

# COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Digest of the 35<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
held on 26 April 2017 at 3:00 p.m.  
in Conference Room, 33/F, Revenue Tower,  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

## **Present:**

Prof the Hon Arthur Li		(Chairman)
Prof John Chai		
Dr Bunny Chan		
Ms Chan Shin-kwan		
Ms Betty Ho		
Ir Alkin Kwong		
Prof Leung Wing-mo		
Dr Ng Cho-nam		
Ms Samanta Pong		
Mr Cliff Tang		
Prof Jonathan Wong		
Dr Thomas Yau		
Mr Eric Yeung		
Mr Wong Kam-sing	<i>Secretary for the Environment</i>	
Mr Yau Shing-mu	<i>Under Secretary for Transport and Housing</i>	
Mr Vincent Mak	<i>Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)<sup>2</sup></i>	
Miss Vega Wong	<i>Assistant Director of Home Affairs (4)</i>	
Mrs Philomena Leung	<i>Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)</i>	(Secretary)

## **In Attendance:**

### Government Representatives

#### Environment Bureau

Mr Donald Tong	<i>Permanent Secretary for the Environment</i>
Mr Vincent Liu	<i>Deputy Secretary for the Environment</i>
Ms Estrella Cheung	<i>Administrative Assistant to Secretary for the Environment</i>

Ms Michelle Au	<i>Political Assistant to Secretary for the Environment</i>
Miss Joanne Kam	<i>Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)1</i>
Ms Neve Leung	<i>Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)2</i>
Mr Tony Wu	<i>Senior Town Planner (Sustainable Development)</i>
Dr Tom Tam	<i>Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Sustainable Development)</i>
Mr Eric Wong	<i>Senior Executive Officer (Sustainable Development)1</i>
Miss Renee Too	<i>Executive Officer (Sustainable Development)2</i>

Housing Department

Mr Martin Tsoi	<i>Assistant Director (Estate Management)1</i>
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For Agenda Item 2

Planning Department

Ms Phyllis Li	<i>Deputy Director of Planning/Territorial</i>
Miss Winnie Lau	<i>Chief Town Planner/Strategic Planning</i>
Ms Christine Cheung	<i>Town Planner/Strategic Planning2</i>

For Agenda Item 4

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr So Ping-man	<i>Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation</i>
Mr Simon Chan	<i>Assistant Director (Conservation)</i>

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Elvis Au	<i>Assistant Director (Nature Conservation &amp; Infrastructure Planning)</i>
Mr Andy Chan	<i>Assistant Director (Waste Reduction &amp; Recycling) (Acting)</i>

Education Bureau

Mr Kwan Pak-keong

*Chief Curriculum Development  
Officer (Moral, Civic and National  
Education)*

Food and Health Bureau

Mr Bill Wong

*Principal Assistant Secretary for  
Food and Health (Food) 3*

Programme Director – Policy for Sustainability Lab, Faculty of Social  
Sciences, The University of Hong Kong (“HKU”)

Dr Winnie Law

*Assistant Director*

Ms Joyce Chow

*Project Manager*

Mr Darwin Leung

*Senior Project Officer*

Independent Analysis and Reporting Agency – Social Sciences Research  
Centre, HKU

Ms Linda Cho

*Centre Manager*

Mr Kelvin Ng

*Senior Research Manager*

Public Relations Agency – Hill and Knowlton Asia Limited

Mr Jeff Tam

*Senior Consultant*

**Absent with apologies:**

Mr Paul Chu

Prof Laurence Ho

Ms Angelina Kwan

Mr Kwok Lit-tung

Mrs Sandra Mak

Mr Daryl Ng

**Opening Remarks**

The meeting noted that Prof Jonathan Wong and Dr Ng Cho-nam had kindly agreed to take up chairmanship of the Strategy Sub-committee (“SSC”) and the Education and Publicity Sub-committee (“EPSC”) respectively in the new term. Members were reminded that the Council had adopted a one-tier declaration system. When a member had a potential conflict of interest in any matters to be discussed and decided by the Council, he or she should make full disclosure of his or her interest. In addition, Members should maintain confidentiality of materials of classified content.

## **Agenda Item 1 – Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting**

2. Members were informed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 June 2016 had been circulated to Members on 13 September 2016. As the secretariat had not received any proposed amendments, the minutes were taken as confirmed.

## **Agenda Item 2 – Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030**

*(SDC Paper No. 01/17)*

3. Members were informed that the Planning Department (“PlanD”) had launched a six-month public engagement exercise on “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (“Hong Kong 2030+”) to gauge views from the public on the updated territorial development strategy in Hong Kong. They were briefed on the Hong Kong 2030+ proposals as set out in SDC Paper No. 01/17.

