

**Legislative Council Panel on Development
Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs**

“Driving Development, Preserving Heritage”

**Initiatives of Development Bureau
in the 2007-08 Policy Address and Policy Agenda**

Introduction

The Chief Executive (CE) delivered the 2007-08 Policy Address on 10 October 2007 setting out his vision and policy objectives for the next five years. This is supported by the Policy Agenda Booklet which lists the HKSAR Government’s new and ongoing initiatives. This paper elaborates on those initiatives under the Development Bureau (DEVB) and relates them to the Government’s overall objectives.

The Setting up of the Development Bureau

2. As mentioned by the CE in his Policy Address, DEVB is set up to better co-ordinate major infrastructure projects that are essential in consolidating Hong Kong’s position as a global city and in creating jobs. To this end, DEVB comprises the planning and lands group of departments as well as the works group of departments. The re-organisation of these nine government departments^{Note} under one roof will ensure more efficient co-ordination and resolution of inter-departmental issues relating to infrastructure development at an early stage.

3. The organizational capacity in delivering infrastructure projects is further strengthened by a Liaison Group amongst the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Secretary for Environment and Secretary for Development to address cross-bureaux issues. Supervisory teams or steering committees chaired personally by the Secretary for Development

^{Note} They are Planning Department, Lands Department, Buildings Department, Land Registry, Architectural Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Drainage Services Department, Electrical & Mechanical Services Department and Water Supplies Department.

will also be established to closely monitor progress on individual mega projects. The first supervisory team has been set up for Kai Tak Development.

4. DEVB is also tasked to enhance the Government's heritage conservation work and to strike a balance between development and conservation. Our heritage conservation policy and initiatives are also drawn up in response to public aspirations and to facilitate active public involvement.

5. The work of DEVB will mainly contribute to the two themes of "Ten Major Infrastructure Projects to Boost Our Economy" and "Quality City And Quality Life". We will also strive to enhance public governance and improve services to the public. An extract of all new and ongoing initiatives under DEVB as contained in the 2007-08 Policy Agenda Booklet is at **Annex 1**. Together with initiatives announced by the CE in his Policy Address, these form a comprehensive package to deliver DEVB's policy objectives. Major items are highlighted in the paragraphs below.

Initiatives under "Ten Major Infrastructure Projects to Boost Our Economy"

Hong Kong 2030 : Planning Vision and Strategy

6. We have completed the Hong Kong 2030 Study, and the Final Report on the Study has been released. To support the realisation of our vision of positioning Hong Kong as Asia's world city, we have through the Hong Kong 2030 Study translated the vision into specific planning goals and objectives which are to be met by a planning strategy. Our planning strategy would follow three broad directions, namely:

- (a) providing a quality living environment;
- (b) enhancing economic competitiveness; and
- (c) strengthening links with the Mainland.

Details of the recommendations of the Study are set out in the Legislative Council (LegCo) Brief on Hong Kong 2030 issued on 10 October 2007. Attached at **Annex 2** is a leaflet on the Study highlighting the action agenda.

Embark on Planning and Engineering Studies on New Development Areas

7. We need to implement New Development Areas (NDAs) to meet the needs of the population in the longer term. This has been confirmed under the Hong Kong 2030 Study as described above in paragraph 6. Given the long lead-time required from planning to implementation of NDAs, we will, as a start, commission a planning and engineering feasibility study in early 2008 on the “Three-in-One” NDA scheme at Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling, and draw up an implementation strategy. Preparatory work for a similar study to ascertain the development feasibility of the proposed Hung Shui Kiu NDA will follow.

Strengthen our partnership with Shenzhen

8. We see the need to strengthen our partnership with Shenzhen, particularly on the front of the development of boundary areas for long term mutual benefits. We propose to establish a high-level working group with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to co-ordinate and oversee different cross boundary development projects, including the Lok Ma Chau Loop and the proposed Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai control point. It will also provide steer to the further research and planning work on other cross-boundary issues such as boundary crossings and the development of the boundary areas.

Press ahead with Mega Projects

9. In his Policy Address, the CE has listed ten major infrastructure projects for priority attention in the coming five years. Apart from taking a lead in Kai Tak Development, collaboration with Shenzhen and NDAs, DEVB will support the various transport infrastructure and work

closely with Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the future West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Authority on the planning and implementation of WKCD.

Quality Improvements in Construction Industry

10. We have strived to improve the quality in the construction industry and made some significant progress. The setting up of the statutory Construction Industry Council (CIC) on 1 February 2007 helps forge consensus on long-term strategic issues, convey industry needs and aspirations to Government, as well as provide a communication channel for Government to solicit advice on all construction-related matters. The registration of construction workers and the commencement of the implementation of phase one prohibition in September 2007 helps tackle the problems of wage disputes and employment of illegal workers.

11. To further help resolve wage disputes and control multi-layer subcontracting, we will continue to implement relevant measures under public works contracts. These include the Government's right to pay workers for wages in arrear out of contract money due to the main contractor, provision of a computerised smart card system, etc.

Initiatives under “Quality City And Quality Life”

Heritage Conservation

12. Upon the transfer of heritage policy from HAB to DEVB, we have accorded priority attention to finalising an action-oriented package of measures to ensure we are better placed in preserving Hong Kong's heritage. These measures were recently endorsed by the Chief Executive in Council. Details are contained in the LegCo Brief issued on 10 October 2007.

