

**Country and Marine Parks Board**  
**Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 This paper aims to inform members of issues discussed at the Country Parks Committee (CPC) meeting held on 9 June 2017. Major issues discussed at the meeting are summarised below.

**2. Consultancy Study on Enhancement of the Recreation and Education Potential of Country Parks and Special Areas – Baseline Review**

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the consultant team briefed members on the progress of the consultancy study on enhancement of the recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas (the Study). Members noted that at the baseline review stage, the consultant team had been reviewing the existing recreational and educational activities and facilities in Hong Kong's country parks and special areas and nine selected international case studies as well as conducting interviews with key stakeholders.

2.2 Regarding the Study's approach, some members considered that the Study should include ideas came up at the baseline review stage and the subsequent questionnaire surveys in the list of potential enhancement options. Consideration would then be given to these enhancement options taking into account technical feasibility, legal requirements and environmental concern at a later stage.

2.3 As regards the international case studies, members were of the view that Hong Kong's country parks were different from many overseas national parks as they were in close proximity to the city and frequently utilised by morning walkers. Therefore, they suggested the consultant team to study overseas examples that shared similar settings. The consultant team also assured members that the Study would collect the views of different groups of country parks users through questionnaire surveys and workshops.

**3. Measures to Enhance Hiking Safety in Country Parks**

3.1 AFCD briefed members on the existing hiking safety measures implemented in country parks and the proposed additional measures, while the Civil Aid Service (CAS) briefed members on their efforts in promoting hiking safety.

3.2 Members noted that getting lost on a hike was the most common reason for requiring rescue operations and inadequate preparation of hikers was the main cause of hiking accidents. They agreed that AFCD and CAS should continue and strengthen the relevant publicity and education to raise the public awareness of hiking safety. In particular, they hoped that the publicity and education efforts could reach out to hiking teams, hikers from overseas, youth groups and schools.

3.3 Members also gave suggestions on the location of warning signs, means of publicity and provision of emergency equipment.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

4.1 Some members expressed their views on the Hong Kong Housing Society's (HKHS) feasibility study on the potential of two sites on periphery of country parks for developing public housing and elderly homes. In general, they considered that it would be a significant change in the policy towards country parks if the Government decided to proceed with the development of the sites concerned.

4.2 AFCD informed members that there was not yet any concrete development proposal on the country park areas under study. The Government's invitation to HKHS for carrying out the study did not mean that the Government had agreed to develop housing in the concerned country park areas under the study. Upon completion of the HKHS's study, the Government would further consider the technical feasibility of the development proposals and the relevant policy issues.

4.3 After some discussions, members requested to discuss the issue in the upcoming Country and Marine Parks Board meeting.

#### **5. Advice Sought**

5.1 Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Country and Marine Parks Authority  
August 2017