

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY SUB-COMMITTEE

Paper 04/04

Consultation on the “Invitation and Response” documents

Purpose

This paper seeks Members’ views on arrangements for the public consultation stage of the engagement process for the sustainable development (SD) strategy. It is suggested that we consider a “common commencement” approach to stakeholder consultation on the “Invitation and Response” (IR) documents for the three Pilot Areas (PA).

Proposal

2. We propose to arrange the following events as part of the “common commencement” of the engagement process -
 - (a) An SD strategy exhibition on the three PA to mark the launch of the engagement process and raise community awareness of the relevant issues;
 - (b) A press conference and a series of media interviews to publicise the engagement process;
 - (c) A public forum on the SD strategy, including specific reference to each of the PA; and
 - (d) An invitation to non-governmental organisations (NGO) to partner the Council in the engagement process.

Considerations

3. During the first meetings of the Support Groups (SG), Members suggested that the three SG synchronise the start of their stakeholder engagement processes as far as practicable. This would help avoid confusion as to the objectives of the exercise and enable a consolidated public relations effort that would stimulate media coverage and allow for prudent use of public resources.

4. SG members also noted that the engagement process offered an opportunity to promote public awareness of the principles of sustainability. By synchronising the start of the engagement process, we could give a clear message that the three PA would form part of an integrated strategy aimed at promoting SD in Hong Kong.

5. Synchronising the start of the engagement process for the three PA does **not** mean that the three SG would have to conduct their subsequent work at the same pace. SG Members recognise that the speed of work of each group might differ. The proposal only seeks to adopt a common approach in “kicking off” the engagement process.

Role of the Education and Publicity Sub-Committee (EPSC)

6. The Council’s EPSC is tasked to promote awareness of the principles of sustainability within the community, and its membership includes public relations advisors (among them, a senior official from the Government’s Information Services Department) and NGO representatives with experience of community engagement. We propose to seek the views of the EPSC on detailed arrangements for the “common commencement” of the stakeholder consultation stage of the engagement process, and where appropriate to consider how the activities of the EPSC might help to promote the SD strategy further.

Partnering Organisations

7. In order to promote community involvement in the engagement

process, we propose that NGO be invited to help with its implementation. Organisations with expertise in facilitating public participation or developing educational programmes would be invited to host some of the events, with funding support provided by the Sustainable Development Unit (SDU), as necessary. The involvement of NGO in the direct implementation of the process would emphasise the point that the formulation of an SD strategy for Hong Kong is a community-wide exercise.

Timetable

8. The current timetable is for the SG to produce IR documents by the end of May. We therefore suggest that the stakeholder consultation stage of the engagement process begin in June. The SG could organise further consultation activities separately throughout the summer, with a view to gathering public views on the respective IR documents.

Way Forward

9. Subject to Members' views, the SDU will -
- (a) seek the views of the SG on how to implement a common programme of activities to "kick off" the stakeholder consultation process;
 - (b) begin planning the proposed events; and
 - (c) consult the EPSC on appropriate publicity programmes.