

# North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study

## Stage One Public Engagement Report March 2009



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## **1 Introduction**

The Chief Executive announced in his 2007-2008 Policy Address the planning for New Development Areas (NDAs) as one of the ten major infrastructure projects for economic growth. The NDAs shall provide quality living space in the Northern New Territories.

The Planning and Development Study on North East New Territories (NENT Study), which was commissioned in 1998, identified Kwu Tung North (KTN), Fanling North (FLN) and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ting (PC/TKL) as suitable for the development of the NDAs in one scheme, i.e. the 3-in-1 NDAs. However, in the light of slower population growth and housing demand, the NDA proposals were shelved in 2003. The “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy” (the HK2030 Study) has revisited the need for NDAs in the New Territories and recommended proceeding with the NDA developments to address the long-term housing demand and provide more employment opportunities.

To initiate the implementation of these NDAs, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and the Planning Department (PlanD) jointly commissioned the “North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study” (NENT NDAs Study) in June 2008. The NENT NDAs Study will formulate a development plan for NDAs taking into consideration the latest planning circumstances, community aspirations and development needs to guide future development.

A comprehensive public engagement programme is being carried out in parallel with the NENT NDAs Study to ensure timely incorporation of public views into the planning and design of the NDAs. A 3-stage Public Engagement programme has been formulated:

- Stage One Public Engagement: Appreciation of the Existing Context and Formulation of Visions for the NDAs.
- Stage Two Public Engagement: Discussion on the Preliminary Outline Development Plans
- Stage Three Public Engagement: Discussion on the Recommended Outline Development Plans and Consolidation of Details in the Layout Plans

The Stage One Public Engagement commenced on 14 November 2008 and lasted for about three months. The aim of the Stage One Public Engagement was to engage members of the public to discuss key issues relating to the development of the NDAs. To facilitate a more focused discussion during the Stage One Public Engagement, the key issues/concerns were consolidated into four focus topics, namely:

1. Strategic Roles of NDAs
2. People-Oriented Communities
3. Sustainable Living Environment

#### 4. Implementation Mechanism

The Stage One Public Engagement Digests were widely distributed to members of the public in order to facilitate public engagement and discussion. In addition, Topical Notes for each of the above four major topics were prepared to provide background information to enable members of the public to understand the issues involved in the respective topics.

Advertisements were posted in newspapers, and invitation letters and posters were sent out to residents in the northeast New Territories, relevant organizations, District Councils and relevant rural committees, etc. to publicize the details of the Stage One Public Engagement activities, and to invite members of the public to express their views and to attend the community workshop. A video was also prepared to facilitate members of the public in understanding the existing context of the NDAs. Moreover, a study website has been launched (<http://www.nentnda.gov.hk>) to disseminate information on the study background, public consultation documents, study reports, video clips and summaries of technical reports for public viewing.

This Report presents the activities undertaken in the Stage One Public Engagement and summarizes the major public comments received on the four focus topics.

## 2 Stage One Public Engagement

### 2.1 Public Engagement Activities

The Stage One Public Engagement activities included a community workshop and a series of briefings to relevant boards/committees (including the North District Council and relevant rural committees), professional bodies and other interested groups. Details of the public engagement activities undertaken are listed below:

#### Briefing Sessions

Date	Organizations
14 November 2008	Town Planning Board
25 November 2008	Legislative Council Panel on Development
25 November 2008	Joint Co-operation Meeting between Planning Department of HKSAR and Shenzhen Municipal Planning Bureau
26 November 2008	The 12 <sup>th</sup> Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Co-operation Symposium
27 November 2008	Planning Sub-Committee of the Land and Building Advisory Committee
3 December 2008	Hong Kong Institute of Planners (upon invitation)
9 December 2008	Sheung Shui District Rural Committee
9 December 2008	The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (upon invitation)
10 December 2008	Fanling District Rural Committee
11 December 2008	North District Council
15 December 2008	Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee
15 December 2008	Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee
16 December 2008	Heung Yee Kuk, New Territories (upon invitation)
17 December 2008	Kwu Tung Village (upon invitation)
9 January 2009	Advisory Council on the Environment
7 March 2009	Residents of Tin Ping Shan Tsuen, Shek Wu San Tsuen, Ling Shan and Ma Shi Po (upon invitation)

