

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 24 November 2023.

2. Proposed Works for Route 11 (Section between Yuen Long and North Lantau) and the Tuen Mun Bypass in Tai Lam Country Park

2.1 The Highways Department (HyD) proposed to carry out two road projects, namely Route 11 and the Tuen Mun Bypass, within Tai Lam Country Park area to improve the traffic conditions of the roads connecting North West New Territories and the urban areas, as well as between the major roads in Tuen Mun and Lantau Island. The HyD had conducted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies. At the meeting, the HyD introduced the alignment, the environmental impacts of the projects and various mitigation measures, and sought Members' views on the potential impacts of the proposed works on Tai Lam Country Park.

2.2 Members generally supported the two projects and opined that they could alleviate traffic congestion. In response to the impacts of the projects on air quality and water bodies, the consultants explained that relevant assessments had been conducted in the EIA studies with the result showing that the impacts caused by the projects would be within the established standards. During the construction period, suitable construction methods would be adopted to minimise the adverse impacts and monitoring would be carried out. Members were concerned about the impact of underground blasting works on country park visitors and whether at-grade works would be carried out in the country park area. The HyD and the consultants said that the projects would only involve controlled blasting. The impacts on the nearby environment and sensitive receivers would be assessed before commencement of the works with a view to reducing the vibration and the impacts generated to an acceptable level. The country park area would not be occupied during the construction stage. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the HyD would be required to reassess the projects in case impacts on the country park other than those covered in the EIA report were noted in future.

2.3 Members suggested connecting the existing hiking trails to the traffic interchanges of Route 11 upon its completion, as well as the Lam Tei Quarry to be developed later. The AFCD explained that Route 11 works would be at some distance from the main access points to the country park. It was understood that the HyD had no plan to develop new connecting roads to the country park at present. The government was undertaking several planning and development studies on the land near Lam Tei Quarry. The AFCD would explore with relevant departments on the feasibility of extending Fu Tei Country Trail to the area when appropriate.

3. Removal of 132-kV Overhead Lines and Pylons for the Bowen and Wong Nei Chung Lines in Aberdeen and Pok Fu Lam Country Parks

3.1 The CPC had discussed the first phase of the project, i.e. the removal of the overhead lines and pylons of Parker Line in Tai Tam Country Park, at its meeting on 26 October 2021. Hong Kong Electric Company Limited (HKE) was planning to implement the second phase of the project, which was to remove the overhead lines of Bowen and Wong Nei Chung Lines and 32 pylons located mainly in Aberdeen Country Park and Pok Fu Lam Country Park. HKE's consultants explained at the meeting the project details, ecological survey results and proposed precautionary measures.

3.2 Members generally agreed with the proposal to remove the overhead lines and pylons to restore the natural landscape of the country park. Some Members were concerned about the arrangement for transporting refuse and whether the maintenance access near the pylons and their foundations would be retained. HKE responded that as most of the pylons were located next to existing access roads, priority would be given to transporting the refuse by vehicles. As for the locations without proper land access, helicopters would be used for refuse transfer. HKE intended to retain the maintenance access and the pylon foundations, and would discuss the arrangements with the Lands Department in accordance with the existing mechanism. Members supported the proposal by HKE and the AFCD to provide recreational facilities such as viewing platforms and sitting-out areas at suitable locations upon the removal of the pylons. They also suggested erecting information boards for education purpose. HKE would discuss the details with the AFCD at a later stage.

4. Presentation

4.1 This paper is prepared for Members' information.