

(Translated Version)

**Lantau Development Advisory Committee
Sustainable Development Subcommittee**

**Task Force on Lantau Conservation
Third Meeting**

Date: 15 September 2017 (Friday)

Time: 2:30 pm to 5:10 pm

Venue: Conference Room, Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre (Kowloon Park, Haiphong Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon)

Notes of Meeting

Members in Attendance

Mr. Andrew LAM Siu-lo, SBS, JP	Convener	
Mr. Michael LAU Wai-neng	Deputy Convener	
Dr. CHENG Luk-ki	Representative of Green Power	
Ms. HO Pui-han		
Mr. Julian KWONG Tse-hin	Representative of The Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong	
Dr. Merrin PEARSE		
Mr. Ken SO Kwok-yin	Representative of The Conservancy Association	
Mr. WONG Man-hon		
Mr. YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP		
Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN		
Ms. Joan SO Shuk-yee	STP2(SD), CEDD	Secretary

Facilitators

Ms. KIANG Kam-yin	DPM (SD), HKI&I, CEDD
Mr. HO Man-kai, Simon	EPO (RA)5, EPD
Ms. HO Ching-yee	SNCO(S), AFCD
Mr. Kevin CHAN Sze-wai	STP/SP6, PlanD

In Attendance

Mr. AU Sheung-man, Benjamin	ADO (Islands)1, HAD
Miss NG Ka-yan	NCO (Lantau), AFCD
Mr. Robin LEE Kui-biu	PM (HKI&I), CEDD
Ms. Joyce LAU Yiu-yan	CE(SD), CEDD
Mr. CHEUNG Kai-cheung, Henry	SE13 (SD), CEDD
Mr. CHAN Wing-tak	TP1 (SD), CEDD

1. The Convener welcomed the Members to the third meeting of the Task Force on Lantau Conservation (Task Force) under the Sustainable Development Subcommittee (SD SC) of the Lantau Development Advisory Committee (LanDAC).

Confirmation of Previous Notes of Meeting

2. Members agreed to confirm the amended Previous Notes of Meeting issued by the Secretariat on 8 September.

Cattle Protection (briefed by Ms. HO Pui-han)

3. Ms. HO Pui-han briefed the Members on the historical, cultural and socio-economic background of cattle, their distributions and behaviors, their current problems, as well as proposals in a presentation titled “Needs and Proposals for Cattle Protection”, including:

- history of cattle in the context of agricultural lives and their relationships with the community upon Hong Kong’s economic transformation;
- the existing policy on cattle and problems arising from their neutering/relocation to Sai Kung;
- proposing that the communities be designed in a cattle-friendly manner, such as planting cow grasses at parks and roadsides, or setting up cowsheds for them to live; and
- in case the cattle had to be relocated, it was worth considering for relocating them to Sha Lo Wan, given the prevalence of native plants there.

4. Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN opined that given wild animals and feral cattles being a part of the habitat, he was against feeding them. Such an act would upset the ecological balance. The Government would better control the number of cattle to the level within the ecological capacity.

5. Mr. WONG Man-hon indicated that farmer households would look after their own cattle in the 1970s, in particular preventing their cattle from damaging others’ crops. The current problems mainly included various nuisances caused by cattle, such as the environmental impacts of cattle dung, cases of conflict with the residents and crop damage by cattle, as well as dangers posed to road users. The number of cattle in Mui Wo had been on the rise in recent years, thereby creating increasingly serious repercussions on residents.

6. Mr. Randy YU remarked that the cattle were currently managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in an ineffective manner, failing to effectively control the number of cattle. He hoped the Government to seriously consider the introduction of a pilot programme under which some of the cattles would be relocated to Tai A Chau with reference to the framework of “Conservation for the South”.

7. Dr. Merrin PEARSE enquired how the Task Force would define a particular creature needed to be protected and why cattle were particularly highlighted in the agenda of the Task Force.

8. In reply, the Convener said that given that the cattle had become a part of the rural environment, discussions should be focused on how to solve the current problems caused by the cattle.

(Translated Version)

9. Ms. HO Pui-han added that in the context of development and conservation of Lantau, the cattle had become one of the common controversial issues, which needed to be addressed in a timely manner.

10. Ms. HO Ching-yee responded that AFCD had always been concerned about the cattle conservation issue, however there had been divergent views among different stakeholders. AFCD remained open to any proposals, but some lacked details that are essential for an assessment on their feasibility. She also agreed with Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN that cattle in the wild should not be fed.

11. In responding, Mr. Robin LEE pointed out that in resolving cattle issue, the key concerns of various parties should be clearly identified. For instance, for the sake of safety and health of the cattle, their relocation to Tai A Chau might bring benefits to them, whereas, for those wishing to visit the cattle, Tai A Chau would not necessarily be a convenient location. Meanwhile, the feelings of the community and those affected by the cattle would also need to be taken into account. It was essential for all the relevant parties and groups to participate in a frank discussion before a consensus could possibly be reached.

