

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 12 November 2019.

2. Proposal on Enhancement of Public Toilets in Country Parks

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has commissioned a consultancy study on “Review of Toilet Facilities in Various Country Parks in Hong Kong, Package 1” in August 2018 with an aim to studying and investigating the options for enhancing the hygiene, convenience, safety and comfort of the toilets in country parks (hereinafter referred to as the Study). In the meeting, the consultants of the Study briefed members on the findings and evaluation on the options for enhancing toilets in country parks and the preliminary recommendations for the ten toilets selected for enhancement. Besides, AFCD introduced the measures that were currently on trial to enhance the facilities and services of toilets in country parks.

2.2 Members appreciated AFCD’s efforts on enhancing the country park toilet facilities and services and they made some suggestions to AFCD, such as to increase the size of toilet compartments, install hooks in each compartments for the convenience of hikers with rucksack, provide light to the toilets as far as possible, etc. AFCD responded positively to these suggestions and indicated that careful considerations would be given to the enhancement of the toilets in country parks.

2.3 Regarding the preliminary recommendations for the ten selected toilets under the Study, members were most interested in the composting sawdust toilet. AFCD indicated that such recommendation was intended to address the issue of inadequate water and electricity supplies for toilet facilities at remote sites of country parks. The Department would conduct a pilot test at a picnic site in Tai Lam Country Park to determine if this toilet option was viable. The Department would also compare the pilot

test results with the performance of other on-trial options, such as the waterless toilets provided at Lo Kei Wan campsites before implementing in a larger scale. Moreover, the Department would also look into another solar-powered toilet, the design of which had won “the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Reinvent the Toilet Challenge” as suggested by a member in the meeting.

3. Planning Proposal for Implementation of a 100kW Floating Photovoltaic System at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir by Water Supplies Department

3.1 The Water Supplies Department (WSD) briefed members on the proposed installation of a 100kW Floating Photovoltaic (PV) System at Tai Lam Chung Reservoir in Tai Lam Country Park and sought members’ views.

3.2 Members supported WSD’s proposal which promoted the development of renewable energy. They advised WSD to seize the opportunity given by this third floating PV project, to strengthen education and publicity about this green technology and raise public awareness of energy conservation and environmental protection. They also suggested WSD to consider studying the potential ecological impacts on the aquatic ecosystem in reservoirs. Moreover, members recommended that WSD should carry out a comprehensive survey to collect the views and opinions of members of the public on the three pilot floating PV systems. They believed that it would provide useful information for WSD to improve or expand the systems in the future.

4. Any Other Business

(a) Country Park Enclave in Yi Tung Shan

4.1 AFCD informed members that in the 2018 Policy Address, the Government committed to explore the enhancement of the protection of enclaves in Lantau, including the feasibility of incorporating them into country parks. To take forward the policy initiative, AFCD conducted a preliminary assessment on the suitability of incorporating Yi Tung Shan Enclave into the surrounding country parks, based on the revised principles and criteria for designating country parks endorsed by Country and Marine Parks Board (CMPB) in May 2011. The preliminary assessment showed that Yi Tung Shan Enclave remained largely natural and intact. The existing land uses and the overall tranquil environment of the enclave were compatible with the surrounding Lantau South Country Park and Lantau North Country Park. Besides, it had

considerable conservation value, landscape and aesthetic value, as well as recreation potential. Subject to the views of the CPC, the Country and Marine Parks Authority would consult the relevant key stakeholders, including the stone chalet owners and hiking groups, and continue to assess the suitability of incorporating the country park enclave in Yi Tung Shan. A management plan for the long-term management and maintenance of the enclave would also be formulated should the enclave be considered suitable for incorporation into country park after assessment.

4.2 Members recommended AFCD to further explore the incorporation of Yi Tung Shan Enclave into country park for better protection of the natural landscape of the area. Besides, they considered that apart from the natural and landscape resources, the stone chalets in Yi Tung Shan Enclave also deserved protection. They suggested AFCD to contact the owners of the stone chalets and relevant groups to explore opportunities of conserving and revitalising the stone chalets through proper management. Members also hoped that AFCD would continue to work on the remaining country park enclaves.

(b) Letters from Mr Ruy Barretto S.C. and The Hong Kong Countryside Foundation about the Proposed Robin's Nest Country Park

4.3 The letters from Mr Ruy Barretto S.C. and the Hong Kong Countryside Foundation (HKCF) addressed to CMPB, among others, were received in October 2019. They were about the proposed Robin's Nest Country Park (RNCP) and were discussed by CPC in this meeting. Members were informed that Mr Barretto was not satisfied with CMPB's decision in July 2019 regarding his request to present at CMPB, hence he requested to meet with the Secretary for Environment in his latest letter. CPC members were advised that Environment Bureau and AFCD would deal with his request separately. On the other hand, the request of HKCF for an opportunity to present their ideas and proposals to CMPB was deliberated in more details.

4.4 Members took the view that in the 70th CMPB meeting on 16 July 2019, CMPB members already had a thorough understanding and discussion of the major views and concerns of Green Groups, including those of Mr Ruy Barretto S.C. and HKCF, and the considerations of AFCD in delineating the boundary of the proposed RNCP. In addition, CMPB members already expressed their support to the commencement of the statutory procedures for designating the proposed RNCP. Concurring with the discussion at the 70th CMPB meeting, CPC members considered that the substantial extension of RNCP boundary suggested by the Green Groups would require another detailed study and extensive public consultation, which might jeopardise the

designation process and risk wasting the previous efforts on consulting the stakeholders. In addition, AFCD had adjusted the boundary of the proposed RNCP to minimise the buffer area between the proposed RNCP and permitted burial grounds/private lands and to include a patch of secondary woodland between Shek Chung Au and Tong To Ping Tsuen.

4.5 On top of the above considerations, members were also aware that according to the statutory procedure for designation of a new country park under the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208), there would be opportunity for members of the public to inspect the draft map of the proposed RNCP. Any person aggrieved by the draft map could send a written statement of his/her objection, and the objector would be invited to attend a special meeting of CMPB at which the objections received would be heard. Therefore, they recommended that CMPB needed not accede to the request from HKCF for presentation to CMPB at this stage.

5. Advice Sought

5.1 Members are invited to note the content of this paper and consider CPC's recommendation provided in paragraph 4.5 with regard to the request from HKCF for presentation to CMPB.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
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