

Proposal for Constructing a Joint-user Government Building in Area 86, Tseung Kwan O

Purpose

This paper aims to brief the Housing, Planning and Development Committee (“the Committee”) of the Sai Kung District Council on the latest proposal for constructing a Joint-user Government Building in Area 86, Tseung Kwan O, and seeks the views of the Committee on the new proposal.

Background

2. On 7 May 2018, the Government Laboratory (GL) introduced to the Sai Kung District Council and sought members’ views on the proposed construction of a new GL complex in Area 85, Tseung Kwan O. Members generally acknowledged the work of GL and the need to construct a new building. On the other hand, some members expressed that the proposed site in Area 85 was close to residential buildings and school. Members would like to reserve the proposed site for the development of other community facilities in the future and recommended departments concerned to explore the feasibility of constructing the new building in other locations in the district. Some members also indicated that the Government should consider the feasibility of incorporating some facilities of other departments to the new building for better utilisation of land resources.

The proposed site in Area 86

3. Having listened to the views of members and discussed in detail the project with relevant departments, we propose the new building to be constructed at the "Government, Institution or Community" (GIC) site at the southernmost of Area 86, Tseung Kwan O, next to the Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate. The site is adjacent to a number of industrial buildings and separated from the residential area by the Cross Bay Link. It is currently used as a supporting base for the construction of the Cross Bay Link with an area of about 6,100 m². The proposed building is estimated to be approximately 110 m high, capable of providing about 35, 000 m² of net operating floor area. The location plan is at the **Annex**. Apart from reprovisioning part of the facilities of GL, the new

building will also accommodate a Drug Store of the Department of Health (DH), public library facilities of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), a “Technology Discovery Centre” of GL and the facility of the Home Care Services for Elderly Persons subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The layout, actual height, number of floors and floor area of the new building will be subject to the final design.

Government Laboratory facilities in the joint-user building

4. GL currently provides a wide range of professional analytical and advisory services encompassing testing services for food safety, drug safety, consumer goods safety and forensic services etc. to various Government bureaux and departments to safeguard the health and safety of the public. GL started to provide laboratory testing services in Hong Kong as early as the 19th century. At the beginning, it was housed in a room of approximately 80 m² in the Sai Ying Pun Government Civic Hospital. Thereafter, the scope of its services continued to expand, and GL’s facilities were scattered across various locations, affecting its operational efficiency. Until 1992, GL’s facilities at different locations became centralised at the current headquarters at the Ho Man Tin Government Offices. However, with the rapid development of the society, the demand for analytical and forensic testing services continued to increase. Given the limited space at the Ho Man Tin Government Offices, many laboratory facilities had to be scattered in different locations over the past two decades. This arrangement is extremely undesirable and has inevitably affected the daily operation of GL.

5. To date, GL has a serious shortfall of net operating floor area according to the Schedules of Accommodation of Government properties and facilities. Because of the shortage of space, some instruments are not operating under the optimal conditions. GL is also facing difficulties in allocation of workplace and space for placement of new equipment. For example, some large-sized, sophisticated analytical instruments can only be placed at particular locations. Geographical factor greatly limits the opportunities for other personnel to use these instruments in their daily operations, impacting the efficiency of the testing work. Taking food testing as an example, food samples often need to be sent to various locations for testing, which increases the time for sample delivery and corresponding documentation work. Centralisation of resources would not only reduce the time and arrangement for sample delivery, but could also create synergistic effect that enhances the testing capabilities through flexible

deployment of human resources and equipment across sections. The scattered locations of laboratory facilities would affect the testing strategies and efficiencies of GL, particularly at times of major crisis that require a large number of different tests to be completed within one to two days. In case of serious food incidents when every second counts, even an improvement of only one or two hours in terms of testing efficiency matters. This enables scientific data to be quickly provided to government bureaux and departments for making corresponding decisions to safeguard food safety.

6. The proposed joint-user building will provide approximately 32,000 m² of net operating floor area as office and laboratory space for GL to resolve the existing problem of serious shortage of working space. The additional office space also makes it possible for GL to equip itself with necessary, advanced analytical instruments and facilities, to consolidate resources appropriately, and to enhance the operational efficiency and capabilities of its various services, so as to enhance the safety and health of the public.

