

COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD

Summary Report of the Country Parks Committee

1. Purpose

1.1 This paper aims to inform members of the issues discussed at the Country Parks Committee (CPC) meeting held on 24 January 2018.

2. Review of Existing Mountain Bike Trails in Country Parks

2.1 The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) briefed members on the findings and recommendations of their review of existing mountain bike trails (MBTs) in country parks. The review was carried out in 2017 covering all the existing MBTs and making reference to the guiding principles of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). After considering the trail conditions, bikers' safety, trail sustainability, ride quality and value to the trail network, AFCD had made specific recommendations for each MBT. The recommendations included deletion of the Pak Tam to Pak Sha O MBT in Sai Kung West Country Park and the Dragon's Back MBT in Shek O Country Park, as well as improvement, re-grouping and re-naming of the remaining MBTs. AFCD also committed to consulting the representative groups of the mountain biking community before implementing the recommendations.

2.2 Members in general supported the recommendations which would improve safety standard and help enhance the riding experiences on the MBTs. Some of them expressed concern over the user conflict and safety issues arising from the likely increase in the usage of MBTs after the improvement works were completed. They were advised that dedicated MBTs were built as far as practicable in recent years, instead of making use of existing hiking trails for mountain biking. For the shared-use trails established in the early days, AFCD would assess the feasibility of re-routing MBTs to separate hikers and bikers to reduce user conflict. Besides, actions would be taken to improve the existing trail planning and design with reference to the IMBA trail standard to address the safety concerns, trail maintenance and sustainability. For example, one of the improvement measures is to erect distance posts at appropriate intervals along MBTs for bikers to identify and report their locations in case of

emergency.

3. Consultancy Study on Enhancement of the Recreation and Education Potential of Country Parks and Special Areas – Public Opinion Survey

3.1 AFCD and their consulting team updated members on the progress of the consultancy study on enhancement of the recreation and education potential of country parks and special areas (the Study). A public opinion survey was carried out in late 2017 for the purpose of gathering public opinions on the enhancement options. Members were briefed on the methodology of the opinion survey, the respondents' profile and the findings.

3.2 Members noted that the opinion survey included interviews of some 2 000 respondents in country parks and special areas as well as urban areas. The interviews were conducted at representative locations and covered respondents of different gender, age groups, education level, marital status, employment status, household income, etc. The findings of the opinion survey showed the preferences of different groups of people on the recreational activities and facilities in country parks, which served as a useful reference for the next stage of the Study. The Chairman and members provided advices on the approaches to the analysis of the opinion survey.

3.3 Concerning the findings, members noticed that the respondents seemed to be satisfied with the activities and facilities currently provided by country parks and special areas and only demanded for some basic facilities, such as kiosk/shop and transportation hub. Some members were of the view that to pursue further improvement of country parks, the final enhancement options should not only consider the activities and facilities preferred by the public, but also other innovative proposals that were compatible with the environment. Besides, the proposals should include holistic strategies to enhance the overall visitor experience in country parks.

4. Advice Sought

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

Country and Marine Parks Authority
April 2018