

Southern District Council

Aberdeen Tourism Project

Purpose

This paper seeks the views of the Southern District Council (SDC) on the design and works schedule of the Aberdeen Tourism Project (the Project).

Background

2. The Tourism Commission (the Commission) briefed the SDC on 23 April 2009 on the latest development and the way forward of the Project. At the meeting, we reported the financial consultant's assessment on the financial viability of the Project's original conceptual design, particularly its limited appeal to the private sector. To enhance the tourism attractiveness of the Southern District, the Administration proposed to fund and carry out improvement works for the promenades on both sides of the Aberdeen Harbour as well as Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets with the theme of traditional fishermen's village in Aberdeen. At the meeting, Members unanimously supported the Commission to seek resources for undertaking improvement works for the tourist facilities in Aberdeen.

Latest progress

3. Thereafter, we consulted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Economic Development and immediately set up an inter-departmental working group to take forward the Project. Since last year, the Commission has conducted a number of site visits and met with the SDC, district personalities and other stakeholders so as to explore the feasibility of various options.

4. In March 2010, the Civil Engineering and Development Department engaged a consultant to work on the design of the Project. We also convened five informal meetings with district personalities in July and August this year to obtain their initial comments, with a view to ensuring that the design would meet their expectations as far as practicable.

5. At the same time, the Commission has reported the latest progress of the Project to the Working Group on Promoting the Development of Tourism of the Community Affairs and Publicity Committee of the SDC three times since mid-2009.

Project design

6. Having consolidated the opinion of the SDC, district personalities and other stakeholders, we propose to carry out the following improvement works along an one-kilometre section of the promenade of both sides of the Aberdeen Harbour as well as Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets –

- (a) re-constructing the existing viewing deck at the Aberdeen Promenade by installing sails with transparent effect, so as to establish a landmark for the promenade and creating the ambience of a fishing harbour;
- (b) widening the public open space in the vicinity of the viewing deck, providing sampan seats and improving the existing chess pavilion as well as fitness area;
- (c) constructing a boardwalk and erecting seats as well as bronze display along the seaside of the elevated section of the Aberdeen Main Road leading to the Aberdeen Praya Road;
- (d) constructing a visitor information kiosk with traditional Chinese architectural characteristics near the Aberdeen Promenade exit of the pedestrian subway connecting with the Aberdeen Bus Terminus, so as to provide information on the history of Aberdeen as a fishing harbour; expanding the existing performing stage and installing dragon boat bronze display and boat-shape seats in the area, as well as renovating the rooftop of the subway;
- (e) building a Chinese-styled wall along the Aberdeen Promenade leading to the Kwun Hoi Path, so as to separate the Promenade from the Aberdeen Praya Road more effectively;

- (f) improving the cruise landing shelters along the Kwun Hoi Path and constructing a public toilet in the area;
- (g) renovating pedestrian footbridges across the Aberdeen Praya Road;
- (h) building a visitor information kiosk, erecting lantern features and a lighthouse display, as well as renovating the existing public toilet and chess pavilion at the Ap Lei Chau Waterfront Promenade; and levelling the public open space in front of the Hung Shing Temple Forecourt;
- (i) constructing a new entrance for the Ap Lei Chau Wind Tower Park and providing beautification features including railings, planters and shelters;
- (j) re-paving the pedestrian way of the Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets in the pattern of dragon boat and sailing boat; and erecting railings and signposts on these streets; and
- (k) installing landmark with traditional Chinese architectural characteristics at various entrance of the vehicular lane of the Ap Lei Chau Main Street; and re-paving the vehicular lane of the Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets with colour-dressing materials.

7. The total cost of the above works items is about \$250 million. A map showing the location of these items is at Annex.

Works schedule

8. If Members support carrying out the above works items, we will consult the LegCo Panel on Economic Development in December this year. With the Panel's support, we shall seek funding approval from the LegCo Finance Committee early next year. Once funding approval has been obtained, we will initiate the tender procedure with a view to commencing construction works in 2011.