#### Community Workshop

Date: 20 December 2008

Time: 2:00pm

Venue: Luen Wo Hui Community Hall, Fanling

## **2.2 Town Planning Board**

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We consulted the Town Planning Board on 14 November 2008. In general, Members supported the arrangements of the Stage One Public Engagement while some Members expressed concern on the sufficiency of time for public engagement. In addition, Members stressed the need for holistic planning of the NDAs with their surrounding areas, including the future development of Shenzhen, as well as to ensure a smooth implementation process. Members also expressed interest to be briefed on the result of the Stage One Public Engagement exercise. A summary of comments from the Members is enclosed in Appendix I.

## **2.3 Legislative Council Panel on Development**

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A briefing to the Legislative Council Panel on Development was held on 25 November 2008. Council Members suggested that the consultation for the NDAs should cover topics on the collaboration and integration between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Administration should pay attention to the possible dilemma between nature conservation and landowners' aspirations for development. Members also opined that the pace of public engagement and the planning for the NDAs could be slower so as to fully gauge the aspirations of the society on how to establish a good model for city development. Comments from Legislative Council Members are summarized in Appendix II.

## **2.4 Planning Sub-Committee of the Land and Building Advisory Committee**

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We consulted the Planning Sub-Committee of the Land and Building Advisory Committee on 27 November 2008. Members were particularly concerned on the implementation mechanism and suggested that if 'private sector participation' approaches were pursued for NDAs development, there should be a thorough examination on the pros and cons of each option. Public aspirations should also be fully considered and it would be necessary to ensure the implementation was open and transparent. A summary of comments from the Members is enclosed in Appendix III.

## **2.5 Professional Bodies**

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### **2.5.1 Hong Kong Institute of Planners**

A briefing to the Hong Kong Institute of Planners was held on 3 December 2008. Members provided various views on the development of NDAs. A summary of comments from the Members is enclosed in Appendix IVa. Subsequently, the Institute also submitted written comments.

### **2.5.2 The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong**

A briefing to the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong was held on 10 December 2008. Members mainly expressed their concerns on the implementation mechanism. Some Members expressed interest in

the preliminarily suggested private sector participation approaches and raised respective concerns and questions on these approaches. Some Members opined that if the planning of the NDAs could match with the landownership pattern, the implementation of the NDAs could also be facilitated under the prevailing practices on implementation. The comments received from the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong are summarized in Appendix IVb. The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong also submitted written comments.

## **2.6 Four Rural Committees in North District**

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### **2.6.1 Sheung Shui District Rural Committee**

We attended the Sheung Shui District Rural Committee meeting on 9 December 2008 to seek Members' and Village Representatives' opinions. Members and the Village Representatives expressed grave concerns on the compensation and re-housing to affected villagers. Some Village Representatives pointed out the need to protect the rights of the villagers, preserve cultural heritage of the indigenous inhabitants, compensate private landowners due to conservation proposals, and extend village boundary. In addition, various Members and Village Representatives provided valuable comments on the development directions of the NDAs. Comments from Members and Village Representatives are summarised in Appendix Va.

### **2.6.2 Fanling District Rural Committee**

We attended the Fanling District Rural Committee meeting on 10 December 2008 to gauge Members' and Village Representatives' views. Some Members and Village Representatives supported the development of NDAs hoping that the NDAs and the supporting infrastructure could boost the development of the Fanling area. Some Members and Village Representatives pointed out the need to better integrate the NDAs with their surrounding towns and villages. In addition, Members and Village Representatives raised concerns on environmental issues during the development of the NDAs and they hoped that the existing pleasant environment could be retained. They also requested the Administration to consult the villagers who would be affected by infrastructure development at the early design stage. Comments from Members and Village Representatives are summarised in Appendix Vb.