4. The following views/enquiries were raised:

### Land requirement and planning

- (a) Enquired if there was any timeframe for the projected land requirement of 4,800 hectares for future development and the priority of the two strategic growth areas (i.e. East Lantau Metropolis (“ELM”) and New Territories North (“NTN”)), and opined that a road map should be devised to highlight the directions of the strategies;
- (b) Enquired how the 10% buffer of the maximum housing capacity of the proposed spatial framework under Hong Kong 2030+ was determined, and how it could be applied to different districts, bearing in mind the significant variance of population density amongst different districts;
- (c) Owing to the general negative sentiments about reclamation, suggested that PlanD could clearly bring out the positive impacts of the ELM reclamation;
- (d) Noted that in planning for new development areas in Singapore, the transport infrastructure would be completed first to encourage people to move into the area. PlanD could take note of such arrangement when planning for new development areas in Hung Shui Kiu and Lok Ma Chau Loop;

- (e) Opined that the Government could also draw reference from Singapore's experience where restrictions were imposed on the resale of public housing;
- (f) Said that the current planning guidelines were out-dated and could not meet the needs of the public for more open space and more leisure and recreational facilities. The new planning guidelines should preferably include developing underground common utility corridors for water pipes, electricity cables, etc. in new development areas, to facilitate maintenance and repair works and minimise nuisance to the public. Roads were currently repeatedly being dug up for different maintenance and repair works in the urban areas, causing inconvenience to road users as well as resulting in traffic congestion;
- (g) Suggested that newly developed buildings and housing estates should make use of renewable energy as far as possible;

#### Ageing population

- (h) Noted an increasing ageing population and enquired whether elderly care infrastructure (such as installing larger lifts that could accommodate convalescent care beds, making available sufficient medical services particularly in remote areas, ensuring barrier-free access, installing hand railings to facilitate walking by the elderly, facilitating the elderly to live in proximity with their family members. etc.) would be taken into account in the overall planning;
- (i) Said that many elderly people were reluctant to reside in the more remote areas or the Mainland as they were worried about the availability of medical services there. Enquired whether the need for medical infrastructure and services in new development areas would be addressed;

#### Ecology

- (j) Supported the idea of urban forestry, which was far more ambitious than urban greening, but wondered if this could be implemented in the crowded urban areas;
- (k) Wondered what further action could be taken to enhance the ecological capacity in areas which were already of high ecological value and were mostly country parks;
- (l) Said that it might be difficult to enhance biodiversity unless there were specific targets as regards use of agricultural land.

Wondered if more concrete targets and timelines should be set;

### Transportation

- (m) Said that air pollution had a marked effect on liveability and was an issue of concern in Hong Kong. Worsening of traffic congestion would compromise efforts on improving the air quality. To tackle the problem, re-initiating the discussion on electronic road pricing which was raised back in the 1980s was suggested. Electronic road pricing was introduced in many cities and had proved to be an effective way in easing traffic congestion;
- (n) Shared the experience of amalgamating bus stops in Kwun Tong and quoted an example that one of the bus stops served some 38 bus routes, resulting in heavy traffic jam when buses queued up to pick up/drop-off passengers. Traffic had eased up after a number of bus routes no longer stopped at that bus stop. Consideration should be given to reducing the number of bus stops and stipulating a certain distance between the stops of each bus route. This would be beneficial to both bus commuters and bus companies;
- (o) Shared the view that the excessive number of bus stops was a contributing factor leading to traffic congestion. Despite efforts to reduce the number of bus stops in the past few years, there were still too many buses on the roads and some had few passengers;
- (p) Opined that the Government should set clear objectives to reduce the number of private vehicles and encourage the use of public transport; reduction of the frequency and convenience of bus services might not be conducive to achieving such objectives;
- (q) Supported the idea of encouraging people to walk “the First/Last Mile”. It was necessary to convey the message to the public that it would be faster to walk the last mile instead of remaining on the bus for alighting at the next bus stop;
- (r) Said that bus and mini bus route rationalisation was unlikely to be able to ease traffic congestion in the light of the growing population. Consideration could be given to implementing flexible working hours as well as home office arrangements so as to stagger people from travelling at the same hours;

### Ageing buildings

- (s) Noted that in view of ageing buildings, there was an increasing need for building maintenance and repair works. However such

works were often perceived as costly and unnecessary and as a result there was a tendency to defer the works. Suggested that for the sake of building safety, the Government should promote the importance of building maintenance and repairs and if necessary, provide funding support to property owners;

