

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Housing Authority

Environmental Policy Statement and Initiatives

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to approve an environmental policy statement, to agree to environmental reporting, and to note progress on environmental initiatives.

BACKGROUND

2. In November 1998, the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) endorsed the development of a Strategic Framework for an Environmental Management System (Papers Nos. SPC 54/98 and HA 23/97) and noted the progress in establishing baseline information on Housing Authority environmental initiatives. In 1998, government took the initiative to require all government Bureaux and Departments to produce an annual environmental report. The Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands wrote to the Authority proposing that the Authority consider publishing an environmental report.

3. Through its construction programmes and management of property, the Housing Authority has a considerable impact on the environment in Hong Kong. The environmental requirements of the purchasing policies of the Authority affect a large number of contractors, consultants and suppliers of materials both inside and outside Hong Kong. Through campaigns, such as the Green Environment Campaign, the Authority is able to improve the environmental awareness of tenants and owners of the property that it manages.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

4. The cornerstone of any Housing Authority (HA) commitment towards the environment, is the agreement of a policy statement on the environment. It is **proposed** that Members approve the following statement -

Environmental Policy Statement

“The HA is committed to continually improving the environmental standards in the provision of public housing and related services. In achieving this objective, the HA has adopted the following environmental principles.

- **To develop a strategic framework and implement environmental management for the promotion of sustainable development.**
- **To comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations.**
- **To address environmental concerns and incorporate environmental initiatives in planning and design, construction and demolition, marketing, and estate management activities.**
- **To minimize environmental impacts (air, dust, noise, waste, and water) to residents and public from the HA’s operations.**
- **To promote healthy living and a green environment.**
- **To minimize the use of resources, whenever practical and cost effective, including the development of procurement policies.**
- **To promote environmental awareness among staff, residents and contractors through education and publicity programmes.**
- **To review and seek continual improvement on the implementation of an environmental management system.”**

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

5. Environmental reports form the basis of demonstrating publicly how an organisation addresses issues relating to the environment. It is **proposed** that the HA produce an annual Environmental Report, and that the SPC be responsible for approving its issue. The report would be in addition to any reporting on the environment within the Annual Housing

Authority report.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

6. A consultant has been commissioned to develop an Environmental Management System framework and strategy for implementation. The consultancy is nearing completion, and proposals will be considered by the SPC in September 1999.

7. Environmental Audits were conducted in 1997 and have proved to be valuable by identifying gaps between good practice and the way the Housing Department (HD) operates. As a consequence, departmental responsibilities for the environment were strengthened in 1998, training of staff has been stepped up, environmental research expanded and environmental issues incorporated into contractors performance assessments. The Environmental Management System framework will examine the need for on going Auditing.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

8. To encourage environmental awareness and to promote good environmental practices, it is **proposed** to initiate the HA Environmental Awards. The awards will be aimed at recognising good environmental performance by contractors, and environmental initiatives of residents of public housing estates. Details of the awards will be agreed by the SPC and other relevant committees.

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Promotion

9. Environmental campaigns within housing estates provide the focus for improving the awareness of tenants and owners. Three recent campaigns are -

- (a) Healthy Living ;
- (b) Waste Reduction ; and
- (c) Green Environment.

Green Environment

10. On the 26 June 1999, the Green Environment Campaign was launched by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of Hong Kong Tree Planting Committee of Hong Kong Tree Planting Day. The campaign will cost \$3.5 million. Various activities have been planned for public housing estates and HOS courts under the campaign, including estate green days, green visits, tree planting days and a radio quiz. Further promotion programmes are planned throughout 1999 and the year 2000 on air and water quality, noise, energy and waste reduction.

Communication

11. EMAC newsletters and the HD newsletters are used to promote environmental initiatives. The HD Staff Magazine Housetalk contains a 'green corner'. Induction training for HD staff now includes an environmental component. A video on 'green offices' has been produced for HD staff, and has been distributed to all offices.

HK-BEAM

12. HK-BEAM is a system for the environmental rating of new and existing buildings. It was developed initially for office buildings by The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (REDA). Independent assessments are undertaken by the Center for Environmental Technology. The Department is assisting in the development of a version of HK-BEAM for residential buildings. Pilot assessment trials using Housing Authority buildings are due to commence in mid 1999. The Building Business Plan includes a commitment to subject all HA residential developments to assessment under the scheme.

Waste Reduction

13. The waste recovery scheme for paper, aluminum and plastic bottles has now been extended to all housing estates. A waste reduction programme aimed at HD offices is in progress. To reduce waste due to decoration of flats by tenants and owners, two trial schemes are in progress. In one scheme, a basic shell is provided that the occupiers finish. In the other trial, a choice of wall tiles and kitchen worktops is provided to owners. Studies are in progress to reduce, and to segregate waste on construction sites. To eliminate illegal dumping of construction waste, contractors will be required to obtain a receipt from the landfill site for

each lorry load of waste indicating proper disposal of the waste.

Air, Noise, Water, Refuse

14. Design and specifications have been changed to conserve water by reducing the volume of flushing cisterns. Over 120 km of water pipes have been checked for leakage. Specifications have been changed to reduce the use of asphalt to minimize air pollution. Specifications are to be changed to reduce further the use of timber in construction, and to use timber from sustainable sources. Studies are underway to monitor the effectiveness of noise mitigation measures in completed estates. The Automated Refuse Collection System is now incorporated into developments over 2,400 flats.

15. Details of HA environmental initiatives as at 31 March 1999 are detailed in **Annex**.

THE WAY FORWARD

16. In the current year, environmental initiatives will focus on -

- (a) Agreement of an environmental policy, development and implementation of strategy for an environmental management system.
- (b) Improving environmental awareness through the Green Environment Campaign, and the Green Office initiative.
- (c) Reducing and controlling waste by identifying solutions to tenants fitting out waste, ensuring no illegal dumping, and encouraging segregation of waste.
- (d) Reducing wastage of water by promoting the recycling of water on construction sites, use of more efficient taps and flushing cisterns, and through leakage detection in estates.
- (e) Improved energy management through design, and the control of lighting and other electrical equipment commensurate with estate security concerns.
- (f) Driving improvements in design through HK-BEAM Residential assessments.

17. The Environmental Management System framework will identify environmental impacts by the Authority. It will propose key performance indicators as well as ways to improve environmental management. It is the intention that the Corporate and Business Plans be used to take these initiatives forward.

PUBLICITY

18. The commitment of the HA to an environmental policy, and to environmental reporting will be welcomed by the public. A press release will be issued outlining the initiatives being taken by the Authority.

DISCUSSION

19. At the next meeting of the HA to be held on 8 July 1999, Members will be asked to -

- (a) Approve the Environmental Policy Statement (paragraph 4);
- (b) Approve the issue of an Annual Environmental Report (paragraph 5);
- (c) Note the proposal to initiate Housing Authority Environmental Awards (paragraph 8); and
- (d) Note the environmental initiatives and the way forward (paragraphs 9 – 17).

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