### **2.6.3 Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee**

We attended the Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee meeting on 15 December 2008 to seek Members' and Village Representatives' opinions. Members presented their visions on the development of the PC/TKL NDA and gave suggestions on the NDA development. Some Members and Village Representatives expressed concerns on the possible environmental impact from the continued open storage uses at PC/TKL, and the integration of the NDAs with the existing villages. Comments from Members and Village Representatives are summarised in Appendix Vc.



#### 2.6.4 Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee

We attended the Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee meeting on 15 December 2008 to seek Members' and Village Representatives' opinions. Members and Village Representatives requested that the development of the NDAs and Sha Tau Kok should be considered in parallel. Comments from the Members and Village Representatives are summarised in Appendix Vd.

### **2.7 North District Council**

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We attended the North District Council meeting on 11 December 2008 to seek Members' opinions on the NENT NDAs Study. Members raised questions and expressed their views on various issues, including community facilities that could be provided within the NDAs, land compensation as well as ecological and heritage conservation. Comments from the North District Council Members are summarised in Appendix VI. In addition, Members also provided their views through other channels.

### **2.8 Heung Yee Kuk, New Territories**

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A briefing was given to the Heung Yee Kuk, New Territories on 16 December 2008 upon invitation. Members raised their concerns and views on various issues, including conservation, land compensation and the impacts of private sector participation on small private landowners etc. Comments from Members are summarised in Appendix VII.

### **2.9 Local Communities**

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#### 2.9.1 Kwu Tung Area

Upon their invitation, we met the villagers of Kwu Tung Village on 17 December 2008 to seek the views of local residents and industrial operators. Villagers expressed their worries on the possible clearance of their village and requested the relevant Government departments to give special consideration for providing local re-housing. Comments from the villagers are summarised in Appendix VIIIa.

#### 2.9.2 Fanling North Area

Upon their invitation, a meeting with concerned groups and residents of Ma Shi Po, Shek Wu San Tsuen, Tin Ping Shan Tsuen and Ling Shan was held on 7 March 2009. Comments from the residents are summarised in Appendix VIIIb.

### **2.10 Advisory Council on the Environment**

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A briefing to the Advisory Council on the Environment was given on 9 January 2009. Members expressed their views on various issues, including ecological and heritage conservation, provision of sufficient community facilities and promotion of sustainable development etc. Comments from Members of the Advisory Council on the Environment are summarised in Appendix IX.

### **2.11 Others**

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Briefings on the NENT NDAs Study were given at the Joint Co-operation Meeting between Planning Department of HKSAR and Shenzhen Municipal Planning Bureau on 25 November 2008 and at the 12th Beijing-Hong Kong Economic Co-operation Symposium on 26 November 2008.

### **2.12 Community Workshop**

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A Community Workshop was held at Luen Wo Hui Community Hall, Fanling on 20 December 2008. The workshop was organised by the CEDD and PlanD, and was arranged by the Study Consultants: Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong Ltd. About 200 people (including local residents, North District Council Members, relevant District Rural Committee Members, as well as representative from relevant organizations and parties) attended the Community Workshop. Focus discussion groups were arranged for the four major topics in the workshop. A report on the Community Workshop is enclosed in Appendix X.

### **2.13 Expert Panel**

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Six experts from various fields (Professor Nelson Chow, Professor William Lam, Dr. Billy Hau, Mr. Tony Chan, Mr. K.S. Wong and Mr. Steve Yiu) were invited to form an Expert Panel to provide professional advices and opinions for the NENT NDAs Study. Some of Expert Panel Members attended the Community Workshop and provided valuable advices to the Study.

### **2.14 Written Submission**

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Up to March 2009, over 90 individual written comments were received.

### **3 SUMMARY OF KEY PUBLIC COMMENTS AND OUR RESPONSES**

#### **3.1 Strategic Roles of NDAs**

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3.1.1 Regarding the strategic roles of the NDAs to serve a wider region, members of the public considered that the development of the NDAs should take into account the development needs of the Pearl River Delta and should consider the overall integration with Shenzhen in the long term. The NDAs should also provide land for specific uses that could also serve Mainland China and the rest of the world. Members of the public considered that the development of the NDAs should take into consideration the planning of the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the Closed Area.

