

Get-Together on Gillman
Thursday, 30 July 2026, 7.30pm - 11.15pm
Telok Blangah CC

This document was prepared by residents who attended the **Gillman Barracks Get-Together and Dialogue** on **30 July 2026**. It aims to provide a factual summary of the discussion and the key issues raised during the session.

Photo Credit: CNA



A GET-TOGETHER ON GILLMAN BARRACKS

Hosted by: Rachel Ong
Adviser to Telok Blangah Grassroots Organisations



TELOK BLANGAH CC

Registration & dinner at 7.30pm,
followed by the chat at 8pm.



THURSDAY

30TH JULY, 2026
AT 7.30PM

JOINING US:

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As many of you will be coming straight from work, a simple dinner will be provided!

Prior Registration is Required.
Just scan the QR code or visit
<https://go.gov.sg/gbd2026>. Registration
closes 6pm, Monday 27th July.

We seek your understanding that this get-together is designed only
for Telok Blangah Division residents across Depot, Dover, Pasir
Panjang East & Telok Blangah.



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SCAN HERE

For enquiries, please contact:
Telok Blangah CC - 6271 9602 from 10am to 6pm daily, excluding PH.
Dover CC - 6777 1540 from 2pm to 6pm daily, excluding PH.

Submitted to HDB, URA, NParks on 31 July 2026

Programme

7.30pm Dinner and Registration

8.00pm Get-Together / Dialogue (as proposed by host)

- 1) Pigeonhole Question collection
- 2) Open Mic / Q&A to hear residents' views
- 3) Presentations by HDB, NParks, URA representatives

The dialogue was conducted under the **Chatham House Rule** to encourage open and candid discussion. In accordance with this, the names and identifying details of residents and individual government representatives have been removed from this document. References are made only to the agencies represented, unless individuals spoke in an official public capacity.

Summary by Stakeholder

1. Housing Development Board (HDB)

- Singapore continues to need new housing because of:
- household formation from marriages,
- smaller household sizes,
- more singles and seniors living independently,
- long lead times required to plan and build new housing.
- Gillman Barracks was identified through long-term planning and the Draft Master Plan process, with good transport connectivity and proximity to the city.
- The current proposal remains conceptual and has been refined based on the EIA and HIA.
- Agencies will consider public feedback before proceeding further.
- HDB committed to publishing a feedback summary in a few months' time, following all the feedback and suggestions.

2. Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) [in response to Vivian's proposal]

- Brownfield redevelopment is prioritised where possible.
- Other suggested sites (Depot Lane Industrial Estate, CMPB, Pasir Panjang Distripark, Greater Southern Waterfront) have all been considered, but each has planning constraints or is already allocated for other uses.
- The Greater Southern Waterfront requires significant land preparation and infrastructure before development. Services such as sewage and power lines could take more than 10 years, or maybe 15 years for the site to be ready for development.
- Land use planning is iterative and balances multiple competing objectives.
- Around 1,000 ha of additional green space planned nationally.

3. National Parks Board (NParks)

- The EIA was undertaken by an independent consultant.
- Nature groups were consulted during preparation of the EIA.

- Ecological connectivity was one of the main considerations.
- The proposed wildlife corridor ranges from **30–200 m**, with the consultant concluding this was appropriate for target species.
- Secondary forests differ in ecological value, with native-dominated forest prioritised for retention.
- The EIA process is still ongoing and feedback remains welcome

Major concerns raised by residents

Pigeonhole Questions

There were 343 [Pigeonhole questions](#) submitted during the dialogue. The following summarizes the top voted submissions, and highlights the key themes that emerged.

1. Preserve Gillman Forest (173 votes)

- The highest-voted submission called for Gillman Forest to be kept intact, noting that numerous HDB and private housing developments already exist nearby, including the Greater Southern Waterfront.
- **Theme:** Housing need, alternatives, conservation.