12. Mr. Randy YU pointed out that a Lantau Stray Buffalo and Cattle Working Group (“Working Group”) was just set up by the Lantau Area Committee to discuss and follow up on the relevant issue, and that the Working Group welcomed the participation of cattle lovers and locals.

HAD
AFCD

[Post meeting note: AFCD has arranged representatives of their office and cattle lovers to join the Working Group meeting on 12 October to discuss relevant issues with the members.]

13. The Convener agreed with Mr. Robin LEE and thanked Ms. HO Pui-han and the Members for their sharing and views.

Major Work Progress

14. Ms. Joyce LAU reported that a briefing on the work progress of the Task Force was held at the Second Joint Meeting of SD SC and Traffic, Transport and District Improvement Items Subcommittee (TTDII SC) on 2 May 2017. The Government published the Sustainable Lantau Blueprint (“Blueprint”) in June and the Members put forth various conservation proposals at the briefing held on 9 June. At the end of July, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) also commenced the “Study on Traffic, Transport and Capacity to Receive Visitors for Lantau – Feasibility Study”, which was anticipated to be completed in 2019. The study scope includes investigating the feasibility to improve the traffic condition in Lantau, including roads and water transport, assessing the capacity to receive visitors and exploring the feasibility to expand cycle track and mountain bike trail networks. The Environment and Conservation Fund held a briefing on 29 August to introduce the environmental education and community action projects with the theme of “Nature Conservation in South Lantau”.

15. Ms. Joyce LAU remarked that as part of the effort to follow up the 11 First Batch Discussion Items at the previous Meeting and address the aspirations of green groups to set up a government database regarding Lantau, CEDD was collating from different departments the snapshots on various fronts, including information on geographic, demographic, economic, infrastructure, environmental and ecological, leisure and culture etc. Upon consolidation, such information would be provided in batches for the public’s reference. In addition, CEDD planned to commence the “Ecological Study for Pui O, Shui Hau, Tai O and Neighbouring Areas – Feasibility Study” in the 4th quarter

(Translated Version)

of 2017. The study would aim to review and consolidate the existing ecological information, conduct ecological surveys for the areas of rural conservation pilot projects (i.e. Pui O, Shui Hau and Tai O) and recommend feasible conservation measures for these areas.

16. Ms. Joyce LAU said that CEDD proposed the setting up of expert groups for various conservation areas, in the hope of exploring practicable conservation proposals for Lantau on different fronts by consolidating relevant professional advice through exchanges and discussions. The five areas prioritized for discussions in the preliminary proposal included: (1) Conservation of Pui O and Shui Hau; (2) Conservation of Tai O; (3) Green Transport; (4) Land and Waste Management; and (5) Linkage of Sites of Natural and Cultural Interests. CEDD would invite relevant experts to join the expert groups on respective areas for discussions and Members were also welcome to provide nomination for the expert groups. When individual conservation proposals had been explored by the expert group and achieved concrete progress, we would report to the Task Force in due course.

17. Dr. CHENG Luk-ki hoped the Government to provide details on the transport and traffic strategy on Lantau. If the Government expanded the transport network on Lantau, it would be in contrast to the green transport and traffic strategy advocated by green groups.

18. Mr. Ken SO suggested CEDD to provide the scope of studies and to discuss with the Members and the Green Groups on the arrangement of studies as soon as possible.

19. Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN enquired the number of the Lantau Closed Road Permits issued as a baseline for assessing the present situation. Given that the developments near Tung Chung River Valley and South Lantau resulted in imminent threat, Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN pointed out that the agricultural lands nearby would be vulnerable to immediate developments in case the roads were opened up. It was essential to step up enforcement for the effective implementation of conservation measures. Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN requested for the information on the study scope of “Study on Traffic, Transport and Capacity to Receive Visitors for Lantau – Feasibility Study” and “Ecological Study for Pui O, Shui Hau, Tai O and Neighbouring Areas – Feasibility Study”.

20. Mr. Randy YU remarked that Lantau was such a major tourist attraction that attracted millions of visitors. Information provided by the bus company revealed the patronage to and from Tai O of five million every year. The carrying capacity of Lantau’s public transport had been exceeded. In reality, it was difficult for local residents to take public transport during weekends. He hoped that the Government would examine the provision of additional public transport services, such as the use of transport system like elevated monorail to connect Tung Chung and Tai O, to facilitate the residents’ access.

