

Government proposes to Town Planning Board to temporarily rezone proposed public housing site in Fanling Golf Course to "Undetermined"

The Planning Department (PlanD) submitted a paper to the Town Planning Board (TPB) today (June 5) proposing to temporarily rezone the proposed public housing site (the relevant site) east of Fan Kam Road in the Fanling Golf Course to "Undetermined" (U). A spokesman of the Development Bureau (DEVB) made the following response:

The DEVB supported the PlanD's proposal to temporarily rezone the relevant site to "U" so as to allow the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and relevant departments to follow up on the conditions attached to the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report earlier, including reviewing the layout design, building height and development density; revising the layout design report; preparing a detailed landscape and visual design report; and submitting to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) the relevant reports.

The DEVB pointed out that about 9.54 hectares of land on the draft Fanling/Sheung Shui Extension Area Outline Zoning Plan (draft plan) published last year was zoned as "Residential (Group A)" (R(A)) primarily for high density public housing development, with a plot ratio of 7 and a building height restriction of 170 metres above the Principal Datum. In view of the conditions attached to the approval of the EIA report last month, these development parameters will have to be adjusted. The magnitude of adjustment is subject to the findings of the CEDD's review later and the DEP's approval. Since the follow-up review and approval by the DEP will take time, it will not be appropriate to retain the current R(A) zoning with the high density development parameters on the draft plan to be submitted to the Executive Council by the statutory deadline of end November this year. The DEVB considered it prudent to rezone the site to "U" temporarily as a stopgap arrangement.

Once the TPB has completed discussion of the draft plan in end November 2023, the CEDD will immediately commence the aforementioned review, which is estimated to take about 12 months. Review outcomes are expected to be available around end 2024 for submission to the DEP for consideration. Subject to approval of the reports, the PlanD will initiate the follow-up statutory planning procedure the soonest possible to propose appropriate statutory residential development parameters and corresponding land use zoning for the relevant site. As in the past, the public will then be consulted on the revised rezoning in accordance with the established procedure.

The DEVB stated that the turn of events will inevitably affect the scale and timetable of the proposed public housing development. However, the Government has to respect and follow up on the conditions attached to the approval of the EIA report, and offer professional and practical advice to the TPB on the follow-up arrangements. Although the relevant site is temporarily rezoned to "U", the intention to develop public housing thereat is retained and stated in the Explanatory Statement of the draft plan. The temporary rezoning will provide a buffer period to allow the CEDD and the relevant departments to follow up on reviewing the appropriate layout and development parameters.

As for the remaining southern portion of about 21.65 hectares east of Fan Kam Road in Fanling Golf Course, the DEVB added that the approval of the EIA report has not affected the proposed zoning to "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Conservation cum Recreation" on the draft plan.

As the Government pointed out repeatedly before, irrespective of the progress of the town planning process, the short term tenancy of the entire 32 hectares of land east of Fan Kam Road will expire on August 31, 2023 and the Government will take back the land on September 1, 2023 as planned. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the land, including the northernmost portion earmarked for public housing development until such is handed over to the CEDD for commencement of works. The LCSD will make separate announcement on the management and detailed opening arrangement. Separately, as the Government previously stated, in case the Hong Kong Golf Club requires temporary additional land in future for supporting the organisation of major events, the relevant departments would be happy to provide appropriate assistance where possible.

The TPB will arrange public hearings for the draft plan from June 12 onwards to consider the representations and opinions received on the draft plan. In this connection, the PlanD issued a TPB paper today on the representations and opinions received as well as the responses from departments, including the proposed rezoning of the R(A) site to "U" temporarily. After the hearings are completed, the TPB will take into account all representations and opinions as well as the proposal from the PlanD to decide whether to amend the draft plan, including whether to accept the PlanD's proposal to temporarily rezone the proposed housing site to "U" before confirmation of the development parameters. The relevant paper has been uploaded onto the TPB's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb/en/whats_new/Website_S_FSSE_1.html).