2. Is this consultation meaningful? (135 votes)

- Residents questioned whether the session was genuinely intended to gather public views or simply to communicate a decision that had already been made.
- **Theme:** Public participation, consultation and trust.

3. Why develop Gillman before the Greater Southern Waterfront? (99 votes)

- Residents asked why Gillman Barracks is needed now when the Greater Southern Waterfront will eventually deliver substantial new housing supply in the same region.
- **Theme:** Housing planning and sequencing.

4. Is the Government genuinely open to changing its plans? (96 votes)

- Residents sought assurance that public feedback could still influence the proposal.
- **Theme:** Consultation, transparency and decision-making.

5. Why not redevelop brownfield sites instead of forests? (91 votes)

- Residents questioned whether underutilised industrial land and other previously developed sites should be prioritised over clearing mature forest.
- **Theme:** Alternative sites and land-use planning.

6. Could housing be provided through other means? (89 votes)

- Suggestions included reviving or expanding SERS, VERS or introducing other redevelopment approaches before converting forests into housing.
- **Theme:** Housing policy alternatives.

7. How was Gillman's community value assessed? (81 votes)

- Residents asked whether HDB had evaluated not only the ecological value of Gillman Forest, but also its social, recreational and community value before deciding to redevelop the site.
- Theme:** Wellbeing, community value and social impact.

The highest-ranked questions reveal four dominant concerns:

- Consultation and trust** – Residents wanted to know whether the dialogue could genuinely influence the outcome or whether the decision had effectively already been made (Questions 2 and 4).
- Housing need and planning justification** – Residents questioned both the timing of the development and whether sufficient alternative housing options already exist or are planned (Questions 1, 3 and 6).
- Alternative sites** – There was strong support for prioritising brownfield redevelopment before clearing mature forest (Question 5).
- Value of Gillman beyond ecology** – Residents emphasised that Gillman should be assessed not only for its biodiversity, but also for its contribution to community wellbeing, recreation, heritage and quality of life (Question 7).

Open Mic Questions

There were 60 in-person questions and interventions by residents at the dialogue.

Key themes were:

Theme	Number of questions / interventions	Examples
Ecology & biodiversity	15–17	Wildlife corridor width, cumulative impacts with Berlayer, mature forest, endangered species, ecological connectivity, EIA recommendations, forest value
Consultation, transparency & public participation	12–14	Is this a done deal? Will feedback matter? What can still change? Will there be another consultation? Will responses be published?
Housing need & planning rationale	9–10	Why Gillman? Is housing demand really this high? How is demand calculated? Why now?
Alternative sites	8–9	Greater Southern Waterfront, Depot Lane, CMPB, Dover, black-and-white houses, Pasir Panjang Distripark
Heritage & neighbourhood character	7–8	Heritage buildings, identity of Telok Blangah, arts uses, adaptive reuse
Heat, climate & liveability	6–7	Urban heat, local cooling, climate resilience, missing heat assessment

Construction impacts	5–6	Noise, dust, landslides, flooding, traffic, monitoring
Wellbeing & quality of life	5–6	Mental health, children, dogs, third places, recreation

The discussion was overwhelmingly centred on three issues:

1. Ecology and biodiversity (approximately 30% of interventions)
2. Consultation and whether residents' feedback would genuinely influence decisions (approximately 25%)
3. Housing need and planning justification (approximately 18%)

These three themes accounted for roughly three-quarters of all substantive questions raised during the evening.

Major concerns were raised about consultation and trust. Residents questioned whether the consultation was meaningful given that:

- housing had already been announced;
- Preston Road residents had already been asked to vacate;
- whether anything could still change;
- whether the consultation was merely procedural;
- whether future updates would be provided;
- whether residents would continue to be involved.

Residents generally accepted that Singapore needs housing. However, they questioned:

- whether Gillman is needed now;
- whether BTO oversubscription accurately reflects demand;
- demographic assumptions;
- future resale supply;
- the impact of the removal of the 15-month wait-out period;
- whether future MOP flats reduce the need for additional land.