3.1.2 Members of the public has the following suggestions on the strategic land uses:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Residential                          | - High quality residential development; Low density residential development; to attract Mainland buyers;   |
| Commercial                           | - Exhibition Venue; Famous-brand outlet centre   |
| High-value-added Economic Activities | - High-value-added economic zone; Information technology industries; Light industries; Clean industries; Logistic purpose  |
| Educational                          | - Higher Education Institutions/ University Towns/International Schools; Agricultural Scientific Research and Development Centres; Bird Research and Development Centres |
| Medical                              | - Hospital and medical centres serving local communities, Hong Kong residents living in Shenzhen, Mainland residents; Medical Resorts                                    |
| Nature and Cultural Conservation     | - Conservation of Long Valley and other important habitats; Preservation of cultural heritage  |
| Tourism                              | - Make use of the ecological and cultural resources to promote green-tourism; Low density and high quality five stars hotels   |
| Leisure                              | - Resort; Golf course/ practicing area   |
| Others                               | - Large scale social service centres: apart from serving the local communities, they could also provide professional training to   |

social service workers in order to assist the development of social services in the Mainland

3.1.3 To satisfy the overall needs of Hong Kong as well as the local communities, members of the public suggested that the NDAs could satisfy the following needs:

- |                                 |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Residential                     | – | Public housing to satisfy the needs of local residents affected by the development of the NDAs; Quality housing; Low density residential development  |
| Job Opportunities               | – | Relocating some Government offices into the NDAs; High-value-added industries; Re-provisioning of local industries affected by the NDA development to retain employments for lower-skilled residents; Job Training Centre |
| Educational                     | – | Boarding schools; Hostel for Mainland Students; Agricultural research and development centres in order to support the agricultural industry   |
| Leisure and Cultural Recreation | – | Large scale community hall/games hall that could accommodate at least 1000 people to hold large scale cultural events such as concerts, forums, etc.; leisure facilities such as Hong Kong Baptist Assembly in Ping Che   |
| Community Facilities            | – | Hospital: the North District Hospital has nearly reached its maximum capacity; Local Clinics; Elderly Centres   |
| Village Development             | – | Improvement of surrounding rural facilities   |

3.1.4 Regarding the development themes of each NDA, members of the public generally considered that as KTN NDA and FLN NDA would have railway connections and were close to existing New Towns, these areas are more appropriate for developing quality housing. KTN NDA could be developed into a green New Town with mixed strategic/regional uses, for example, commercial, hotel, exhibition venue, educational etc. FLN NDA could provide a quality living environment with leisure and green spaces, and could integrate with the existing Sheung Shui/Fanling New Towns. Although a majority of members of the public comments supported the development of the NDAs, few of them (including some residents living in Fanling and the Woodland Crest Owners'

Committee) suggested that FLN should not be developed, and the existing agricultural character should be retained.

- 3.1.5 For the PC/TKL NDA, members of the public considered that it could be developed in a diversified manner, with the development of high-value-added industries to boost Hong Kong's economy moving towards a high value-added market. Some people suggested the setting up of a high value-added economic zone and the provision of some short-term free tenancy to young people to incubate local brands and to cultivate local talent. Some members of the public also indicated that there should be scope for quality and low-density residential development/other leisure uses in PC/TKL NDA. For the question on whether to keep open storage uses in PC/TKL NDA, members of the public had diverse views. Some of them suggested that the continued proliferation of open storage uses would pollute the environment, while some people viewed that it was a good opportunity for consolidating scattered open storage uses and providing landscaping measures to minimize the impact on the environment. Members of the public also suggested that the PC/TKL NDA could be developed for eco-tourism/agricultural uses.

