

# COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper 07/05

## Taking Forward the Sustainable Development Strategy

### Purpose

This paper reviews the first engagement process for a Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy for Hong Kong, and seeks Members' views on how we might improve the process in planning for the next stage of the SD Strategy.

### Key Points

2. Members are invited –
  - To re-establish the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC) to plan and coordinate the Council's work on the next stage of the SD Strategy;
  - To advise on how best to identify new topics for the Strategy;
  - To consider and advise on the timetable for the next round of the Strategy at **Annex A**; and
  - To advise on arrangements for enhancing the resources and publicity arrangements for taking forward the SD Strategy.

### Review of the Engagement Process

3. The five-stage engagement process was as follows -

- I.* Identify Pilot Areas
- II.* Prepare an "Invitation and Response" (IR) document
- III.* Directly involve the wider community
- IV.* Report back to the Government
- V.* The Government to act.

4. As regards the **identification of Pilot Areas**, having the Principal Officials on the Council nominate issues for consideration by Members allowed the process to meet the timetable set for completing the exercise. However, there is an expectation that the wider community would participate in selecting the areas to be considered in the next round of public engagement on the SD Strategy.

5. The **preparation of the IR document** involved input from the three Support Groups set up to advise on the Pilot Areas. The document generally presented the relevant issues in a straightforward and unbiased manner. This made it accessible to the public. However, we have received comments that the content of the document was inadequate for an in-depth discussion of the Pilot Areas, and that more comprehensive research should be done in future.

6. In **directly involving the wider community** in discussion on the Pilot Areas through facilitated workshops, forums, the SD Strategy Summit and the online discussion forum, many respondents felt that the Council was breaking new ground in public consultation in Hong Kong. There was however a feeling that more could be done to reach out to the district level and to young people.

7. Following the public involvement stage, the distillation of comments into a **report to the Government** was conducted by a “Rapporteur” nominally independent of the SDU. The final report endorsed by the Council will be available by the end of April. As regards **the Government’s First SD Strategy**, Members will have considered the extent to which this reflects the outcomes of the engagement process when discussing Paper 05/05.

### **Proposals for Further Developing the Engagement Process**

8. To provide a forum for planning and coordinating the implementation of the engagement process, **we recommend** that Members re-establish the SSC with the terms of reference at **Annex B**. Subject to Members’ views, the Secretariat will invite Members to indicate their interest in joining the Sub-committee.

#### *Selection of New Topics for the SD Strategy*

9. To involve stakeholders more closely in the identification of new topics for the SD Strategy, **we propose** that the SSC convene a stakeholder forum with the aim of identifying topics for final consideration by the full Council. We would suggest that new topics should have the following characteristics -

- They should be clearly linked to the central issue of Hong Kong’s long-term sustainable development;
- They should be areas that would be likely to be well understood by the public and that would stimulate community debate and involvement;
- They should concern clearly definable social, economic and environmental matters.

Prior to the forum, the SSC could consider how best to prepare participants for an

informed discussion of appropriate new topics for the SD Strategy. The Sub-committee could also consider whether it would be advisable to suggest specific topics as a basis for stakeholders' consideration, bearing in mind that during the first engagement process, many suggested that topics such as population policy and air quality could be the priority issues for the next stage of the Strategy. Sub-committee Members would be invited to consider the full list of topics raised during the engagement process.

### *Timetable and Resource Implications*

10. Some participants in the engagement process commented that it was too ambitious and strenuous to tackle three Pilot Areas, all at the same time. We now propose that the next stage of the process be more focussed, and that topics be discussed in a consecutive, rather than concurrent manner. The timetable at Annex A therefore reflects the approach of considering two topics over the next two years, with one topic at a time to allow for more concentrated research and focussed discussion of these topics. **We further propose** to explore with the SSC the following options for maximising the resources available for the exercise –

- Identifying appropriate partners from non-government sectors to help organise and implement events;
- Engaging research support for the SSC and Support Groups to help in the preparation of the IR document and related information; and
- Inviting the District Councils to play a more active partnership role in promoting the engagement process.

### *Public Involvement and Outreach*

11. With the aim of extending the reach of the engagement process, **we propose** that the SSC and the EPSC form a joint working group to consider ways to maximise publicity, with particular regard to reaching out to people at the district level and young people, as well as ways of generating greater media interest throughout the process.

### **Next Steps**

12. Subject to Members' views on the above issues, the SDU will arrange for the re-establishment of the SSC and provide support for the Sub-committee to take forward the next stage of the SD engagement process. The Chair of the SSC will report back on progress to the full Council at regular intervals.

### Proposed Timetable for the Next Engagement Process

<i>Stage I</i>	May – June 2005	Stakeholder Forums to invite views on potential new topics
	July	Council meeting to decide on two new topics
<i>Stage II (First Topic)</i>	Aug - Nov	Establish stakeholder Support Group to develop IR document on first SD Strategy topic, research topic and prepare IR document
<i>Stage III (First Topic)</i>	Dec 2005 – March 2006	Launch IR document on first topic and carry out public involvement stage of the engagement process
<i>Stage IV (First Topic)</i>	April	Council report on the engagement process findings
<i>Stage V (First Topic)</i>	June	Government to publish second SD Strategy document
<i>Stage II (Second Topic)</i>	March – May	Establish stakeholder Support Group to develop IR document on second SD Strategy topic, research topic and prepare IR document
<i>Stage III (Second Topic)</i>	June – Sept	Launch IR document and carry out public involvement stage of the engagement process
<i>Stage IV (Second Topic)</i>	Oct	Council report on the engagement process findings
<i>Stage V (Second Topic)</i>	Dec 2006	Government to publish third SD Strategy document

**Terms of Reference of the Strategy Sub-committee**

- (a) To assist the Council for Sustainable Development with the formulation of a Sustainable Development Strategy for Hong Kong;
- (b) To engage stakeholders and the community and implement a consultation programme as agreed by the Council for Sustainable Development with a view to ensuring that the Sustainable Development Strategy is inclusive and widely accepted by the community; and
- (c) To report regularly to the Council for Sustainable Development on progress with the formulation of the Sustainable Development Strategy.