

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper 09/05

Priority Areas for the Sustainable Development Strategy

Purpose

This paper reports for Members' consideration the views of Members of the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC) on the selection of Priority Areas for the next stage of the Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy. These views take into account the outcome of the stakeholder forum on 28 July.

Background

Role of the SSC

2. At the Council meeting on 18 April, members considered Paper 07/05, "Taking Forward the Sustainable Development Strategy", and advised that the SSC should be re-established –

- 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; and
- To advise on arrangements for enhancing the resources and publicity arrangements for taking forward the SD Strategy.

3. As regards the identification of new topics, Members noted that there was an expectation that the wider community would participate in selecting the Priority Areas for the next stage of the SD Strategy. Accordingly, Members advised that to involve stakeholders more closely in selecting new topics, the SSC should host a public stakeholder forum with the aim of identifying areas for final consideration by the full Council.

Stakeholder Forum

4. The forum took place on 28 July, and involved 183 participants from

various sectors. Taking the form of a facilitated workshop, the format of the event allowed participants to express their views on potential new Priority Areas both through surveys of their individual preferences and through reports from table-based discussion groups.

5. Based on an analysis of the feedback from the surveys of individual views and the reports from discussion groups (at the **Annex**), the following six topics were found to be of most concern to stakeholders in the context of Hong Kong's long-term sustainability (in order of preference) –

- Air Quality
- Population Policy
- Education
- Energy
- Sustainable Manpower and Employment
- Transport and land Use Planning in the Pearl River Delta (PRD).

When reporting on their group discussions, participants recognised that certain issues, such as Air Quality and Population Policy were not the responsibility of a single arm of the HKSAR Government, but were “cross-bureau” in nature and would require coordination of the various government agencies involved.

Considerations

Scope of Priority Areas

6. The SSC met on 4 August to assess the outcome of the stakeholder forum and to consider how best to advise the full Council on the way forward for the selection of Priority Areas. As a basic consideration, SSC Members agreed that it was important to respect the outcome of the stakeholder forum. Members also agreed that it was important to understand and to define clearly the scope of Priority Areas to be recommended to the full Council. In this regard, it would be advisable to review with government bureaux the precise issues that might be of greatest relevance in taking forward public engagement on the potential Priority Areas.

7. Based on these considerations, SSC Members considered that at this stage it would be premature to make a firm recommendation to the full Council on the Priority Areas for the SD Strategy. Rather, Members felt that there was a need to -

- Assess further the outcome of the stakeholder forum – in particular the full report on the event, including the detailed discussion group reports (the report is currently under preparation by the SDU); and
- Discuss with relevant government bureaux the appropriate scope of potential Priority Areas, in the light both of the feedback from the stakeholder forum and an appraisal of the key issues that could usefully be addressed through a process of wide public engagement.

Grouping of Issues into Larger Priority Areas

8. Whilst agreeing that there was a need to consider further the precise scope of the potential Priority Areas, SSC Members agreed that the outcome of the stakeholder forum indicated a clear grouping of issues of public concern with regard to Hong Kong's SD. Further, Members felt that these issues could be grouped into two broad categories, namely –

- **A Healthy Living Environment:** this stemmed from the issue of Air Quality, and related to energy, transport and planning policy issues, as contributors to improving local air quality as an “outcome” measure; and
- **Population and Human Development:** this was an extension of Population Policy, and encompassed policy issues related to education, manpower and employment, and culture and recreation.

9. As a preliminary recommendation therefore, SSC Members felt that the Council should consider grouping the individual issues that emerged from the stakeholder forum into broad Priority Areas. Each may involve a number of policy bureaux and has clear “read-across” implications for economic development, social equity and conservation of natural and cultural heritage – consistent with the Council's own vision and with widely-accepted SD principles. The Council may decide on the selection pending the input of relevant government bureaux and the SDU report as in paragraph 7 above.

Recommendation and Next Steps

10. Based on the considerations above, we **recommend** that the SSC be asked to consider further the precise scope of potential Priority Areas before making a firm recommendation to this Council on the way forward. To this end, the

Sub-committee should review in full the report of the stakeholder forum, and engage in an early dialogue with relevant government bureaux in order to identify clearly key public concerns with regard to Hong Kong's sustainability and to assess how these can best be tackled in the context of the engagement process.

11. In taking this issue forward, the SSC could also consider further the viability of grouping issues of public concern into broader Priority Areas (as outlined in paragraph 8 above), with a view to moving more quickly towards the compilation of a more integrated and comprehensive SD Strategy.

12. The SSC Chairman would then report back with a firm recommendation at the next Council meeting, tentatively scheduled for October.

Council Secretariat
5 August 2005

Feedback from Stakeholder Forum

(I) Surveys of individual views

New Priority Areas		1 st survey			2 nd survey			% change
		No.	%	Ranking	No.	%	Ranking	
(A)	Integrated Planning of the Harbour	42	8%	5	15	4%		-4%
(B)	Rural Conservation	22	4%		6	2%		-2%
(C)	Preservation of Heritage	24	4%		12	3%		-1%
(D)	Sustainable Transport Policy	42	8%	5	16	4%		-4%
(E)	Air Quality	101	19%	1	71	19%	1	0%
(F)	Sustainable Population Policy	62	12%	4	51	14%	2	+2%
(G)	Energy Policy	67	12%	2	46	12%	3	0%
(H)	Rural Land Use	24	4%		4	1%		-3%
(I)	Transport and Land Use Planning in PRD	40	7%		29	8%		+1%
(J)	Sustainable Employment and Manpower	67	12%	2	37	10%	5	-2%
(K)	Education	20	4%		40	11%	4	+7%
(L)	Waste Management	12	2%		10	3%		+1%
(M)	Town Planning	7	1%		22	6%		+5%
(N)	Health	5	1%		11	3%		+2%
(O)	Arts and Recreation	3	1%		1	0%		-1%
	TOTAL	538	*		371	*		

* The sum of individual percentages may not be equal to 100%, owing to rounding of numbers.

(II) *Reports from discussion groups (3 Priority Areas for each of the 19 tables)*

New Priority Areas		No.	%	Ranking
(A)	Integrated Planning of the Harbour	1	2%	
(B)	Rural Conservation	0	0%	
(C)	Preservation of Heritage	0	0%	
(D)	Sustainable Transport Policy	1	2%	
(E)	Air Quality	14	25%	1
(F)	Sustainable Population Policy	11	19%	2
(G)	Energy Policy	5	9%	5
(H)	Rural Land Use	0	0%	
(I)	Transport and Land Use Planning in PRD	6	11%	4
(J)	Sustainable Employment and Manpower	4	7%	6
(K)	Education	7	12%	3
(L)	Waste Management	1	2%	
(M)	Town Planning	4	7%	
(N)	Health	2	4%	
(O)	Arts and Recreation	0	0%	
(P)	Constitutional Development	1	2%	
	TOTAL	57	*	

* The sum of individual percentages may not be equal to 100%, owing to rounding of numbers.