#### Our Responses

- 3.1.6 We deeply appreciated the general public support to the development of the NDAs. We agree that the trend of further social and economic integration between Hong Kong and Guangdong Province is inevitable. In the next stage of the Study, we will examine possible strategic uses to be provided within the NDAs to target for the needs of Shenzhen as well as the Pearl River Delta. We will also make reference to the development trends of the Pearl River Delta (e.g. Framework for Development and Reform Planning for Pearl River Delta Region (2008-2020)) to better co-ordinate with the regional development. We noticed that some of the strategic land uses proposed by members of the public did meet with the existing development needs, and some public suggestions did tally with our preliminary ideas of the NDAs development. We shall examine all innovative proposals received carefully in terms of their feasibilities.
- 3.1.7 Influenced by the suggestions proposed by the previous NENT Study, some members the public believed that the idea of developing PC/TKL NDA for open storage and rural industrial uses would be maintained in the current NDAs Study. However, we should clarify that major land uses appropriate for PC/KTL NDA would be reconsidered in this Study after taking into account the public views received. We also share the same opinion of many people that the function of the NDAs should be complementary with those of the existing New Towns. In planning the FLN NDA, we will take into account the planning

circumstances of the existing New Towns and the surrounding rural areas in order to provide coherent, complementary infrastructure and community facilities to complement and boost the existing developed areas.

### **3.2 People-Oriented Communities**

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- 3.2.1 To ensure a harmonious community, members of the public was generally of the view that the NDAs should not be heavily skewed towards either public housing or private housing developments. The proportion of public and private housing should be balanced or with a slightly higher proportion on private housing.
- 3.2.2 Regarding development density, members of the public generally considered that high density development might no longer be appropriate for the NDAs. However as no population target had been defined, it would be difficult to suggest an appropriate level of density and community facility provision for the NDAs at the current stage. In general, members of the public opined that the population and development density proposed in the previous NENT Study were too high and unacceptable. Some also suggested that with good public transport facilities, higher density development could be considered for areas adjacent to the proposed KTN railway station.
- 3.2.3 For the building height, members of the public considered that building heights should not be too high. Even in the central core, there should not be massive building mass in order to avoid any “Wall Effect” or “Concrete Jungle”.
- 3.2.4 For the subject of urban design, members of the public pointed out that non-conforming high-rise buildings should be avoided in the vicinity of Long Valley in order to protect the backdrop. Visual corridors and landscape buffers should be incorporated in planning and designing the NDAs.
- 3.2.5 For open space, members of the public generally requested more open spaces and greenery areas. A number of people pointed out the importance of the rivers, including Sheung Yue River, Shek Sheung River and Ng Tung River, to the NDAs. Buffer areas should be provided between building blocks and rivers. No access road should be constructed along the rivers, and riverside promenade with cafes should be provided to enhance attraction. Footpaths and cycle tracks should also be provided along the riverside in order to improve the pedestrian environment and connect the KTN and FLN NDAs.
- 3.2.6 To encourage social harmony and sense of belonging, members of the public suggested that a landmark feature was required for the North District. The proposed landmark could either be a large park or piazza for public gathering. This public space could be double-decked. The upper deck could be a piazza while the lower

deck could be for transportation use. Some members of the public also suggested that the NDAs could make use of the historical and cultural resources of the North District, for example the traditional “walled villages” and green brick design, to enrich the historical and cultural understanding of the residents. Other people also suggested that a large scale community hall would be required to hold major cultural events.

- 3.2.7 Some members of the public were particularly concerned that the NDAs should avoid repeating the social problems in Tin Shui Wai. Sufficient job opportunities should be provided in the NDAs.
- 3.2.8 Some members of the public suggested that the NDAs should learn from the past experience of new town developments and should ensure timely and adequate provision of community facilities. If needed, community facilities should be provided beyond the existing standards and guidelines.
- 3.2.9 Some people worried that the NDAs might not be materialized finally, or there would be a gap between the planning vision and implementation. As the implementation process would span over a period of time, it is necessary to ensure that the planning principles were carefully implemented throughout the process. Close communication amongst relevant Government departments should be maintained to take account of the changing circumstances. The Government should also maintain a good interactive relationship with the residents to have a better understanding on the local circumstances for better implementation.

