

HKIS Views on the 2017-2018 Budget

The Financial Secretary of the HKSAR, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po delivers the 2017-2018 Budget (hereafter the Budget) today. The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (hereafter the HKIS) generally supports and welcomes the directions of the Government's support on building rehabilitation and the measures of increasing housing supply.

Support for Building Rehabilitation

The "Budget" mentioned that the Government will earmark \$300 million to allow owners to participate in the "Smart Tender" Building Rehabilitation Facilitating Services Scheme run by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) at a concessionary rate. It is estimated that owners of about 4,500 buildings will benefit from this initiative in the next five years. The HKIS welcomes the Scheme and suggests the Government sets up a Building Repair and Maintenance Authority (BRMA) for the long run to formulate the standards and guidelines of building repair and maintenance services, and to monitor and regulate the market.

Increasing Supply of Housing Land

The HKIS supports the "Budget" in implementing the measures of the increase in the supply of housing land in the Policy Address and is pleased to see many more private residential units and public rental housing units can be provided in the next five years. To achieve the ten-year housing supply target, the HKIS suggests the Government increase land supply through 'multipronged' measures. For example, feasibility of residential development on peripheral land of country parks can be considered, and more consultations and planning could be done for caverns, brownfield sites and underground space during which the interests of various stakeholders should be balanced.

Besides increasing land supply, the HKIS suggests the Government streamline the town planning application process, improve the system and allocate human resources more effectively.

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Infrastructure Development

The HKIS supports the Government for allocating substantial resources for implementing infrastructure projects. However, the HKIS concerns that the skillful labour force cannot cope with the need of these substantial projects. The HKIS suggests the Government reviews the supply and demand in the existing labour market in the construction and building industry, and import suitable workers in a limited amount if necessary to fill the local manpower gap.

Long-term Development

The "budget" mentioned that while carrying out large-scale new land development and building up a land reserve, the society need to formulate a comprehensive development strategy for meeting various challenges, especially those posed by our ageing population and ageing building stock. The HKIS agrees that ageing problem will become more severe in twenty years. The proportion of elderly is projected to 30% in 2034. We urge the Government to earmark resources to provide more elderly-friendly residential units (non-institutional care) to cater for their housing needs.

Smart City

The HKIS supports the Government's commitment to developing Hong Kong into a smart city by leveraging I&T to enhance city management. The HKIS suggests the Government set up a Common Spatial Data Infrastructure. This platform can help the practitioners in surveying and construction industry exchange information, save the time of different stakeholders' on gathering and managing duplicate information of spatial data and detailed maps.

Conclusion

The HKIS welcomes the Government's considerations on land supply, building rehabilitation and infrastructure development and urges the Government to enact the measures promptly. The HKIS concerns over the slow progress in funding approval of a number of public building and infrastructure projects in the Legislative Council. We expect a smooth progress of the fund allocation in the future so that sustainable development of the society can be maintained.

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About the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Established in 1984, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors is the only professional organisation representing the surveying profession in Hong Kong. As of 3 February 2017, the number of members reached 9,776, of which 6,288 were corporate members. The Institute's work includes setting standards for professional services and performance, establishing codes of ethics, determining requirements for admission as professional surveyors, access and award the professional qualification, and advance members' professional knowledge, technical and services standards through continuing professional development.

The Institute has an important consultative role in government policy making and on issues affecting the profession. We have advised the Government on issues such as unauthorised building works, building safety campaign, problems of property management, town planning and development strategies, construction quality and housing problems. We are working on amendments to standard forms of building contract and have issued guidance notes on floor area measurement methods.

For more details, please refer to HKIS website: <http://www.hkis.org.hk>.
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