

Press Statement

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers Presents “Recommendations on Streamlining Building Works and Infrastructure Development Process” and Submission to the 2022 Policy Address

(12 October 2022, Hong Kong) The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) has carried out a study on streamlining statutory processes pertinent to development projects, and is delighted to present the report entitled “Recommendations on Streamlining Building Works and Infrastructure Development Processes”.

The report was prepared in support of the Government’s legislative proposals, set out in a paper delivered in March 2022 to the Panel on Development of the Legislative Council, to streamline development-related statutory processes. The HKIE acknowledges the efforts expressed therein to simplify the upstream statutory procedures in the planning and development regimes, but considers that the downstream statutory and administrative processes at design and construction stages, which the paper does not discuss, are equally crucial to the timely delivery of development projects.

The HKIE, as a professional body championing engineering excellence, has taken the liberty to study the industry stakeholders’ opinions and offer corresponding suggestions on streamlining the procedures at the downstream ends. In broad outlines, the major recommendations stated in the report are as follows:

1. An entity should be assigned to act as the centralised processing department for handling and responding to the plan submissions for building and development projects in accordance with a pre-assigned timeframe, which is also to be observed by all the enabling government departments and public utilities.
2. Before formal submissions, a “Draft Statutory Submission Vetting” process, during which consultative workshops with the Authorities are conducted, is recommended. It would help identify any potential technical issues and facilitate agreement on the principles of resolution, so that the processes of approval and consultation with other departments may proceed simultaneously. A collaborative approach is also proposed, particularly for large-scale or complicated developments, between the project proponents and the Authority to expedite the approval as well as acceptance inspection process with a view to minimising or avoiding resubmissions.

3. Instead of seeking approval for each amendment after the first approval, as is the current practice, project proponents should be spared the need to seek prior approval for minor amendments provided that the original approved design principles and construction methodologies are complied with. For checks and balances, project proponents are required to obtain a final approval for all these amendments before certifying completion of the building works.
4. In discharging their statutory duties, the relevant government officials should act not only as regulators but also as facilitators, though statutory safety and quality requirements should not be compromised. Giving advice in a fair and open manner will eliminate the possibility that the officials will be falsely perceived as offering privileges.
5. A new public housing project delivery model is recommended, according to which the design and construction responsibilities for both site formation/infrastructure works and the building works for suitable chosen sites are vested in one single entity.

The recommendations above have further been incorporated in the HKIE's submission, recently delivered to the Administration and available [here](#), on the formulation of the 2022 Policy Address.

In anticipation of the Policy Address to be delivered on 19 October 2022, the HKIE also made recommendations to the Administration on reviewing procurement policy, augmenting manpower of the engineering profession, streamlining development processes, boosting land and housing supply, developing innovation and technology capacity, integrating into the Greater Bay Area, transportation, education as well as sustainable and smart development of the city. The executive summary of our submission is as follows:

1. Significantly low bids from tenderers should be curtailed to improve the ecology of the industry and attract next generations of engineering talents, so that the increasing demands following the city's development may be met.
2. A multi-pronged approach should continue to be adopted to tackle the shortage of land supply. To take forward the reclamation at the Harbour Metropolis, the planning, design and construction stages are suggested to be fast-tracked. A detailed infrastructure blueprint specifying key milestones of delivery of land parcels and infrastructure works is also called for. Rezoning and urban renewal projects should be continued, reaping on the advantages of each strategic location.

3. In addition to the Advance Allocation Scheme to be implemented in public rental housing projects, the Institution suggests separating government, institutional and community facilities from residential blocks such that modular integrated construction (MiC) method could be adopted to further compress the construction time. Meanwhile, MiC factories and prefabrication yards shall be set up in line with the increasing application of the construction method. To make full use of the market force, the Administration is suggested to consider offering more incentive to private sectors to support the development of other subsidised housing.
4. To promote the development of innovation and technology (I&T) ecosystem, the procedures and requirements of the funding application should be scrutinised in order to raise Hong Kong's status and competitiveness on this front and effectively expand the talent pool.
5. With the vast opportunities in the Greater Bay Area, in addition to the development of infrastructure to enhance connectivity with the area, it is important that the Administration exerts greater effort to foster mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
6. Echoing the idea of infrastructure-led development, we suggest the Administration review the overall transportation networks while taking into consideration the latest strategic development of the city and the neighbouring cities.
7. To respond to the increasing demand for I&T and engineering talents, the Administration needs to review the school curricula and university entry requirements in a timely manner and step up the effort to promote STEAM education.

The HKIE eagerly awaits the delivery of the Policy Address on 19 October 2022 and would appreciate the inclusion therein of any of these recommendations.

The full report is available [here](#).

For media enquiries, please contact:

Corporate Communications Section
The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Tel: 2895 4446

Fax: 2882 6825

Email: corpcom@hkie.org.hk