

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper 12/03

Report of the Strategy Sub-committee

Purpose

This paper reports on the recent work of the Strategy Sub-committee (SSC), in particular the First Workshop on a Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy, and seeks Members' advice on the way forward with the strategy building process.

Proposal

2. On the advice of the SSC, we propose that –
 - (a) three priority areas, namely: waste management, renewable energy and urban planning priorities, form the basis for engaging the community in the first “round” of the SD strategy building process; and
 - (b) accordingly, three support groups be formed to assist in collecting and presenting information on the proposed priority areas to the public.

Outcome of the First Workshop

3. At the first SD strategy workshop, which took place on 8 November, more than 70 participants attended to discuss the proposed engagement process for building the SD strategy. In particular, views were sought on three key elements of the proposed process, namely –
 - the initial selection of priority areas for engaging the community in the strategy building process;
 - the evolution of the strategy through the formation of support groups to gather information and coordinate

public discussion; and

- the presentation of findings for the Council's advice on the strategy formulation.

4. There was general consensus among participants that there should be a clear engagement process that would include the wider public and have a high degree of senior level Government involvement. This process should help build consensus, facilitate trust-based engagement with the community and establish a legitimate decision-making process. The participants also emphasised the importance of involving the younger generations in the process and to take into account the interface with neighbouring cities and the Pearl River Delta Region as appropriate.

5. Regarding the selection of priority areas, although the general direction should be achieving full public participation, the workshop concluded that it would be acceptable for the Council to advise on the first priority areas, based on proposals from policy bureaux, for the purpose of starting off the strategy building process or the first "round" of the process. For subsequent "rounds", the Council should consider effective arrangements to encourage and collect direct community input on the selection of priority areas.

6. Many workshop participants commented that the Council could start by focusing on a few priority areas that would be easily understood by the community and would generate general public interest and discussion. Subjects that could be too controversial or complex might not be suitable for the initial strategy building process and could affect public interest in taking part in subsequent "rounds" of the later process.

7. While workshop participants endorsed the idea of having support groups to collect and present information on selected priority areas, they commented that the size of each group should not be too large, and that group members should be impartial and knowledgeable about the relevant subjects. The support groups should be actively engaged in building the strategy and in regular direct communication with the public through appropriate forums.

8. A detailed Workshop Report that summarises views expressed
— at the Workshop is at **Annex A** for Members' reference.

Selection of Priority Areas

9. In the light of the outcome of the Workshop, the SSC has invited Official Members of the Council to propose possible priority areas for inclusion in the first “round” of the strategy building process. A list of the priority areas put forward by the Official Members is at **Annex B**. Taking into consideration the views expressed at the workshop, and bearing in mind that this represents something of a “test-run” of the engagement process, the SSC recommends the following priority areas –

- (a) urban planning priorities (combining two planning related items, i.e. (c) and (d) at Annex B into one general priority area);
- (b) renewable energy (recognising that this will have potential interface with the overall energy policy); and
- (c) solid waste management.

10. It is important to recognise that in dealing with these priority areas, the intention is to focus on long-term sustainable development concerns rather than specific day-to-day implementation issues. It will be necessary to look at how proposed targets and development in these areas would impact on Hong Kong’s broader sustainability in terms of economic and social development as well as our natural environment, and to assess how future changes might help improve the quality of life for our citizens. In this context, it will be useful to refer to the draft vision statement presented to the Council on 2 June, as well as the suggested broad structure for the SD strategy itself (extracts from Paper 05/03 at **Annex C**).

Formation of Support Groups

11. For each selected priority area, there would be a dedicated support group to assist in collecting background information on issues relevant to the priority area and explaining them to the community. The information would form the basis of documents that we would issue for consideration by stakeholders and the public at large. The support groups would play a key role in seeking the community’s views on their concerns in relation to the relevant priority areas. They should include among their

membership representatives of relevant policy bureaux or departments. Subject to the Council's advice on which priority areas should be included in the first "round" of strategy formulation, the SDU will, in consultation with the SSC, identify members for the support groups which are expected to begin work early in 2004.

Timetable

- 12. A tentative timetable for the management of the engagement process for the first "round" of strategy formulation is at **Annex D** for Members' review.

Council Secretariat
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