#### Living space

- (t) Noted that many “nano” apartments of approximately 100 square feet recently appeared and enquired if the Government would set a planning standard on average living space per person in both public rental housing and private housing;
- (u) Opined that despite the increasing supply of first-hand properties, many properties were left vacant. Suggested setting an objective to increase household living space in the future;

#### Others

- (v) Commented that Hong Kong 2030+ covered a wide range of policies, but unlike the study on Hong Kong 2030, Hong Kong 2030+ did not have in-depth studies on specific areas such as transport or the environment;
- (w) Said that Hong Kong 2030+ appeared to be able to address a number of issues but the practicability of the proposals was not too clear; and
- (x) Supported the need to diversify our economic base but noted that previous attempts had met with a lot of difficulties.

5. The meeting noted the following responses:

#### Land requirement and planning

- (a) A number of factors, including the projected population peak of 8.22 million, a modest annual GDP growth of Hong Kong and that of Guangdong, the housing supply target under the Long Term Housing Strategy, etc. had been taken into account in estimating the total long-term new land requirement of 4,800+ hectares. Land requirements relating to waste recycling, construction waste, etc. had not yet been included in the estimated land requirement. To cope with the demand from population increase and economic growth, a number of New Development Areas including Hung Shui Kiu, Fanling North, Kwu Tung North and Tung Chung New Town Extension would be developed. The two strategic growth areas would be required to cater for long-term development needs;

- (b) The latest Census & Statistics Department's Population Projections included a baseline population projection, which indicated a population peak of 8.22 million by 2043. The maximum housing capacity of all developments under the proposed spatial framework of Hong Kong 2030+ was about 9 million in terms of population, representing a 10% buffer on top of the population peak of 8.22 million. The buffer could also allow space and flexibility in meeting the changing social and economic needs and aspirations. In addition, Hong Kong 2030+ focused on optimising development in new development areas and retrofitting the densely developed urban areas by managing the development intensity. For example, in existing built-up areas of Kowloon, the maximum domestic plot was already up to 7.5, and there was no intention to further relax the high plot ratio in the main urban area of Hong Kong and Kowloon;
- (c) Additional development capacity to allow for larger flat size had been reserved under the updated territorial development strategy. There was in fact an increase in average apartment sizes in the past decades despite a recent surge in the number of "nano" apartments. Affordability of buyers amid surging housing prices was a main factor affecting flat sizes. In the current Hong Kong 2030+ document, there was no proposal on a minimum flat size requirement yet;
- (d) Regarding the priority of the two strategic growth areas, i.e. the ELM and NTN, the recommended development strategy would only be formulated after completion of further technical assessments under the on-going Transport and Land Use Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, as well as the Sustainability Assessment to be commissioned to evaluate the social, economic and financial impacts in broad terms;
- (e) The ELM would be the strategic growth area to meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs. The location of the ELM between Hong Kong Island and Lantau was considered relatively less ecologically sensitive. Innovative and eco-friendly measures would be adopted to minimise the potential impact of reclamation in ELM;
- (f) A Strategic Environmental Assessment was being conducted to identify environmental concerns early in the planning process, and assess in broad terms the environmental impacts of the preferred development options with a view to ensuring sustainable growth;

- (g) Green building design and environmental infrastructure would be integrated into new development areas and urban renewal projects. For instance, district cooling system would be used for commercial development in the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area;
- (h) Transport infrastructure should tie in with district planning when developing new areas so as to facilitate movement of the public, and current planning was made on this basis. Thus when the new development area in Hung Shui Kiu was ready, the plan was that the railway station there would also be opened for public use. Railway would remain the backbone of the public transport network and in this regard, the Railway Development Strategy 2014 had proposed seven railway projects including those that would link up new development areas in the northeastern and northwestern New Territories;
- (i) Common utility corridor was adopted in the Mainland and this could be considered in Hong Kong to minimise land intake and the public nuisance arising from maintenance works;
- (j) To cope with new demand and expectations, the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines should be reviewed and revised accordingly. In addition, to improve spatial distribution of homes and jobs, high-technology and knowledge-based industries and other emerging industries could be located outside the traditional Central Business Districts;

#### Ageing population

- (k) To facilitate ageing in place, universal design in public housing would continue to be adopted to cater for the needs of the elderly. Hong Kong 2030+ suggested promoting a universal design in private housing units as well, many of which currently only provided barrier-free access and facilities in common areas;
- (l) On the issue of elderly people retiring in the Mainland, a number of measures were already in place to facilitate the elderly to receive subsidised residential care services in the Mainland through non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”) from Hong Kong. Should there be a trend of Hong Kong’s elderly relocating to the Mainland upon retirement, there would be sufficient measures to facilitate them to do so;