#### Our Responses

- 3.2.10 Influenced by the recommendations of the previous NENT Study, some members of the public still thought that high development density and population target would be the planning goals of the current NENT NDAs Study. Indeed, taking into account the growing public aspirations for lower density development and a quality living environment, we will lower the development density and building height in formulating the planning proposals in the current Study. An appropriate public private housing mix ratio will also be assessed taking into account the strategic roles and development themes of the NDAs.
- 3.2.11 Learning from the past experience of new town developments, adequate and diversified job opportunities would be provided in the NDAs to satisfy the needs of the residents.
- 3.2.12 We will determine the types, quantity and scale of various social and community facilities flexibly taking into account the unique demographic structure and social characteristics of the future population of the NDAs and the surrounding areas. We will also consider the various suggestions proposed by members of the

public on public services and social/recreational facilities to satisfy the needs of the area.

- 3.2.13 In formulating development plans for NDAs, we will pay particular attention to the building height, building mass, open space networks and pedestrian networks. Urban design elements, such as visual corridors and breezeways will also be introduced.

### **3.3 Sustainable Living Environment**

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- 3.3.1 To create a sustainable living environment, members of the public suggested that development of the NDAs should preserve important ecological, natural landscape, and historical and cultural resources of the area. A balance between development and conservation of such resources should be achieved.
- 3.3.2 On ecological conservation aspect, although some local residents did not agree the importance of wetland conservation and thought that the extent of the yellow-shaded wetland area shown on the map in page 15 of the Public Engagement Digest was too large, members of the public in general recognized the important ecological resources of Long Valley and other wetlands in the vicinity and considered that they should be retained and protected.
- 3.3.3 However, landowners' rights should be taken into account and should not be sacrificed for conservation purpose. The wetlands could otherwise be destroyed if the landowners were not satisfied and refused to cooperate with the green groups. Some members of the public pointed out that the current Management Agreement practiced in the Long Valley was far from being sufficient to achieve the conservation objectives. They suggested that approaches that could balance different needs should be explored.
- 3.3.4 Several members of the public also pointed out that heritage features within the NDAs should be preserved. Historical and cultural heritage resources should not only include tangible historical village buildings but also some intangible heritage such as important cultures and customs, including local farming tradition. Some people expressed concern that valuable cultural heritage would be affected or permanently lost due to the implementation of the NDAs.
- 3.3.5 Regarding visual impact, some members of the public concerned that the pleasant rural scenery, particularly in the FLN area, would be blocked by high-rise buildings in the FLN NDA. Control on development density and building height within the NDAs, urban design measures, such as visual corridors, protection of ridgelines, buffer areas between building blocks and rivers, should be applied so as to preserve public view to the rural landscape.



- 3.3.6 Regarding transport in the NDAs, many people concerned that the capacity of the existing road networks might not be able to cope with the future population, and the existing traffic congestion situations at Sheung Shui/ Fanling would be worsened, and thus affected the quality of life of existing residents. The members of the public requested to upgrade the existing roads infrastructure to cope with the future needs while some suggested to provide railway connections between the NDAs, Sheung Shui, Fanling as well as to the urban areas. For internal transport, members of the public considered that sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling should be promoted. A comprehensive cycling network with adequate supporting facilities should also be provided to connect the existing cycling networks in Sheung Shui/Fanling New Town.
- 3.3.7 Regarding energy and resources saving within the NDAs, public members suggested to minimize the use of non-renewable energy and to use solar energy, wind energy or mixed energy (for example, introduction of electric vehicles and solar cell street lamps, etc). Energy saving could also be achieved by promoting the use of existing railway infrastructure. Innovative ideas such as making use of natural ventilation to cool down indoor temperature and nearby river water for central air-condition cooling system were also suggested.

#### Our Responses

- 3.3.8 The ecological value of the Long Valley has been well established in the past and there is a general support to conserve the area. As a result, the Long Valley should be preserved. On the basis of respecting landowners' right, we shall take the opportunity to implement the NDAs in proposing a more sustainable mechanism for the conservation of Long Valley. We will also further study the extent of the wetland and make it as a reference for the development of the NDAs.
- 3.3.9 We will strengthen the conservation of cultural heritage within the NDAs, including the protection of historical buildings and intangible cultural heritage features as far as possible. We will adopt a "Point-Line-Surface" Approach to revitalize important heritage features for succession, education and recreation purposes.
- 3.3.10 We will actively explore the feasibility of introducing environmentally friendly transport modes (EFTM) to the NDAs and assess its associated implications including the financial implication.
- 3.3.11 We will also consider the energy and resource-saving measures raised by members of the public. We will consider introducing energy saving measures at different levels, and exploring ways to

achieve energy-efficient objectives, as well as promoting a low carbon economy, which is based on low energy consumption and low pollution. We will examine and consider appropriate and feasible energy-efficient measures for the NDAs.

