

LCQ18: Aberdeen Tourism Project

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, in the Legislative Council today (May 20):

Question:

Regarding the Aberdeen Tourism Project under the concept of a fisherman's wharf, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the total expenditure incurred on various studies for the aforesaid project, which have been conducted by consultants commissioned by the Tourism Commission;

(b) whether the Government had, when it proposed the aforesaid project, considered the synergy among various thematic clusters under the project (including the traditional fishing harbour along the Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau Promenade, the Fisherman's Wharf at Tai Shue Wan and the leisure and dining node off the coast of Sham Wan), as well as the synergy between these clusters and the entire Southern District;

(c) whether the Government has assessed the negative impact of its recent decision not to implement the aforesaid project on such synergy; if it has, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct the assessment expeditiously; and

(d) given that at its meeting on April 27 this year, the Panel on Economic Development of this Council passed a motion on urging the Government to reconsider implementing the aforesaid project, what specific follow-up actions the Government will take in this regard?

Reply:

President,

Our response is provided as follows:

(a) The Tourism Commission (TC) appointed a consultant in late 2006 to develop a conceptual design for the Aberdeen Tourism Project (the Project). The consultancy fee is \$1,280,000.

As the conceptual design comprised a number of commercial developments, we appointed a financial consultant in early 2008 to assess the commercial and financial viability of the conceptual plan, so as to explore the best approach to take forward the project. The consultancy fee is \$1,380,000.

(b) The conceptual design of the Aberdeen Tourism Project is a study which outlines the broad directions for consideration. It covers Aberdeen, Ap Lei Chau, Tai Shue Wan and the areas along both sides of the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter. The original conceptual design aims to highlight the theme of traditional fishing village whilst injecting certain commercial elements with a view to increasing visitors and enhancing tourism development in the Southern District as a whole.

(c) Owing to the recent developments in Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau (for example, the gate of Ocean Park in Tai Shue Wan will no longer be a main entrance upon the Park's redevelopment; part of the land under the Ap Lei Chau Bridge in Sham Wan would be used as the works areas for the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)) and Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS); part of the land at the Ap Lei Chau Northern Reclamation are being developed into a new public park by Leisure and Cultural Services Department, etc.) and the financial consultant's findings which concluded that the conceptual design was not commercially viable, we have decided to adjust the original conceptual design and fund the improvement works for the promenades on both sides of the Aberdeen Harbour and Ap Lei Chau Main Street to showcase the ambience of a fishing village. This will expedite the implementation of the project and can further enhance the general tourism appeal of the Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau areas. As the original design was conceptual in nature, no studies on the synergy effect was conducted. In view of the suggestions made by the Panel on Economic Development (ED Panel), we shall work with the Hong Kong Tourism Board to see how the Project could complement other attractions and facilities in the area, so as to strengthen the tourism appeal of the whole district.

(d) We shall push ahead with the proposed improvement works supported by the Southern District Council and the ED Panel. At the same time, we shall form a working group in response to the suggestion of the Panel to examine all objective factors (such as restrictions from lands or planning perspectives) with relevant departments to explore how to enhance the Project promptly. Our work will include the following four elements:

(i) to examine the feasibility from the planning, environment and transport perspectives of converting the works area of SIL(E) and HATS located under the Ap Lei Chau Bridge into a dining cum entertainment zone featuring seafood cuisine upon completion of the related works (expected to be around 2015);

(ii) to explore with concerned departments the feasibility of providing appropriate dining and tourism facilities at the Wholesale Fish Market without affecting its daily operation and the traffic in the vicinity;

(iii) to examine whether the "Class III Stationary Vessels" can be preserved and revitalised with a view to turning them into tourist attractions; and

(iv) to explore how the transport setting near Ap Lei Chau Main Street can be improved. For example, to examine how to improve the connection between the future Lei Tung Station of SIL(E) and Ap Lei Chau Main Street/waterfront area so as to facilitate visitors and local residents to visit the area.

We will maintain close liaison with the Southern District Council and the tourism industry to gauge their views on the Project, in order to further develop the tourism potential of the area.

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