THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Building Committee

Consultancy Report on the Development of Site Safety Strategy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to -

(a) inform Members of the consultancy Final Report on the development of Site Safety Strategy; and

(b) seek Members' endorsement on the proposed Site Safety Strategy developed from the consultancy.

BACKGROUND

2. The 1,700 number of accidents in Housing Authority (HA) Sites in 1998 is substantially higher than the 684 number in 1997. In particular, an alarming 11 cases of fatal accidents incurred in 1998. This unsatisfactory situation was brought up to Members' attention on 29 April 1999 (Paper No. BC 72/99 refers)

3. By the same Paper, the Building Committee approved the appointment of a consultant to shape a long-term site safety strategy. The Occupational Safety and Health Council was appointed on 11 October 1999 to undertake the consultancy.

4. Improving site safety is also one of the initiatives covered in the Quality Housing Consultative Document, (Chapter 6 and recommendation 27 refer). The consultancy is in accord with this direction.
5. The objective of the consultancy is to devise a long-term site safety strategy aiming to bring the safety performance of the HA’s sites to the highest standards. The scope of the consultancy includes -

(a) An analysis of accident history on HA's sites with a view to determine the likely causes of the increase in the number of accidents in 1998 and 1999.

(b) An examination and appraisal of current procedures and systems for site safety in the HA. The context of other major clients operating in Hong Kong and the latest development in site safety management in Hong Kong and leading countries are to be considered.

(c) Propose short term and long-term recommendations and programmes for implementing the HA's site safety strategy.

6. The consultancy Final Report is attached at Annex A. An executive summary is placed at the forefront of the Report; Section 10 gives a summary of the consultant's forty recommendations.

7. Upon consideration of the findings and recommendations of this consultancy, the Department proposes in this paper a comprehensive HA site safety strategy. A site safety statement is also proposed embodying the mission and target of the strategy.

SITE SAFETY STATEMENT

8. The HA as one of the major clients in Hong Kong can exercise her capacity to influence standards of safety through the process of tendering and contract administration.

9. One measure in this process is to place prominently in tender documents a safety statement, which aims to assert HA's commitment to safety and thereby prompt all contractors to fulfil their duties on safety. By setting out HA requirements and standards, this safety statement also embodies a safety mission to which HA contractors must commit. An initial version of this safety statement is attached at Annex B.

SITE SAFETY STRATEGY
10. A comprehensive HA site safety strategy is developed and presented in the Final Report (Annex A). The strategy coherently covers the following areas -

- Section 2 Accident Analysis
- Section 3 Tenders and Contracts
- Section 4 Sanctions and Incentives
- Section 5 Site Related Safety Culture and Safety Systems
- Section 6 Organisations’ Safety Culture and Safety Systems
- Section 7 Publicity and Safety Campaigns
- Section 8 The Law and Law Enforcement

CONSULTATION

11. Views from the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) has been sought on the initiatives covered in this Paper. They are generally supportive of the proposals. Further consultation is expected as details are progressively developed. In the course of developing this proposed site safety strategy, the consultant has also conducted interviews with a broad range of related government departments and stakeholders organizations. The recommendations proposed in the Report are in context with the construction industry.

IMPLEMENTATION

12. A summary of recommendations and an implementation programme are respectively presented in Section 10 and 11 of the Final Report (Annex A). A priority rating has been assigned beside each recommendation. Category A indicates works which should be dealt with during the first year of implementation, though not necessarily completed. There is a sub-division within Category A indicated by [A] which represents important initiatives for safety already in place, operating successfully and
recommended that they should continue. Category B recommendations are less urgent and can be dealt with during the second year of implementation.

13. Implementation of these recommendations will also be carefully studied to integrate coherently with the Quality Housing initiatives.

14. With this general direction set, details of implementation schemes as well as progress will also be reported to the Building Committee on a regular basis.

**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

15. Competent and adequate resources are vital for successful implementation. The consultant advised the need of setting up a safety unit in HA with external help in the beginning; at present, the unit is staffed with one senior professional officer. It is proposed to create 1 to 2 additional staff for the Safety Unit. The creation of the first officer is proposed to phase in to accord with the first year of implementation. Whether a second additional officer is needed will be reviewed in the second year of implementation.

16. It is proposed to obtain a retainer service from the Occupational Safety and Health Council (OSHC) to further advise on the implementation, if necessary. The estimated expenditure for this service is $0.30 M.

**RECOMMENDATION**

17. Members are requested to approve or note the following -

   (a) approve the proposed Site Safety Strategy of the Consultancy Final Report at Annex A.

   (b) approve the adoption of a safety statement in paragraphs 8 and 9.

   (c) note the programme for implementation in paragraphs 12 to 14.
(d) endorse the creation of additional 1-2 staff for the Safety Unit in paragraph 15. DEC/HRC submission will be made accordingly.

(e) note the requirement of a retainer service from the Occupational Safety and Health Council in paragraph 16.

**DISCUSSION**

18. At the Building Committee meeting to be held on 27 April 2000, Members will be invited to discuss this paper and approve the recommendations stated in paragraph 17 above.

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