

14 April 1989

\$4.5m to cope with change in New Territories

By Wilson Wong

ABOUT \$4.5 billion will be spent over the next 10 years to cope with rapid development in the New Territories.

The Government is studying the problem as many areas in the north-east and western New Territories are under vigorous redevelopment without adequate sewage, roadworks and anti-flooding measures.

A working group on rural planning and improvement strategy has been set up in the Lands and Works Branch, headed by a deputy secretary, Miss Christine Chow.

It is to draw up a development programme for rural areas.

A special feature of the programme is that consultations will start from the bottom and go to the top — all districts will be asked for their views on major projects in their areas.

The consultations are expected to be completed next year.

The group will then compile final recommendations for Government approval.

"It's understood that different districts have different needs, so it is better to hear what individual areas want before drawing up

the programme," said a senior official.

The group will use a long-range forecast system similar to that devised by the Finance Branch for big developments.

"It is expected the programme will be drawn up next year and the Territory Development Department will implement the projects set down," the official said.

The group will be responsible for the drawing up of the major items in the programme while project managers will carry out the construction.

Officials estimate that about \$4.5 billion will be required for the scheme, which they say is not regarded as much when spread over a long period.

The projects will include flood protection systems and road networks to improve communication between districts, according to the official.

"The project managers will be given the job of coordinating the works among different departments."

The group may be required to keep on monitoring the scheme after they hand in their recommendations, but no decision has been made on this yet.