

Islands District Council
Paper IDC 19/2008

Proposed Lantau North (Extension) Country Park

1. Purpose

To brief members on the progress of the designation of Lantau North (Extension) Country Park.

2. Background

2.1 The Islands District Council (IsDC) was first consulted on the proposal to designate the proposed country park in 2000. Taking into account the comments received from IsDC and other interested parties such as the four Lantau Rural Committees and village representatives, the Administration presented to IsDC a revised proposal in April 2001, which included improved facilities for recreational, eco-tourism uses, etc. in the proposed country park. The IsDC did not object to the proposed designation but some members suggested that the views of the Rural Committees be sought again.

2.2 A gazette notice of the proposed country park, with the draft map revised after taking into account comments received, was published on 13 July 2001.

2.3 In 2004, the Lantau Development Task Force under the steer of the Financial Secretary formulated a “Concept Plan for Lantau” to provide an overall planning framework for a balanced and coordinated development of Lantau. The proposed Country Park was included as a major conservation proposal. Taking into account public comments and the latest findings/progress of studies/projects affecting Lantau, the Lantau Development Task Force released in May 2007 a “Revised Concept Plan for Lantau”. The proposed Country Park remains a major item in the comprehensive conservation strategy in the plan. In his Policy Address in October 2007, the Chief Executive undertook to initiate the designation process of the country park.

2.4 The draft map of the proposed Country Park was gazetted for public inspection under sections 8 to 12 of the Country Parks Ordinance on 4 January 2008.

2.5 The boundary of the proposed Country Park has remained unchanged. In addition, the draft map and explanatory statement have been updated in the following manner:-

- the base map has been updated in the current draft map Plan No. CP/LN(E)^A(Appendix 1); and
- the explanatory statement of the draft map of the proposed Country Park has also been updated taking into account the recommendation in the Revised Concept Plan for Lantau.

3. Country Park Extension Area

- 3.1 The proposed designation of north Lantau as a country park seeks to provide overall protection to the natural resources in the area, having regard to the development strategy of the Lantau.
- 3.2 The proposed country park covers areas to the north, north-east and east of the existing Lantau North Country Park. It embraces most of the undeveloped mountainous areas stretching from Tai Shan above the Penny's Bay in the east to Tai Ho, Tung Chung, and Sham Wat in the west. It is bounded to the south by the Lantau North Country Park and to the north by the North Lantau Highway, new town at Tung Chung. The hilly area north of Silvermine Bay and south of the Discovery Bay is also included in the proposed extension area. The proposed extension area has an area of approximately 2360 hectares. A plan showing the preliminary boundary of the proposed extension is at the Appendix 1. All private lands, villages and new town environs would be excluded from the proposed country park.
- 3.3 The proposed extension area includes areas of secondary woodlands, shrubland, grassland, and fresh water habitats with high biological diversity. The majority of the proposed extension area is mountainous with upland valleys. Some deep valleys are covered with natural woodland and unspoiled stream courses, which combine to create the distinguished landscape. These are highly scenic and may act as backdrop for the urban area.

4. Development Plans

- 4.1 In formulating the development plan of the proposed country park, AFCD will take a holistic approach, taking into account the facilities available at existing country parks as well as the recommendations of the Revised Concept Plan for Lantau. This would ensure that the existing and new country park facilities would complement each other. In addition, it would contribute to the effort to promote the tourism development potential of Lantau Country Parks and the areas nearby.
- 4.2 Country parks are managed on a multiple-use basis. This involves planting, and protection of woodland and vegetation, provision of recreational facilities and keeping the country parks clean and tidy. It also covers nature education, guide walks, scientific research, outdoor recreation and tourism so as to enhance the understanding of the public about the importance of countryside conservation.
- 4.3 Our development strategy covers aspects of nature conservation, outdoor recreation, nature education and tourism, including the following aspects.

4.4 Conservation

Local species will be planted at suitable locations to enhance natural resources so as to provide different habitats for different wildlife species like butterflies and birds. Besides, planting will be carried out at the area around Mong To Au and Lai Pik Shan for the purpose of erosion control and landscape improvement. In addition, we will establish fire breaks at suitable locations to minimize the impact to the Lantau countryside should hill fires occur.

4.5 Outdoor Recreation, Tourism and Nature Education

- (i) The existing Lantau Trail will be extended to the north-east of the Lantau Island to make it a popular hiking trail. Besides, new country trails will be constructed to attract overseas and local visitors.
- (ii) New campsites will be put in place near Mong To Au and Lo Fu Tau. Viewing points will be provided at suitable locations with fine views along Lantau Trail and country trails.
- (iii) To expand outdoor recreational facilities, we plan to construct morning walker gardens and picnic sites in the vicinity of Tung Chung new town. We will explore the feasibility of providing barbecue sites and family walks along the abandoned section of Tung Chung Road after its widening.
- (iv) The Nam Shan Campsite will be reconstructed to improve its facilities and increase its camping capacity.
- (v) To promote eco-tourism in Lantau, eco/heritage trails will be constructed to connect Lantau Country Parks and nearby areas of ecological and historical interests.
- (vi) To provide countryside educational facilities, and cultural and eco-tours, a visitor centre will be established at Ngong Ping. Guided tours or self-guided tours would be arranged for visitors to appreciate the ecology, temples and culture heritage of Lantau Island.
- (vii) To enhance the understanding of the public and students of the natural environment, nature trails and tree walks will be provided near Tung Chung for nature education.

4.6 Please refer to Appendix 2 which depicts the development plan of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park.

5. Planned Programme

5.1 A Draft Map of the Proposed Lantau North (Extension) Country Park was prepared for public inspection in accordance with the Country Parks Ordinance on 4 January 2008. A notice for inspection of the Draft Map was published in the Gazette and was publicized through newspapers. The Draft

Maps are also displayed at suitable locations within the proposed country park. Any person aggrieved by the proposed country park may send his objection to the Country and Marine Parks Authority within 60 days from the date of gazetting.

- 5.2 We plan to designate the proposed country park in the fourth quarter of 2008 after the necessary procedures are completed.

6. Advice Sought

Members are requested to comment on the nature conservation, educational and tourism aspects of the development plans of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park.

Country and Marine Parks Authority
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
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