

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Consultancy Study on Enhancement of the Recreation and Education Potential of Country Parks and Special Areas – Conceptual Proposals

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to brief members on the progress of the consultancy study on enhancement of the recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas (the Study) and the conceptual enhancement proposals.

2. Background

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) commissioned Urbis Limited in association with Mott Macdonald in January 2017 to explore and identify opportunities for enhancing the recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas (CP/SA) so as to broaden and diversify visitors' experience in CP/SA and meet the growing demand for countryside recreation. The Study aims to formulate a sustainable strategy and recommend proposals in three broad aspects, namely overnight facilities, adventurous activities and leisure.

2.2 Given the importance of CP/SA in protecting and conserving biodiversity and landscape, it has been clearly specified in the study brief that recreation and education options to be proposed should not be incompatible with the conservation objective of CP/SA. Progress and findings of the Study have been reported to the Country Parks Committee at its previous meetings of 7 March 2017, 9 June 2017 and 24 January 2018, and the Country and Marine Parks Board on 13 April 2018.

3. Conceptual proposals

3.1 Having taken into account the views and comments of key stakeholders (including members of the Country Parks Committee and the Country and Marine Parks Board) collected at various stages of the Study, and results of the public opinion surveys, the consultants have formulated a shortlist of conceptual proposals to

enhance the recreation and education potential of CP/SA as follows:

- (a) Visitor hubs to serve as gateways to country parks with provision of visitor information, services and transportation connection;
- (b) Campsites with equipment rental services and advance booking;
- (c) Eco-lodge and glamping facilities;
- (d) Tree-top adventure, tree climbing, zipline and grass sliding facilities (in combination as appropriate);
- (e) Viewing platforms / lookout points along hiking trails for landscape appreciation;
- (f) Open museum for relics appreciation;
- (g) Stargazing;
- (h) Orienteering; and
- (i) Enhancement of existing facilities.

3.2 The consulting team is in the process of assessing these conceptual proposals to address possible issues and constraints, including environmental concerns, public accessibility, essential infrastructures required, statutory requirements, mode of operation and site selection criteria. With the recommended proposals, we plan to roll out the public consultation in the fourth quarter of 2018 in order to gather further views of the public. We will keep the Country and Marine Parks Board and the Country Parks Committee informed of the progress, findings and recommendations of the Study.

4. Advice sought

4.1 Members are invited to offer views on the conceptual proposals, in particular issues and constraints that need to be identified and addressed at this and later stages of Study.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
July 2018