

1. The meeting was resumed at 9:05 a.m. on 29.4.2015.
2. The following Members and the Secretary were present at the resumed meeting:

Mr Thomas T.M. Chow	Chairman
Mr Stanley Y.F. Wong	Vice-Chairman
Mr Roger K.H. Luk	
Professor S.C. Wong	
Professor P.P. Ho	
Professor Eddie C.M. Hui	
Dr C.P. Lau	
Mr Clarence W.C. Leung	
Ms Anita W.T. Ma	
Professor K.C. Chau	
Mr H.W. Cheung	
Mr Ivan C.S. Fu	
Mr Sunny L.K. Ho	
Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang	
Ms Janice W.M. Lai	
Mr Dominic K.K. Lam	
Mr H.F. Leung	
Mr Stephen H.B. Yau	
Mr David Y.T. Lui	
Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung	
Mr Peter K.T. Yuen	
Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1)	
Mr C.W. Tse	

Principal Assistant Secretary (Transport) 3
Transport and Housing Bureau
Miss Winnie M.W. Wong

Chief Engineer (Works), Home Affairs Department
Mr Martin W.C. Kwan

Director of Lands
Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn

Director of Planning
Mr K.K. Ling

Deliberation Session

[Closed Meeting]

3. The Chairman extended a welcome to Members. He recapitulated that in deliberating on the representations and comments in respect of the Kwu Tung North (KTN) and Fanling North (FLN) Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) at the meeting on the day before, Members agreed that the Board's decision on the OZPs should be based on the overall public interest of the community at large and that the new town approach was an efficient and sustainable way of providing land to meet the development needs of Hong Kong. The land use proposals in the two draft OZPs had duly balanced the different needs of Hong Kong. The various technical assessments had confirmed the technical feasibility of the New Development Areas (NDAs). While the land use proposals on the two OZPs were considered acceptable and that no change should be made to the two OZPs, Members were of the views that there were a number of issues and concerns raised by the representers/commenters, albeit outside the scope of the two OZPs, were related to the detailed design and implementation of the NDAs, which should be properly and proactively addressed by the Government at the detailed design stage. In that regard, Members agreed that a submission summarising the Board's views on such issues/concerns should be prepared for consideration by the Government outside of the statutory plan preparation process. Based on Members' discussion on the day, the Secretariat would help compile a draft list for consideration by the Board at a later meeting.

4. Members then went through a gist of points made by Members previously, as shown on the visualiser, which was prepared by the Secretariat to facilitate discussion.

Rehousing and Clearance Arrangements

5. A Member considered that timely rehousing of the affected local inhabitants was of paramount importance and there should be no time lag between clearance and rehousing.

6. In response to a Member's question on the elderly home at Dills Corner Garden, the Chairman said that it was the elderly people residing in the elderly homes rather than the operators of those commercially-operated elderly homes that the Government should give priority attention.

7. Noting that some representers had raised concerns on how to settle down the animals and livestock kept by them, the Vice-chairman asked whether the Government should be requested to look into the arrangements for accommodating the animals. The Chairman said that the Board's suggestion to the Government should be pragmatic. Members agreed. Mr K.K. Ling, Director of Planning, said that as the area where most of the affected inhabitants were residing would be cleared for development around 2023 or thereafter, and hence there should be sufficient time for the inhabitants to plan for their animals and livestock.

[Mr Clarence W.C. Leung and Mr David Y.T. Lui returned to join the meeting at this point.]

8. A Member suggested recommending the Government to strengthen the social service teams to assist the affected inhabitants with the rehousing and clearance arrangements. This Member agreed that the timely rehousing of all affected inhabitants, in particular the relocation of the elderly at Dills Corner Garden, before clearance was important.

9. A Member considered that while there could be various kinds of impacts on the affectees due to the NDAs development, most of the impacts could be addressed through other appropriate channels. The Board should suggest the general approaches that the Government should adopt and the particular areas for attention that the Government should take note of, and should leave the detailed arrangements to the Government to map out.

10. The Chairman said that it was necessary to have a preamble in the Board's submission to the Government that any arrangements to address the concerns of the affectees of the NDAs development should be subject to the principles of fairness and reasonableness for safeguarding the public interest and the proper use of public resources. Such a preamble should be made clear to the public. Members agreed. In response to a Member's concern, the Chairman said that the Government could be advised to provide suitable arrangements to those affected inhabitants who were not eligible for rehousing to subsidised housing.

11. Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn, Director of Lands, considered that, insofar as the provision of rehousing choices was concerned, the Government should pay particular attention to those affectees who were not eligible for subsidised housing and would be most needy.

12. A Member said that while the Board had sympathy for those affected farmers who had been farming in the area for a long time, the need to provide relocation assistance to business operators in general was problematic as it might be misinterpreted as the Government having a policy to re-provision business operations in land clearance exercises. The Chairman said that in general the eligible business operators affected by government projects would be compensated with ex-gratia allowance but their operators would not be re-provisioned by the Government. Those who owned the land would also get land compensation for their land resumed by the Government under the established policy. However, if the Government had land for industrial or specific business purpose for sale, the affected business operators might be so informed of the land sale. The case for a restricted tender might be considered for them.

13. A Member considered that it might be necessary to define who the local inhabitants were as some inhabitants might have been living in the area for a very long time whilst some might have just moved in recently. Similarly, while farmers could refer to those who had been farming in the area for a very long time, some of those who claimed to be farmers were more akin to business operators as their farms were mainly for hobby farming and had only been set up for a few years. The Chairman said that only genuine farmers as verified by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) would be eligible for agricultural resite under the Government's Agricultural Resite Policy.

14. Members generally agreed that a people-orientated approach in rehousing should be adopted to preserve ties and social fabric for long-established villagers. There should be proper rehousing and clearance arrangements for the local inhabitants, including the non-indigenous villagers and those living in domestic structures/squatters, the elderly who were residing in the elderly homes at Dills Corner Garden, the farmers and the business operators, subject to eligibility and the principles of fairness and reasonableness, public interest and proper use of public resources.

Timely Provision of Transport Facilities

15. A Member said that some representers and commenters were concerned about whether the transport facilities could be provided timely to tie in with the population intake of the NDAs. This point should be emphasised in the submission to the Government. A few other Members concurred that timely provision of the transport facilities was essential and should be emphasised.

16. A Member considered that while the Board accepted the findings of the traffic impact assessment (TIA) conducted for the NENT NDAs Study, if the Government was requested to carry out a regional TIA, as suggested by some representers, to further examine the cumulative impact of the NDAs development on the strategic road network system, the study area of the regional TIA should be clearly defined, and the traffic impacts on the strategic roads and rail service should also be assessed in a holistic manner. The Secretary said that the Member's views could be conveyed to the Transport Department for reference if a regional TIA for the NDAs development would be carried out in future.

17. A Member said that some follow-up measures, e.g. monitoring the traffic conditions of the strategic road network and train frequency, could be done after the implementation of the NDAs development. On the other hand, as railway would be the major mode of transport for the NDAs, it was important to reaffirm the carrying capacity of the rail lines taking into account the demand forecast and the finding of the strategic public transport study if a regional TIA would be carried out.

18. Noting that the findings of the TIA conducted under the NENT NDAs Study, including the proposed road networks and provision of transport facilities for the NDAs,

were acceptable to the Board, a Member considered that the carrying out of a regional TIA might not be necessary. Instead, it might be more appropriate to suggest to the Government that it should constantly review the traffic conditions of the strategic road network and railway provision and devise improvement measures, if necessary, for maintaining an acceptable level of service. On the Northern Link (NOL), this Member said that the project would enhance the provision of train service to the NDAs.

19. While having accepted the results of the TIA conducted for the NENT NDAs Study, which confirmed the technical feasibility of the NDAs development, Members considered that the Government should continue to examine the need for further enhancing, on top of the committed improvements, the provision of transport services to address the concerns raised. For example, the traffic conditions of the strategic road network system between the New Territories and the urban areas and the train service, in particular the frequency of trains of East Rail Line (ERL), should be closely monitored to ensure that they were operating within their carrying capacities, and that the timing for implementation of the Kwu Tung Station of the NOL as well as the local road improvement measures should tie in with the population intakes of the NDAs.

Integration of Rural and Agricultural Characteristics in Urban Design

20. A Member considered that the overall design concept of the NDAs could emphasise the integration of the built environment within the rural setting of the area for creating a characteristic that was unique to the NDAs. Another Member concurred with the view.