- 3.3.12 The above mentioned issues may have wider policy and resources implications, which may not be resolved within the scope of this Study. Nevertheless, we shall proactively make recommendations to the relevant policy bureaux, explore and study the feasibility of implementation.

### **3.4 Implementation Mechanism**

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- 3.4.1 Many members of the public criticised that there were weaknesses in the “Conventional New Town Approach”. However, some members of the public considered that the “Conventional New Town Approach”, with block land resumption by Government, was fair and equitable.
- 3.4.2 Members of the public commented that land resumption by Government under the “Conventional New Town Approach” deprived private property rights. They considered that the resumed land auctioned at a much higher price after formation and servicing was unfair to the private landowners. This could lead to litigation and would have a negative impact on social harmony. Also, the prevailing compensation packages offered by the Government could not meet the expectations of the landowners. The process of land assembly and site formation under the “Conventional New Town Approach” would take a very long time and delay the development programme. Besides, the Government had to bear a huge amount of public expenses as well as financial risk.
- 3.4.3 Some members of the public considered that prevailing compensation arrangements from Government land resumption were unfair. The prevailing re-housing arrangements were also unacceptable since the affected residents should subject to “Comprehensive Means Test” (CMT). They pointed out that from past experiences, local re-housing was not made available to the affected residents eventually. Even worse, some affected residents were not eligible for re-housing as they could not pass the CMT. This would be a particular concern of elderly residents and those residents living in the squatter areas.
- 3.4.4 In addition, non-recognized villages and communities affected by the development of the NDAs, such as the Kwu Tung Village, strongly requested local re-housing and raised concern on disruption to their long established village community. Some villagers requested re-housing and village resite on like-for-like basis. Some villagers suggested that public housing could be provided to re-house the whole village prior to the clearance in

- order to retain the existing community networks. As it would take time to establish social networks in new developments, members of the public also thought that to retain the existing community network would help the new residents to establish a sense of belonging.
- 3.4.5 Some locals also raised the need to relocate affected local industries as they were important employment sources for local residents.
- 3.4.6 Some members of the public considered that Government should be responsible for resolving conflicts, such as forced displacement without re-housing, induced by private land acquisition and clearance. Government should ensure that the process of private land acquisition was fair with a high degree of transparency.
- 3.4.7 Members of the public generally considered that the development of the NDAs should respect the property rights of private landowners and indigenous villagers. Reasonable compensation should be offered to those affected private landowners and indigenous villagers.
- 3.4.8 Members of the public generally supported the introduction of private sector participation in the implementation of the NDAs and considered that this would rectify some of the weaknesses of the “Conventional New Town Approach” and could respect the private landowners’ property rights. However, some people pointed out that Government would still have an important role to play in ensuring that small landowners’ rights would not be deprived.
- 3.4.9 Regarding the approaches for private sector participation, some members of the public commented that “Land Exchange” was proven effective practice and could be adopted in the development of the NDAs. With integrated planning, this approach could be exercised effectively, although land exchange might entail lengthy procedures. Some members of the public also considered that the “Negotiation Approach” i.e. to invite submission of private sector development proposals, was worth further consideration. Some people suggested revitalizing the previous land administration practice of “Development Entitlement” (or “Letter A/B”) but pointed out that the associated administrative problems observed under this system in the past should be avoided. Other members of the public suggested the adoption of “Development Shares/Convertible Bonds”, noting that this approach would involve introduction of new legislation. They also assumed that the Government would play an important role in setting up the ‘Development Corporation’ in association with this approach. Some public members viewed that the various approaches could be considered concurrently.

3.4.10 In respect of whether the Government should use statutory power to resume problematic land (i.e. lots involving Tso/Tong, absentee landowners, lots with missing data, and defective titles) for private projects, some people indicated support to this proposal. However, some local landowners have indicated concerns on this as this could result in favouritism to major developers.