Residents repeatedly suggested alternative sites for housing development, such as:

- Depot Lane Industrial Estate
- CMPB
- Pasir Panjang Distripark
- Greater Southern Waterfront
- older housing estates
- black-and-white areas

Residents wanted to understand: **Why Gillman first?**

Ecology and biodiversity was a major recurring theme in residents' concerns, making up around 30% of all interventions and questions. Citing the EIA directly, many residents noted:

- 30 m corridor insufficient
- desire for 60 m corridor
- cumulative impacts with Berlayer
- baseline affected by previous clearing
- mature forest cannot be replaced
- concern over exotic-dominated secondary forest's proposed clearance, despite there being overlaps with critically endangered fauna
- wildlife movement
- long-term monitoring

Many residents also highlighted the heritage value of Gillman Barracks. Residents consistently described Gillman as:

- part of Telok Blangah's identity;
- a unique heritage landscape;
- an important arts destination;
- somewhere with emotional and cultural significance.

Several expressed concern that so few buildings were proposed to be retained, and suggested adaptive reuse rather than redevelopment. Residents also expressed concern about the [May 2022 rejuvenation plans](#) for Gillman Barracks by the Singapore Land Authority to transform the precinct into a vibrant creative lifestyle enclave with enhanced infrastructure, innovative F&B and lifestyle offerings, noting that the 2024 Ministry of National Development Committee of Supply announcement to study Gillman for housing came less than 2 years after the plans were announced.

One resident proposed moving the Singapore Art Museum into Gillman Barracks, as their [current lease at Tanjong Pagar Distripark ends in 2027](#).

Residents also repeatedly noted that:

- The EIA does not assess urban heat.
- Mature forest cools the neighbourhood.
- Telok Blangah is noticeably cooler than other estates.
- Forest contributes to climate resilience.

One resident commented that he had lived in Tampines, and quipped that he did not want Telok Blangah to become another Tampines.

Several residents pointed out that the Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE) should have been present at the dialogue, but were notably absent from the discussions so far. Many referenced the National Climate Change Study, and highlighted that Singapore was currently developing a National Adaptation Plan.

Residents questioned who was accountable for fulfilling [Singapore's endorsement of the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forest and Land Use, to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation by 2030](#). Residents who spoke up about deforestation questioned why the agencies would cut down a forest to rebuild it into a park. They noted that even if NParks were to plant a million trees, it cannot replace a mature forest, due to the structural complexity of the forest. Many noted the ecological connectivity between Berlayar and Gillman, noting that the EIA from Berlayar found that many forest birds won't cross even small gap in tree cover and that the Gillman EIA failed to include this despite referencing the corridor widths from the Berlayar EIA. One resident highlighted that Gillman's surveys only started after Berlayar was cleared, so the baseline of Gillman captured during the study survey may not be its usual state and it is not possible to tell if Gillman is taking more ecological workload than it used to, with the loss of the former Keppel golf course site and stress on Berlayar creek.

The same resident pointed out that former Minister for National Development, Mr Desmond Lee had [told Parliament](#) that "plans will take into account past studies, including findings on ecological connectivity from the NParks' Ecological Profiling Exercise and the Environmental Impact Study for the redevelopment of the former Keppel Golf Site", a commitment made 6 months prior to Gillman's surveys commencement. She questioned whether this promise was fulfilled.

Residents also raised concerns about the construction impact of Gillman's redevelopment, citing experiences from the Berlayar development across the road. Traffic, dust, noise, slope stability, landslides, flooding and enforcement of mitigation measures were questioned. Several residents requested stronger monitoring of environmental impacts on residents.

Residents spoke emotionally about:

- mental health
- children's connection with nature
- dog owners
- bird life
- community gathering spaces
- Gillman as a "third place"
- recovery from illness
- decision to move to Telok Blangah for the greenery

Many framed the issue in terms of quality of life rather than biodiversity alone. One resident said she lived in Block 69 since she was a baby, and that her first lesson in nature was when her parents brought her to see the trees and plants in the surrounding greenery. She lamented that children today will not know and have as much access to nature if the forest was cleared, adding that culture, feeling and nostalgia would be lost. The emotional impact of Gillman Barracks and forest loss on residents in the estate were raised over and over again throughout the dialogue.

