

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper 02/06

Report of the Study Group on Better Air Quality

Purpose

This paper presents the Report of the Study Group on Better Air Quality and seeks Members' views on –

- (a) the Study Group's recommendations on issues for the Council for Sustainable Development (SD) to take a position on, as well as issues that the Council for SD will put forward for a stakeholder engagement; and
- (b) the proposed way forward for the Priority Area of Better Air Quality.

Background

2. At the last meeting on 16 December 2005, Members agreed that a Study Group should be set up under the chairmanship of the Council Vice-chairman, to take forward the Priority Area of Better Air Quality during the second engagement process of the SD Strategy. Members also agreed that, as it would be a study conducted by the Council for SD, the Study Group should therefore comprise Council Members and Government representatives only, in order to facilitate more effective discussions. The membership and terms of reference of the Study Group are at Annex A.

3. The major task of the Study Group is to study and identify the current state of air quality in Hong Kong, the Government's and various sectors' committed action programmes, key issues relevant to Hong Kong's long-term sustainability as well as scope for the community to contribute their views. Recognising the on-going efforts of the

Government to address the air quality issues, the Study Group has been focusing on filling the information gap between the Government and the community.

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4. The Report of the Study Group on Better Air Quality, as well as the Executive Summary of the Report which has summarized the major findings of the Study, are at Annex B.

5. The Study Group Report recommends the Council for SD to consider –

- (a) issues that the Council for SD should take a clear position on, so that it can give advice and recommendations to the Government on appropriate policies. These issues concern the air quality objectives, as well as the power, transport and industry sectors (c.f. pages 5 to 6 of Executive Summary); and
- (b) issues that will require the involvement of stakeholders and hence form the basis for another round of informed stakeholder discussion and engagement (c.f. page 7 of Executive Summary).

Way Forward

6. Subject to Members' views, the work of the Study Group on Better Air Quality will be followed up in the following manner.

- (a) The Council Secretariat will prepare a Report of the Council for SD, on the basis of the Report of the Study Group on Better Air Quality and Members' views on its findings. The Council Report will be ready in about two weeks' time (from this Council meeting) for submission to the Government. In line with the transparent process of the Council for SD, the Council Secretariat will upload the

Council Report to the website of the SD Unit and the dedicated SD Strategy website for the engagement process. We will also issue a press release when the Council Report is released for public information.

- (b) For issues that require the involvement and discussion of stakeholders in making choices, the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC) will plan and implement an engagement process with priority, including the establishment of a new Support Group, drafting of the Invitation and Response (IR) document and the rollout of the public involvement stage. Building on the experience of the previous engagement process, the Support Group will comprise members from the SSC, relevant Government bureaux or departments, as well as representatives from the local community. The Council Secretariat will, in consultation with the SSC, coordinate the formation of the Support Group, which is expected to commence work as soon as possible. As the engagement process on the Priority Area of Population Policy is planned for the summer until October 2006 (to be discussed via Council Paper 03/06), we propose to launch the engagement process on Better Air Quality in the fourth quarter of 2006 the earliest. This is to avoid confusing the public with different Priority Areas and to better focus the public's attention and discussion during respective exercises.

Council Secretariat
April 2006