

Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences

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Press Release

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HKAES puts forward a position paper on land supply issues

Hong Kong Academy of Engineering Sciences (HKAES) today (15 August 2018) submitted a [position paper](#) to the Task Force on Land Supply (the Task Force) appointed by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR Government, setting out its views on the land supply-related issues in Hong Kong and the 18 options for provision of additional land put forward by the Task Force in the public engagement activities commenced in May this year.

HKAES expressed grave concern to the long-standing imbalance in demand and supply for land which has created a lot of socio-economic issues. It was suggested that the Government should accord top priority to increase both the scale and speed of land supply in order to address the many livelihood and developmental issues plaguing Hong Kong.

The followings are the recommendations put forward by HKAES in the position paper:

1. Adopt a people-first mindset. The needs of the people should be accorded with priority while having due regard to those of the environment and the economy. Implement a compensation mechanism under a “conserve before develop” principle. New preservation areas should be created before assigning part of an existing country park of low ecological value for development.
2. Take the 1,200 hectare land supply deficit as projected in “*Hong Kong 2030+*” as the bare minimum, as the projection has not taken into account many salient factors. Set up a land reserve of different levels so as to tackle any slippage or gap in land supply and/or address any unforeseeable surge in demand.
3. Set performance targets with implementation timelines to increase and quicken land supply, while joining forces with the Legislative Council (LegCo), District Councils and statutory bodies involved in land supply to make collective commitments.
4. Use big data technologies to capture, track and disseminate statistics and projections relating to the supply and demand of land and housing, in order to sustain the wider community’s support for various land supply measures.
5. Streamline the administrative and statutory procedures with a view to reducing the lead time required to complete a development.
6. Allocate funds, with the support of the LegCo, for conducting studies required to take forward the various land supply options and projects, and consider other sources of funding for the studies.
7. Do not discard any of the 18 options shortlisted by the Task Force and keep an open mind on additional options/projects that may be put forward by community stakeholders. In order to map out large-scale land developments, it is necessary to consider a large number of factors, conduct a comprehensive planning and explore all possibilities in a non-exclusive manner.

8. Identify specific projects from the 18 options and kick-start the necessary technical studies to address considerations under the three pillars (the needs of the environment, society and economy) of sustainable development for these projects. Distinguish between generic options and specific projects, which are collectively known as “land supply options” in the consultation document. Proceed immediately with feasibility studies for as many of the generic options as possible, with a view to identifying specific projects for planning and engineering studies. Specific projects already commenced should be expedited while non-commenced projects should be taken forward immediately with detailed planning and engineering studies to generate development scheme scenarios and formulate the relevant engineering design solutions for part or whole of the project area.
9. HKAES considered that the Administration should immediately pursue the following six options of less implementation challenges, particularly the time required to make available formed sites for housing and other developments, in the consultation document in order to address the land deficit problem:
 - Developing brownfield sites
 - Tapping into the private agricultural land reserve in the New Territories for development under the Public-Private Partnership initiatives
 - Alternative uses of some of the sites under the Private Recreational Leases
 - Developing two pilot areas on the periphery of country parks
 - Near-shore reclamation outside Victoria Harbour
 - Developing the East Lantau Metropolis

HKAES has actively reviewed and deliberated on the Task Force’s consultation document before coming up with the above recommendations. “We hope that this endeavour can help steer the discussion and understanding of the public from various perspectives which will benefit our society,” said Professor Timothy W. Tong, President of HKAES.

Founded in 1994, HKAES was formed by eminent engineers to promote science advancement and the practice of engineering for the benefits of Hong Kong. Apart from supporting education and research programmes, it engages in policy research and provides expert advice on engineering related matters to the government and other organizations.

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