One of the strongest recurring themes was that many residents deliberately chose to live in Telok Blangah because of Gillman Forest and the surrounding greenery, rather than simply because of housing or transport.

At least 9 residents explicitly noted they had moved to or chose to remain in Telok Blangah because of its greenery, forests or unique natural environment.

Resident	What they said
Resident 1	Telok Blangah was chosen because of its unique greenery and dog-friendly environment.
Resident 2	The forests were the main reason for remaining in the area and had aided recovery from a serious illness.
Resident 3	Said they loved Telok Blangah because of its nature, wildlife and cool environment.
Resident 4	Moved there three years ago because of Gillman and was distressed that Berlayer had already disappeared.
Resident 5	Moved from Malaysia 15 years ago and chose the neighbourhood because it was exceptionally green and close to nature.
Resident 6	Moved in before Chinese New Year and chose Telok Blangah over Tiong Bahru specifically because of Gillman Barracks and the forest.
Resident 7	Moved to Depot Road in 2022 and was excited by the announced rejuvenation of Gillman Barracks before the redevelopment proposal.
Resident 8	Moved from Woodlands five years ago after forests there had been cleared, choosing Depot Road because of Gillman.
Resident 9	Downsized from Tampines because they wanted the cooler, greener lifestyle offered by Telok Blangah and did not want it to become "another Tampines".

Many lifelong residents of Telok Blangah explained that the forests are the defining reason they continue to live in this estate. Several described the forest as integral to the neighbourhood's identity, quality of life and daily routines.

Key Observations

The single biggest concern raised across both the Pigeonhole questions and open mic dialogue was whether the decision-making process was justified, transparent and balanced. Residents repeatedly asked:

- Is this consultation genuine?
- Has the decision already been made?
- Can today's feedback still change anything?
- What exactly remains open to change?
- Will there be further opportunities to participate?
- Will agencies publish responses?

The second and fourth highest voted Pigeonhole questions reflected this concern directly. During the dialogue, residents also repeatedly described the process as potentially a “done deal” or “foregone conclusion” and wanted reassurance that the consultation was meaningful.

Residents also called for stronger evidence-based explanations for selecting Gillman, as well as Maju forest. Many residents specifically questioned reliance on BTO demand and asked whether demographic change, resale supply, and future MOP flats had been adequately considered. The highest voted Pigeonhole question asked to keep Gillman intact because numerous housing projects are already planned nearby. Others questioned why Gillman was needed before the Greater Southern Waterfront.

There was a technical discussion throughout the dialogue on the ecological connectivity and value of the non-native, exotic-dominated secondary forest. Unlike many public consultations, this dialogue saw residents directly engaging with and frequently citing findings from the EIA itself. Residents argued that if development must proceed, stronger ecological protection must be enforced.

The seventh highest Pigeonhole question asked how HDB assessed community value, not just ecological value. In the open mic dialogue, one of the most interesting and heartening parts was hearing residents’ personal stories about Telok Blangah and Gillman forest. Many described Gillman and the surrounding greenery as a key reason for moving to Telok Blangah, that the forest provided a source of mental and physical wellbeing, that it played an important part of neighbourhood identity, is a place for children, has a dog-friendly environment, is an arts precinct and a third-place for gathering. Personal testimonies from residents were given throughout the evening, reflecting the community value of Gillman Barracks and the forest.

Residents said this wasn’t a local issue, and highlighted the value of kickstarting a national conversation on what we hold dear as Singaporeans and how our country will be shaped in the coming decades. One resident shared that in the past, citing his growing up years in Pasir Ris, there were never any opportunities to talk about deforestation when forests were cleared for an international school. He added that we have a chance now for Singaporeans to address who we are as a nation by having a conversation on the future of our nation.