9. The construction works for the South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)) will also begin next year and the planned Lei Tung Station (the Station) will have an entrance/ exit at the Wah Ting Street. During the construction of the Station, there would be construction vehicles running on the Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets. To minimise the impact of construction on the above-mentioned works items 6(j) and (k), we will work closely with the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited on various arrangements so that construction of the Station and the Project could tie in with each other to the greatest extent.

10. Assuming that funding approval will be obtained from the LegCo early next year, it is estimated that works items 6(a) to (i) mentioned above would be completed in phases in 2012-13. Depending on the works progress of the Station, works items 6(j) and (k) are expected to finish in 2013-14.

Long-term development

11. Besides carrying out improvement works for the promenades on both sides of the Aberdeen Harbour as well as Ap Lei Chau Main Street and adjacent streets, we have also explored some long-term proposals after gauging the opinion of stakeholders and district personalities. The latest progress of various proposals is as follows –

Developing a dining cum entertainment zone featuring seafood cuisine at part of the waterfront of northeastern Ap Lei Chau

12. Since part of the existing open space under the Ap Lei Chau Bridge has now been used as works areas for the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme or reserved as works areas for the construction of the SIL(E), the site can only be converted into other uses in 2015 at the earliest. We will examine the feasibility of developing a dining cum entertainment zone featuring seafood cuisine in this area from the planning, environment and traffic perspectives at an appropriate time.

Developing the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market into a tourist attraction and providing seafood restaurants at the market

13. The Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market (AWFM) is one of the busiest wholesale fish markets in Hong Kong. It operates round the clock and is packed with hundreds of market users and lorries as well as a large number of handcarts during peak operating hours. The existing facilities have already been utilised to the full capacity. Traffic around the market is also extremely busy.

14. The AWFM's primary function has all along been to provide wholesale services to fish buyers and was not designed for receiving scores of tourists. If the AWFM is to be developed into a tourist spot, this can only proceed on the premise that market operation will not be affected. Moreover, extra resources need to be secured for expanding the market space as well as improving traffic arrangements and other facilities such as parking space and toilets. In addition, the safety issue arising from the gathering of a large number of tourists in the market must be adequately addressed while approval from the Lands Department and the Town Planning Board has to be obtained for providing commercial facilities in the AWFM.

15. In fact, the scale and mode of operation of wholesale fish markets in other parts of the world are substantially different from those of the AWFM. Some busy markets have even put in place restrictive measures limiting the number of visitors and visit hours so as to ensure smooth market operation and safety of market users and visitors.

16. We have conducted several site visits to the AWFM, and consulted the Fish Marketing Organisation, which is responsible for the management of the AWFM, on the proposal. In addition, we have liaised with representatives of the food and beverage sector to gauge their initial views on developing and operating seafood restaurants in the AWFM. Since the proposal involves many stakeholders and the issues are rather complicated, we will continue to examine the proposal with relevant departments in the context of land lease, traffic arrangements, finance, planning and re-provisioning of affected facilities etc.

Improving transport facilities around the Ap Lei Chau Main Street

17. The future Lei Tung Station of the SIL(E) will have an entrance/ exit at the Wah Ting Street. We will liaise with relevant departments on improving the linkage between the Station and the Ap Lei Chau Main Street as well as waterfront area, with a view to facilitating access by visitors and local residents.

18. Meanwhile, the enlargement works of the coach pick-up/drop-off area near the entrance of the Ap Lei Chau Wind Tower Park have been completed in early November this year. Works items 6(i) mentioned above would also mitigate the problem of illegal parking in the area.

19. In addition, we understand that the District Facilities Management Committee of the SDC approved funding to construct a pedestrian cover at Ap Lei Chau Manly House on the Ap Lei Chau Main Street in April 2009. The project has been completed in September this year.

Re-vitalisation of “Category II” stationary vessels along the Aberdeen Promenade

20. Regarding the latest progress of this item, please refer to SDC Paper No. 103/2010.

Advice sought

21. We would like to obtain the support of Members for the Aberdeen Tourism Project, so that we can seek funding approval from the LegCo and commence construction works as soon as possible. Members are invited to comment on the design and works schedule.

**Tourism Commission
November 2010**