21. A Member said that as there was proposal to relocate the proposed police driving training school from Planning Area 3 of FLN to Kong Nga Po, the two “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) sites originally reserved for the police driving training school might also be used for promoting urban farming. Mr K.K. Ling said that the relocation proposal of the police driving training school was still being studied. If there was any change to the land use zoning of the sites, it would be brought to the Board for consideration.

22. A Member said that opportunities for urban farming should be considered in all “Open Space” (“O”) zones and not only the Central Park in FLN.

23. Members were generally of the views that the rural and agricultural characteristics of the NDAs should be integrated in the urban design in a holistic manner and that opportunities for urban farming, including that within developments, should be explored within the NDAs.

Supporting/Promoting Local Agriculture

24. A Member suggested recommending that the Government give priority to the affected farmers to use the agricultural land within the NDAs or other suitable sites for agricultural rehabilitation. The Chairman said that the genuine farmers displaced by the NDAs development would have priority in the Government’s matching scheme for agricultural resite or rehabilitation. Members agreed that the Member’s suggestion would be included in the submission to the Government.

25. A Member said that in addition to AFCD and the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the Lands Department should be requested to participate in the current review of the agricultural policy as many issues concerning local agriculture were land administration issues. This Member also suggested that the Government should explore measures to facilitate the recycling of food wastes in the building design of the NDAs so as to assist the operation of the local community or sustainable farms. The Chairman agreed that the NDAs did provide an opportunity to improve waste recycling in Hong Kong. Members agreed that the suggestion would be included in the submission to the Government.

26. A Member said that in addition to adopting a more proactive and comprehensive approach in the formulation of the agricultural policy and conducting an agricultural land survey to identify the good quality farmland for retention, the Government should explore how to provide suitable farmland for agricultural practice under the agricultural policy.

27. A Member said that while the views of some representers on the agricultural policy could not be addressed by the two draft OZPs, they could be further examined by the Government in the review of the agricultural policy. The Board's submission to the Government provided an opportunity for the Board to convey the representers' views to the Government so that the Government could assist the affected farmers on agricultural resite or rehabilitation more proactively. In view of the fact that many farmlands in the New Territories were left idle by the landowners which was a waste of the scarce land resource, this Member suggested recommending that the Government devise measures to avoid hoarding of private agricultural land, e.g. mandating the landowners to maintain agricultural activities on the land. The Chairman said that the Member's concern on hoarding of agricultural land was understandable. However, it was difficult to enforce against vacant land since the landowners could just do a little planting on the land and it would not be easy to challenge that it was not being used for the purpose.

28. A Member said that many representers were dissatisfied that the Government did not pay due regard to food safety and had not set any target on local agricultural production. This Member suggested that in the planning of other future new towns or NDAs, the Board should take local agriculture as an opportunity, rather than a constraint, for integrating agriculture with urban design.

29. A Member considered that agriculture had been taken as an essential element in the planning of the two NDAs. It might explore further the integration of the agricultural concept in the urban design such that the rural environment was transformed into an urban village.

[Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung returned to join the meeting at this point.]

30. A Member said that the two OZPs had already reserved land for agricultural purpose. Moreover, the Government was concurrently reviewing the agricultural policy. Board Members could submit their views on the agricultural policy to FHB for consideration. Another Member concurred.

31. Members generally agreed that on the agricultural policy, the suggestion to the Government should focus on how the proposed Agriculture Park could be used to assist genuine farmers. On the broader context, the Board could suggest that the Government

take note of the strong aspirations of some in the community for setting a new vision for local agriculture and increasing local agricultural production in devising the new agricultural policy.

32. As a related matter, Members noted there were representers and commenters who were doubtful about the necessity of the NDAs. While Members agreed that there was an imminent need for the NDAs development. In line with the Government's policy to build up a land reserve, they considered that the Government should also be urged to continue to examine other potential development sites in parallel to meet the housing and other development needs of the Hong Kong community.

Provision of Employment Opportunities

33. The Vice-chairman considered that the suggestion of some representers and commenters for the Government to strengthen the general skills of the workforce might be overstated as the NDAs development was mainly a regional issue.

34. Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn said that despite the suggestion to decentralise the employment opportunities from the urban area, thereby minimising the need for commuting, it was accepted that the NDAs development as reflected on the draft OZPs would not result in insurmountable traffic impacts.

35. Members agreed with the importance of providing more job opportunities in the New Territories to minimise the need for commuting to the urban areas. The Government should take proactive action to address the general problem throughout the territory of mismatch of job opportunities and labour skills, including strengthening the general skills of the workforce in Hong Kong.

Dissemination of Information

36. A Member noted from the hearing that many local inhabitants were not aware of the rehousing and compensation arrangements or they had received false information from other people, making them even more worried about the NDAs development. Many of the adverse representations arose from such misunderstanding. This somehow

revealed that the affected inhabitants did not trust the assurances given by the Government. This Member suggested that the Government should clarify the rehousing and compensation arrangements with the affected residents as soon as possible in order to ease their minds.

37. A Member said that many of the representers had a perception that only 6% of land in the NDAs would be used for housing development, which was a big misunderstanding. The Chairman said that there was a need to improve the dissemination of information on the NDAs to the public.

38. After discussion, Members considered that there should be improvements in the dissemination of information on implementation of the NDAs and the communications with the villagers and the public. In particular, the details of the clearance programme and compensation package should be announced as soon as possible to ease the mind of the affected parties.

Summary of the Board's Views

39. After further discussion, the Secretary summed up Members' views on the various aspects that had been deliberated and suggested that the following main aspects would be covered in the Board's submission to the Government:

Rehousing and Compensation

- suitable rehousing and/or compensation arrangement to the existing inhabitants affected by the NDAs development, subject to eligibility and the principles of fairness and reasonableness, public interest and proper use of public resources, should be made by adopting a more people-oriented approach;
- the special needs and concerns of the elderly population, including those living in Drills Corner Garden, should be catered for in a timely manner;

- appropriate assistance should be provided to address the relocation needs of the traditional industries as justified;

Timely Provision of Transport Facilities

- the Kwu Tung Station as well as the committed local road improvements should be timely implemented to tie in with the population intakes of the NDAs;
- the traffic conditions of the whole NENT region, including the train service and especially the ERL, should continue to be closely monitored, and appropriate measures, if necessary, should be devised to ensure that the transport provisions were capable of serving the anticipated developments in the years to come;
- the NOL should continue to be studied to meet the strategic needs of the wider region;

Retaining Local Agriculture

- assistance should be provided to match the affected farmers with land owners of appropriate farmland to make available land for agricultural resite;
- in its agricultural policy review, the Government might set out a new vision for local agriculture taking into consideration issues such as global food supply, the growing demand for local agricultural produce and the sustainable development of local agriculture;
- leisure agricultural activities such as hobby farming should be encouraged and facilitated in the detailed design of projects, e.g. open space development in the NDAs;

Continue Exploring Alternative Land Supply

- potential development sites other than KTN/FLN NDAs to meet the housing and other development needs of the Hong Kong community should continue to be examined in parallel;

Employment Opportunities

- more job opportunities should be provided in the New Territories with a view to decentralising the employment opportunities from the main urban area and reducing the need for commuting;
- proactive action to be taken to address the mismatch of job opportunities and labour skills in the region; and

Dissemination of Information

- the Government should continue to enhance communication with the affectees and provide more easily comprehensible information and explanations to the community regarding the NDAs.

40. The Chairman said that Members' views would be consolidated into a draft list to be prepared by the Secretariat, which would be submitted to the Board for consideration at a later meeting. The submission would then be made to the Government and made available for public inspection.

Confirmation of Decision on the Representations

41. After further deliberation, Members agreed that the Board's decisions on the representations in Group 1 to Group 4 in respect of the draft FLN and KTN OZPs, as made on the day before, were in order and that the OZPs should not be amended to meet the representations.

Agenda Item 4

[Closed Meeting]

Any Other Business

[The meeting was conducted in Cantonese.]

42. Members went through a draft press statement on the Board's decision on the representations and comments in respect of the draft FLN and KTN OZPs, and suggested some refinements to the statement. The Secretariat was authorised to refine the press statement for promulgation after the meeting.

[Post-meeting Note: The press release was issued on 29.4.2015 after the meeting.]

43. There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 10:40 a.m.