13. These measures together with several heritage items announced in the CE's Policy Address will enable us to achieve the following objectives-

- (a) in the Government domain, ensure that impact on heritage will be taken into account at the project inception stage by subjecting all public works projects (except maintenance) to Heritage Impact Assessment;
- (b) revitalise historic buildings in public ownership by launching a *Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme*. A leaflet describing the Scheme for the purpose of engaging stakeholders and the public is at **Annex 3**. Together with the Hong Kong Jockey Club's proposal for the Central Police Station Compound, a total of eight historic buildings will undergo adaptive re-use in one go;
- (c) provide a framework to facilitate preservation of historic buildings in private ownership through suitable and acceptable economic incentives to be devised in full consultation with stakeholders;
- (d) promote proper maintenance of historic buildings in private ownership by extending the present financial support scheme applicable to declared monuments to graded buildings subject to certain conditions;
- (e) expand heritage conservation work beyond individual buildings by embarking on an area-based approach in the older parts of Wan Chai, preserving the Tai Yuen Street and Cross Street open air bazaars, re-examining the optimal use of the ex-Hollywood Road Married Police Quarters site (the former Central School site) and tasking the Urban Renewal Authority to do more in preserving pre-war buildings;
- (f) provide a focal point to take forward heritage conservation work by setting up an Office of the Commissioner for Heritage under DEVB; and
- (g) enhance resources in heritage conservation work by strengthening the Antiquities and Monuments Office in the

Leisure and Cultural Services Department and setting up dedicated teams in the Architectural Services Department and Buildings Department to support the adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

Greening Work

14. We will continue our efforts on enhancing urban greenery and will actively implement Greening Master Plans (GMPs), which seek to define comprehensively the greening framework of selected districts with coherent themes and plant species to promote a clear district identity. Greening works in Central and Tsim Sha Tsui were completed in March 2007. Studies on the development of GMPs for Sheung Wan / Wan Chai / Causeway Bay and Mong Kok / Yau Ma Tei are in progress for completion by end-2007. The study for developing GMPs for the remaining areas on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon has commenced in September 2007 for completion in early-2009. We also plan to commence studies of GMPs for the New Territories in mid-2009. In developing GMPs, we will continue to adopt an enhanced partnering approach which involves consultation with District Councils and local stakeholders at an early stage.

15. Apart from developing GMPs, we have implemented green roof top projects for new government buildings, which aims to help enhance cityscape, attenuate urban heat island effect and improve air quality. Since 2001, about 50 government buildings have already incorporated rooftop planting or flat roof landscaping while another 30 projects are under planning or construction. These include schools, office buildings, hospitals, community facilities and government quarters. Furthermore, another 20 projects for retrofitting green roof in existing government buildings have been identified for implementation in 2007/08.

Development Intensity

16. We understand the growing community aspirations for a better living environment and their calls for lower development intensity, less congested building layouts and more open space. To strike a balance between development needs and creating more open space and less

densely built environment, we will progressively stipulate in Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) clear development restrictions, where justified, for all to follow. This will be done through the statutory town plan amendment process and concerned parties can voice their views on the proposed amendments. Among the some 50 OZPs which at present do not have such development restrictions, priority will be given to those covering areas subject to high development/redevelopment pressures, waterfront areas along Victoria Harbour and congested built-up areas.

17. For the property development projects at Nam Cheong and Yuen Long Stations along the West Rail, we will discuss with the railway corporations to formulate revised planning schemes, to be followed by consultation with the stakeholders and the community (such as the concerned District Councils) under the statutory town planning process. The exact reduction in development intensity will be site-specific, as each site has its own special features and surrounding environment. The railway corporations and the developers should be allowed to come up with better designs which can go some way towards addressing the public's concern.

Quality City Environment

18. We plan to take forward a number of public works projects aiming to improve the quality of city environment. Firstly, we will develop a continuous cycle track of up to 60 km from Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan by 2012. Secondly, we will continue our efforts to upgrade substandard government slopes, with a view to dealing with all high-risk man-made slopes by 2010. Thereafter, we will devise an implementation strategy to systematically deal with the landslide risks from the natural hillside catchments with known hazards, in order to provide a sustainable slope safety environment for the community. Thirdly, we have commenced a feasibility study for completion in 2008 to enhance the local environment quality and the ecological value of the Yuen Long Town Nullahs. Finally, we will expedite the programme to complete the replacement and rehabilitation of some 3,000 km of water mains by 2015, in order to reduce the risk of water main bursts and the resulting disruption to the traffic and water supply.

Building Safety

19. We will introduce a minor works control system with a view to simplifying the statutory requirements and procedures for carrying out small-scale building works, such as the erection of supporting frames for air-conditioners and advertising signboards as well as the repair of windows and drainage pipes. A Working Group comprising representatives from the professional institutions, the Hong Kong Construction Association and the Minor Works Concern Group has been established to formulate the implementation details of the proposal. We have taken into account the views expressed by the stakeholders in finalising the legislative amendments. We plan to introduce the Buildings (Amendment) Bill into the LegCo by end 2007.

20. On the basis of the community consensus achieved through the two-stage public consultation on mandatory building inspection, we are proceeding with drafting the legislation on a mandatory building inspection scheme and a mandatory window inspection scheme. We will work closely with Panel Members on operational details of the proposed schemes. We strive to introduce the proposed legislation into the next term of the LegCo as early as possible.

Conclusion

21. We welcome Members' feedback and pledge to work closely with LegCo in taking forward DEVB's priorities in the coming five years.

Development Bureau
11 October 2007