21. Ms Joyce LAU responded collectively that the “Study on Traffic, Transport and Capacity to Receive Visitors for Lantau – Feasibility Study” would examine ways to improve transport connections, the needs and feasibilities of the transport infrastructures, including financial viability, environmental and traffic impacts etc. The Government had no pre-conceived stance on widening of the roads. As regards the enquiry by Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN on the Lantau Closed Road Permits, CEDD would provide the information after the Meeting. Mr. Robin LEE added that the study would focus on the carrying capacity of visitors on Lantau instead of mere widening of the roads.

The
Secretariat

[Post-meeting note: The Secretariat emailed the Members on 22.9.2017 in replying to Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN’s enquiry on the number of the Lantau Closed Road Permits issued. The information on study scope of the “Study on Traffic, Transport and Capacity to Receive Visitors for Lantau – Feasibility Study” and the “Ecological Study for Pui O, Shui Hau, Tai O and Neighbouring Areas – Feasibility Study” was provided to the

(Translated Version)

Members via email on 26.10.2017. Further updated study scope of the “Study on Traffic, Transport and Capacity to Receive Visitors for Lantau – Feasibility Study” was sent to members on 10.11.2017.]

22. Dr. Merrin PEARSE enquired why the ecologically important habitats of North Lantau (e.g. Tai Ho) were not included in the study area of the ecological study and why “Conservation of Pui O and Shui Hau” and “Conservation of Tai O” were not included in the same expert group.

23. Mr. Julian KWONG suggested extending the scope of the ecological study to cover geology and landforms, in addition to ecology.

24. The Convener enquired when the item on setting up database mentioned in the First Batch Discussion Items would be implemented.

25. Ms. HO Pui-han remarked that green groups had undertaken an ecological survey on the Tai O mangrove area and suggested that the ecological study should take into account relevant survey findings.

26. In responding, Ms. Ginger KIANG said that the ecological study would focus on the South Lantau areas outside the country park areas so as to evaluate the ecological significance of these areas. Apart from Pui O, Shui Hau and Tai O, the ecological study would evaluate the need of conducting ecological surveys/studies and the priority of these surveys/studies based on the ecological significances of the habitats in the Study Area (e.g. Sha Lo Wan, Yi O, Mui Wo, Shap Long, etc). If the need was established, ecological surveys/studies would be arranged separately for these ecologically important habitats with a view to exploring possible conservation measures. As per the request on information on study scope, CEDD would provide the information to members later. As for the expert groups, the expert group for “Conservation of Pui O and Shui Hau” would focus on nature conservation while the expert group for “Conservation of Tai O” would focus on conservation of both nature and culture heritage. Therefore, the coverage of the discussion topics for these two expert groups would be different. CEDD was currently in liaison with various departments to follow up on the issue of the database. Hopefully, CEDD would complete the setting up of the database on Lantau snapshots in end 2017 or early 2018.

27. Mr. Paul ZIMMERMAN remarked that the above discussions were not the most important issues at the moment, which should be about how to protect lands from destruction, such as by means of a systematic overhaul of the land administration regime and relevant legislations, as well as the allocation of additional resources to step up enforcement.

28. Dr. CHENG Luk-ki pointed out that the areas around Tung Chung River, which were destroyed in 2003, had been once again destroyed. It has therefore become more necessary than ever to take enforcement action in an effective manner.

PlanD

[Post-meeting note: Planning Department (PlanD) has stepped up enforcement action against unauthorized developments (UDs) in Tung Chung Valley area. Since December 2015, a total of 9 UD cases involving land filling or storage uses were found. Enforcement Notices (ENs) had been issued in these 9 cases. In the two cases against unauthorized land filling within Conservation Area (“CA”) zone, Reinstatement Notice had been issued in one case and another one to be issued shortly. Two other suspected UD cases are currently under investigation. PlanD will continue to visit the area regularly to monitor the condition in the area. Should there be sufficient evidence to prove an UD occurs, appropriate enforcement action would be taken.]

29. The Deputy Convener pointed out that Tung Chung River Valley was located

(Translated Version)

within the development permission area plan (DPA plan). As such, enforcement action could be taken by the PlanD in case of unauthorized developments. Given the South Lantau Coast was not covered by DPA plan, the PlanD was not in a position to proceed with enforcement even if the sites in the area had been designated as Coastal Protection Area.

30. Dr. CHENG Luk-ki hoped to follow up the traffic control measures to control the fly-tipping problem.

31. The Deputy Convener hoped that the expert groups could be set up as soon as possible, in a bid to discuss various measures such as those relating to traffic control with the Transport Department.

32. The Convener agreed to a more detailed discussion of various items for concrete progress.

33. In responding, Ms. Ginger KIANG said that CEDD was currently coordinating with the relevant departments in preparation of the composition and agenda of expert groups. The implementation timetable was yet to be determined.

Any Other Business

34. There being no other businesses, the Convener thanked the Members for attending the third meeting of the Task Force. The Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.