7. Viral or bacterial testing is not within the scope of work of GL. Therefore, viral or bacterial testing will not be carried out in the joint-user building. The facilities of GL in the proposed joint-user building are mainly for the testing of food, drugs and consumer products, as well as forensic testing, and the operation is similar to that of other government offices. The daily operation of GL is in compliance with the international standards for testing and calibration laboratories, and environmental protection laws and regulations in Hong Kong. For laboratory safety and environmental management, GL has particularly established thorough internal procedures to strictly regulate all operations to ensure that they will not affect the safety and environment of its neighbourhood. GL also regularly reviews various operating procedures to keep abreast with latest environmental protection and safety standards. As GL is equipped with the professional knowledge and expertise in handling chemicals, it is the professional department responsible for providing emergency advice and support for on-site handling of chemicals to the concerned departments, whenever there is any incident and emergency involving hazardous chemicals in Hong Kong.

8. The effectiveness of GL's environmental management system is attested by its smooth operation for over a hundred years without adversely affecting its surrounding environment. In fact, the current headquarters of GL in Ho Man

Tin and the testing laboratories in some other areas are in close proximity to residential buildings and/or schools. Yet, GL has never received any complaints from residents nearby against any chemical or gas leakage.

Other facilities in the joint-user building

9. The proposed joint-user building will house a Drug Store from DH for the storage of antiviral drugs, as well as other emergency and reserve drugs required for the Preparedness Plan for Influenza. As the operation of GL involves the examination of exhibits, the proposed joint-user building has stringent security and indoor environmental quality monitoring requirements which is commensurate with the security and storage temperature requirements of the Drug Store. Hence it is deemed to be an ideal location for the Drug Store.

10. In view of the development of the Lohas Park area, there is an increasing demand for library services from the local residents. As the joint-user building could offer the required space and relevant planning works could commence shortly, it is proposed to include library facilities in the project to provide residents with library materials for borrowing and other library services to cope with the local development. The proposed library is a small library¹ with facilities including adult library, children's library, newspapers and periodicals section, extension activities room, exhibition/display area, self-service facilities for borrowing and returning books and picking up reserved items, internet and digital service workstations, etc. for public use. Moreover, a students' study room would be included in the small library.

11. GL will set up a "Technology Discovery Centre" in the proposed joint-user building to enhance the understanding of students and young people in testing and forensic work in addition to arouse their interest in exploring technological knowledge. Through self-guided tours and interactive facilities, visitors could learn more about the testing and forensic work of GL as well as related testing techniques, including the simulations of outdoor on-site chemical testing and scientific evidence collection at crime scenes, etc. with a view to providing visitors with an immersive experience. The small library and the "Technology Discovery Centre" in the joint-user building will provide students and residents in the district with more facilities for reading and studying, as well

¹ Including a students' study room, the proposed small library will take up a net operating floor area of about 1,000m².

as opportunities to experience testing technology.

12. The facilities for the team of the Home Care Services for Elderly Persons subvented by the Social Welfare Department mainly provides door-to-door community care services for frail elderly persons in the district. The facilities can strengthen the support services for elderly persons in the district through provision of services including personal care, basic and special nursing care, rehabilitation exercises, meals services, home care, home respite, environmental risk assessment and improvement suggestions, transportation and escort services, and carer services, etc.

13. Due to the security requirements, there will be separate entrance and exit for the library facilities, “Technology Discovery Centre” and the facilities for the team of the Home Care Services for Elderly Persons in the proposed building, which are segregated from the facilities of GL and the Drug Store.

Traffic Impact Assessment

14. GL has conducted a preliminary traffic impact assessment of the proposed building to the district. The peak hours of traffic for GL is from 10 am to 11 am which differs from the rush hours of the district and hence will not affect the commuting of residents in the district. The traffic flow is mainly due to delivery of samples to GL from various departments for testing. Based on the overall situation in 2019, the traffic flow during peak hours of GL is estimated to be approximately 50 vehicles per hour, consisting mainly of private cars and light goods vehicles. The proposed building is not expected to have negative impact on the traffic in the vicinity. Similarly, the facilities of other departments will not cause any significant increase in traffic in the area. After collecting views of the Committee on the proposed joint-user building, we will kick-start the feasibility study, including a detailed traffic impact assessment.

Views sought

15. We welcome members’ views on the proposal for constructing the Joint-user Government Building in Area 86, Tseung Kwan O so as to facilitate relevant departments to commence the technical feasibility study, detailed design and

other related work. After we have completed the relevant assessments and formulated a specific proposal for the building design, we would report to members in due course.

Attachments

Annex - Location map of site for the proposed Government joint-user building

**Food and Health Bureau
Government Laboratory
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