning of Pak Tam Chung Holiday Camp, the TTA facility aimed at incorporating elements of TTA into a

spectrum of nature-based activities in order to enable the public to experience the natural environment, and so their targets would be different.

3.3 A Member opined that the current design of the facility did not offer a sense of excitement and was too small in scale, failing to fully utilise the unique characteristics and expansive environment of the country park. The AFCD said that the TTA facility would be operated at the PTC site on a pilot basis to evaluate the popularity of establishing similar facilities in country parks. The Consultants would examine in detail the feedback from Members and the public for refining the design and formulating a suitable mode of operation in the next phase. The AFCD would report the progress to the CPC in due course.

#### **4. Presentation**

4.1 This paper is prepared for Members' information.

Country and Marine Parks Authority  
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