#### Agricultural land

- (m) The Administration had been working on revitalising abandoned

agricultural land and brownfield sites in Northeastern New Territories and NTN. The New Agricultural Policy had been formulated and a further study would be commissioned as a follow-up to identify Agriculture Priority Areas that had higher value for agricultural activities and to incentivise landowners to put the identified areas into agricultural purposes;

### Transportation

- (n) Transport infrastructure alone could not tackle the congestion problem. The rate of increase of road area lagged behind the growth of private vehicles. In order to optimise the use of road area, the Transport and Housing Bureau had been working on, for example, bus route rationalisation, provision of more parking facilities for commercial vehicles and curbing the growth of private vehicles;
- (o) The Transport Advisory Committee had conducted a study on the causes of and possible solutions to road traffic congestion in 2014 and put forward 12 recommendations on short, medium and long-term measures ranging from electronic road pricing to raising the level of fixed penalties. The Transport Department had completed a public engagement on the Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas in March 2016. A consultant would be engaged to conduct an in-depth feasibility study for the Scheme and analyse the implementation details. The Government had also attempted to curb the growth of private vehicles by withdrawing the tax concessions for electric vehicles. Proposals to increase fixed penalties had to go through the legislative process and would be subject to approval from the Legislative Council. But proposals which required legislative amendment or funding approval often met with strong scepticism and opposition;
- (p) Many views expressed on the need to rationalise the distance between bus stops but suggestions to remove or move a bus stop often met with strong opposition at district level;
- (q) Provision of transport infrastructure alone could not fully tackle the congestion problem. Behavioural change such as willingness to walk would also be needed. The Government would embrace the concept of walkability and more lifts and escalators would be built to facilitate pedestrians. While railway served as the backbone of the public transport system, walking and cycling would be promoted to improve health and well-being; and

Others

- (r) HK2030+ touched on many aspects which would require corresponding policy tools to achieve the aims and targets.

**Agenda Item 3 – Report on the Work of the Education and Publicity  
Sub-committee  
(SDC Paper No. 02/17)**

- 6. Members were briefed on the work progress of the EPSC as set out in SDC Paper No. 02/17. The following were highlighted:
  - (a) Since its establishment in 2003, the Sustainable Development Fund had processed 12 rounds of applications. 67 projects, involving a total grant of about \$69 million, had been approved. Out of these, 61 projects had been completed while six projects were on-going. The next round of applications was expected to be launched in the second half of 2017;
  - (b) The School Award Programme was held on a biennial basis. The current (2016-2018) round was launched in May 2016 under the theme of sustainable consumption of biological resources. A total of 43 schools had enrolled. Assessment for awards would be conducted in early 2018 with a view to presenting the awards by end of the 2017-18 school year;
  - (c) Under the School Outreach Programme, 81 schools had enrolled for 70 drama performances, 21 talks and 11 workshops in the 2016-17 school year. Invitations to schools to join the next (2017-18) round would be issued in May 2017;
  - (d) The Sustainable Development Promotion Award for Students of Higher Education Institutions was a new initiative launched in 2016 to encourage undergraduate students to plan and implement projects to apply the sustainability concept in their daily lives and spread the message to the community. A total of 19 entries were received. The best five proposals were given the “Proposal Award” with a cash award of \$3,000 and a certificate. Those who satisfactorily completed their projects were further given the “Implementation Award” with another cash award of \$7,000 and a

certificate. The team which performed the best was also given the “Outstanding Project Award” with another cash award of \$10,000 and a certificate. An award presentation ceremony was held on 26 February 2017 during which the awardees shared their experience in planning and implementing the projects; and

- (e) As at April 2017, there were 397 SD Ambassadors from 27 schools. They had been involved in the regional forums and roving exhibitions of the Council’s public engagement exercise as well as the award presentation ceremonies. Further activities were under planning to sustain their participation in the promotion of sustainable development.

7. A member suggested extending the education and publicity work to cover property management companies and owners’ organisations to increase their participation and create a bigger impact in society.