Did agencies answer residents’ questions?

Why Gillman?

HDB and URA explained long-term planning, transport access, city-fringe location and planning timeline.

Were other sites considered?

URA explained Depot Lane, CMPB, Pasir Panjang Distripark were being considered for the Greater Southern Waterfront development.

Will there be a feedback summary?

HDB committed to publishing one, in a few months.

Why isn’t MSE present?

NParks explained sustainability is coordinated across agencies and MSE works behind the scenes.

Can plans still change?

Agencies repeatedly said the proposal is conceptual and feedback will be considered, but did not specify **what** could change.

Housing demand methodology

HDB explained broad demographic trends but did not answer detailed questions on oversubscription, repeated applications or MOP projections.

Ecology

NParks explained the corridor rationale but did not address every technical issue (e.g. cumulative ecological assessment, Berlayer baseline).

Heritage

Agencies said HIA informed planning but gave few specifics about heritage recommendations.

Heat

No substantive answer beyond general planning explanations.

Crucially, the following questions were not substantively addressed:

- What exactly remains open to change?
- Could block height, density or layout still change?
- Can more forest be retained, particularly the exotic-dominated secondary forest?
- Why no urban heat assessment?
- How will mitigation of construction noise and dust be enforced?
- How will traffic impacts be managed?
- How are BTO oversubscription figures adjusted for repeated applicants?
- Projected MOP numbers through 2035.
- How removal of the 15-month wait-out period affects planning.
- Whether residents should have been consulted during the EIA.
- Whether the EIA framework will be revised in future.
- Whether Berlayer's EIA was factored into Gillman's planning.
- When exactly the feedback summary will be published.
- How cumulative ecological impacts were assessed.
- How mitigation measures will be monitored after construction.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions during the 30 July 2026 dialogue, residents respectfully put forward the following recommendations for HDB, URA and NParks' consideration:

1. **Clarify what remains open to change.** Residents would appreciate greater clarity on which aspects of the proposal, such as site layout, housing density, ecological buffers, heritage retention and mitigation measures, remain open to refinement following this consultation.
2. **Publish a comprehensive response to public feedback.** In addition to summarising the feedback received, residents encourage the agencies to publish their responses to the key issues raised, explaining how feedback has been considered and whether it has resulted in changes to the proposal.
3. **Strengthen opportunities for ongoing engagement.** Given the significant public interest, residents hope there will be further opportunities to engage with the agencies as the plans are refined, rather than consultation ending with the current feedback exercise.
4. **Provide greater transparency on the planning rationale.** Residents would welcome additional information on how housing demand projections, alternative sites, ecological value, heritage considerations and community wellbeing were assessed and balanced in selecting Gillman Barracks for redevelopment.
5. **Give careful consideration to the Environmental and Heritage Impact Assessments.** Residents encourage the agencies to adopt, wherever feasible, the recommendations of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment, including strengthening ecological connectivity, preserving mature forest where possible, and safeguarding Gillman Barracks' unique heritage character.
6. **Recognise the broader community value of Gillman Barracks.** Beyond its ecological significance, many residents described Gillman Barracks as a defining feature of Telok Blangah that contributes to physical and mental wellbeing, recreation, arts and culture, heritage, and neighbourhood identity. Residents encourage these values to be explicitly considered in future planning decisions.
7. **Continue building trust through open dialogue.** Residents appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with HDB, URA and NParks and hope this marks the beginning of an ongoing dialogue. Transparent communication, timely updates and continued engagement will help build confidence that residents' views are meaningfully considered throughout the planning process.

The residents who participated in the dialogue recognise the challenges of balancing Singapore's long-term housing needs with the conservation of nature and heritage. The discussions reflected a shared desire to work constructively with the Government to find the best possible outcome for Gillman Barracks. It is our hope that the feedback captured in this document will contribute positively to that process and support continued collaboration between residents and the agencies involved.