



30 August 2018

Panel on Development
Legislative Council
Hong Kong

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to you regarding the two proposed Development Options at Hong Kong Golf Club's (HKGC) Fanling Golf Course (FGC), which were outlined in the TFLS' booklet published in April of 2018. Following extensive research, we have reached the considered conclusion that should either Option be undertaken, the effects would severely impact the ecological and environmental wellbeing of the Northern New Territories, the cultural and historical significance of both HKGC and FGC, as well as the economic benefits that HKGC bring to the surrounding communities and Hong Kong as a whole.

As a directly concerned party, the HKGC has engaged specialised technical consultants to conduct studies using methodologies consistent with major government development studies.

The most significant conclusions drawn from the interim technical report are as follows:

Ecological and Environmental Concerns

FGC supports a broad ecosystem comprising various and numerous endangered/vulnerable species. Additionally, 44.3% of FGC is covered by some 60,000 trees; 174 of which belong to species protected under Hong Kong Law. A 2016 study has shown that the FGC plays an indispensable climatic role in lowering local temperatures and can be considered a 'green lung' in northern New Territories. Both Development Options would cause an irreversible impact to the ecological and landscape assets of FGC.

They would result in higher levels of disturbance, and would materially and adversely fragment ecological linkages. There would be a loss of a beautiful and unique landscape character area that cannot be found elsewhere in Hong Kong.

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Cultural and Historical Concerns

There are 144 ancestral graves and urns around FGC. Furthermore, there are 3 graded historical buildings listed by the Antiquities and Monuments Office, which can be considered to be of “national level cultural heritage”. Meanwhile, the annual Hong Kong Open (HKO) helps to elevate Hong Kong’s international image and demonstrates that sport is integral with the identity of this city. Both Development Options would irrecoverably impact the important historic and cultural aspects that the FGC protects and promotes.

Economic Benefits

The HKO contributed millions of dollars of economic benefit to Hong Kong. The event was broadcast to 414 million homes around the world and generated HK\$425 million in media value. This tournament brings substantial positive global attention and promotes Hong Kong as “Asia’s World City”. Furthermore, the tournament has attracted upwards of 48,000 spectators, many of whom are overseas visitors who spend significantly more than the average tourist to Hong Kong. FGC also plays a crucial role in supporting the community and sports development. Around 44% of all golf rounds are played by non-members. Approximately 200 golfing and non-golfing activities run by FGC annually, which raised more than HK\$20 million for charities in 2017.

Both Development Options would limit the availability of some already very scarce facilities in Hong Kong, reduce the opportunities for Hong Kong to promote its international profile and attractiveness of Hong Kong for business.

Transport and Traffic

If either Development Option were to be carried out, the current MTR network could not support the high-density new town development, nor offer accessibility and connectivity to employment opportunities and other social activities. Findings suggest that the necessity for new strategic railway and highway corridors to the metro area would result in the Full Development Option not being realised until the mid-2040s.

Engineering and Costs

Both Development Options are not considered as “spade-ready” sites. Essential civil engineering infrastructure required to allow both Development Options is extensive and significant in terms of cost and time to build such support infrastructure at FGC.

In summary, the very real and negative impact that both Options would have on the Northern New Territories and indeed Hong Kong is clearly identified. As such, we recommended that no development occur at FGC.

Sincerely,



Ian Gardner

General Manager