**Agenda Item 4 – Draft Report on the Public Engagement on Promotion of Sustainable Consumption of Biological Resources**  
*(SDC Paper No. 03/17)*

8. Members were informed that during the public involvement period, 64 engagement events, including regional fora, as well as briefings for advisory and statutory bodies, District Councils, residents’ organisations and other interested groups were held. Over 3 000 members of the public and stakeholders participated in these events. A total of 3 592 views collection forms and 27 written submissions from individuals and organisations/companies were received. In addition, comments were received through other channels, including engagement events, internet and social media, printed media and radio channels, etc. After conclusion of the public involvement period, the Independent Analysis and Reporting Agency compiled and analysed the findings of all the views received during the public engagement. Based on the views collected during the public involvement period, the Programme Director had prepared a draft Council report. The draft report was deliberated at a joint meeting of the SSC and the Support Group on Promotion of Sustainable Consumption of Biological Resources (“SG”) held on 28 March 2017. Taken into account the views expressed at the meeting (see paragraph 6 of SDC Paper No. 03/17), the draft report had been revised.

9. Members were briefed on the views collected during the public involvement period and the draft report as set out in SDC Paper No. 03/17. The following views/enquiries were raised:

- (a) Said that the recommendations focused on fostering a culture of sustainable consumption of biological resources in Hong Kong. They were comprehensive, practical and realistic and hoped that the Government would accept the recommendations;
- (b) Recalled that when SDC was invited to take on the subject of sustainable consumption of biological resources for public engagement, it was noted that the concept of biodiversity was not well understood by the general public and therefore the focus should be placed on education and publicity. The recommendations in the draft report reflected such intention;
- (c) Said that similar to the promotion of electric vehicles, one hurdle to the wider consumption of sustainable biological products was the higher price of such products. Price was of foremost concern to many consumers and businesses and wondered how this could be dealt with;
- (d) Noted that views collected during the public involvement stage suggested that awareness building and guidelines on consumption would be appropriate initially as the first step. However, if education and publicity had proven ineffective in generating the demand and supply, then further actions such as financial incentives might have to be considered. For this reason, the draft report recommended that the Government should keep in view the case for strengthened measures and the use of economic and financial tools;
- (e) Enquired whether consideration had been given to promoting sustainable consumption of biological resources through highlighting the negative effects of consuming unsustainably;
- (f) Noted that a number of recommendations suggested funding support for quasi-government organisations and NGOs and enquired whether a certain amount of funding should be set aside for this purpose; and

- (g) Opined that to assess the effectiveness of the recommendations, say in five years' time, apart from ascertaining any increase in knowledge and awareness level, it would be useful to know any behavioural changes. In this regard, wondered if a baseline study on current consumption should be conducted.
10. The meeting noted the following responses:
- (a) Food and Health Bureau was supportive of the recommendations in particular recommendation 15 which fell under its purview and that the recommendation was in line with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department's long-term objective in promoting the sustainable development of the fisheries and agricultural industries;
  - (b) According to the views collected during the public involvement stage, there was general consensus on the need for more work on awareness building, particularly amongst the younger generation as well as on encouraging the supply and purchase of easily identifiable sustainable biological products. NGOs and green groups could be well placed to take up such work. There could also be some form of cooperation with the retail sector through the offer of reward scheme to encourage the purchase and consumption of sustainable biological products;
  - (c) There was no specific discussion during the public involvement as to the amount of funding that should be channelled to this. It was recommended to tap onto existing platforms such as the Environment and Conservation Fund ("ECF");
  - (d) Subject to deliberations on the draft SDC report, the ECF Committee could be invited to consider taking into account the subject of "sustainable consumption of biological resources" in setting its priorities and setting aside funds for this purpose;
  - (e) The proposed recommendations focussed on positive encouragement. Whether the tactic used in promoting organic products should be used in promoting sustainable biological resources could perhaps be left to the NGOs to consider as they took forward the recommendations in the SDC report;
  - (f) There was currently no baseline data and for this reason, recommendation 19 had suggested that a study be conducted. If after a certain period, say five years, there was no noticeable change in consumption behaviour, then further actions such as

economic and financial measures might have to be considered; and

- (g) In the light of discussion at SSC and SG on turning certain green specifications in Government's Green Procurement Guidelines from "desirable" to "mandatory", Environmental Protection Department clarified that when items with the relevant specifications were available on the market with adequate models and quantities in supply, the green specifications would be listed as "mandatory"; and when there was uncertain or limited market availability, the green specifications would be listed as "desirable". "Desirable" features would be revised to "mandatory" when market conditions allowed. Quoting electric vehicles as an example, owing to limited models and suppliers in the market, it would not be possible to mandate bureaux and departments to purchase electric vehicles. However as the market developed, the Government had been procuring more electric vehicles though this requirement was listed as desirable and not mandatory. Environmental Protection Department had been and would continue to keep in view market availability and would review and update the Green Procurement Guidelines from time to time.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – Any other business**

11. There was no other business raised.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Date of the next meeting**

12. The Secretary would confirm the date of the next meeting nearer the time.

**Secretariat  
Council for Sustainable Development**