#### Our Responses

3.4.11 We noted the general support towards the introduction of private sector participation in the implementation of the NDAs and we will further examine the feasibility of different approaches in the next stage of the Study. On the other hand, we will examine the appropriateness for Government to use statutory power to resume problematic land under the principles of fairness, equitability, openness and legitimacy.

3.4.12 However, it is noted that even if some forms of private sector participation were eventually adopted, Government will still have an important role to play in assembling land for constructing public infrastructure and other supporting facilities.

3.4.13 Since the development of the NENT NDAs is still in its early planning stage, the detailed development option and the extent of affected areas are still subject to further studies. The Government has not yet commenced any land resumption process for public uses. In the next stage, the Study will assess and recommend a development programme for various project items of the NDA development.

3.4.14 We agreed that landowners' rights must be respected and reasonable compensation should be given to affected persons. On matters relating to government land resumption and compensation, the Administration will, as a usual practice, compensate the eligible persons affected and re-house them properly in accordance with the relevant prevailing legislation and policies.

3.4.15 We will further examine the re-housing issue. At present, the Government could consider to offer re-housing arrangements to indigenous villagers (or pre-war residents). Housing Department could make re-housing arrangements for eligible clearerees affected by clearance exercise confirmed by Lands Department. Housing Department will strive to re-house eligible clearerees affected by clearance initiated by the Government within the district or region from which they are being cleared, subject to availability of housing resources.

3.4.16 However, we must clarify that re-housing and village resite on a like-for-like basis are not the prevailing policy. Indeed, such arrangements are not practicable due to the limited developable

land within the NDAs. The prevailing policy does ensure that the affected residents are offered with reasonable compensation or re-housing before any clearance exercise.

- 3.4.17 As the existing rural industries are scattered over the NDAs, it is difficult to retain all rural industries within the NDAs. The Administration will compensate the eligible person affected in accordance with the relevant prevailing legislations and policies. We will try to identify suitable industrial land within the NDAs.
- 3.4.18 Regarding the issue of disputes and forced displacement of residents and tenants arising from private land acquisition, members of the public should understand that as land acquisition by private developers involving landowners and existing tenants is a market transaction, it is inappropriate for the Government to interfere in such market transaction. Nevertheless, residents and tenants who are affected by private land acquisition can register on the Waiting List for Public Rental Housing if they are eligible for public housing. Should they have any medical reasons or social needs to support accelerated allocation, they may consider applying to the Social Welfare Department for Compassionate Re-housing. In addition, if applicants for public rental housing have individual special grounds to support their applications for public housing in a specified area and have the support of the relevant departments (e.g. Social Welfare Department) or institutions (e.g. Hospital Authority), the Housing Department will entertain their requests as far as possible if suitable reasons are available. For those who are already on the Waiting List for Public Rental Housing, they can also apply for the Express Flat Allocation Scheme for an earlier allotment of public housing unit.
- 3.4.19 Land resumption and clearance are inevitable during the development of the NDAs. We will handle the issues carefully. We will further investigate the arrangements on land resumption, compensation and re-housing with relevant Government departments, and will address and consider the comments raised by members of the public carefully.

## **4 Next Steps**

The public engagement activities of the Stage One Public Engagement have raised the public's awareness of the NENT NDAs Study and facilitated public discussion on the development of the NDAs. We have also learned from the public their aspirations and visions for the NDAs. Public views received from the Stage One Public Engagement will be analyzed and used in establishing new visions and guiding principles. On the basis of on-going studies and analysis, key development parameters would be formulated and translated in the Preliminary Outline Development Plans (ODPs). We will then consult the public on the Preliminary ODPs, with detailed development parameters and three-dimensional illustration of the design concepts, in the Stage Two Public Engagement.

## Photos from Stage One Public Engagement

### Sheung Shui District Rural Committee



### Fanling District Rural Committee



### Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee



### Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee



### Kwu Tung Village



### Residents of Fanling North



### Hong Kong Institute of Planners





### The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong



North District Council



Heung Yee Kuk, New Territories



### Community Workshop

