

Absence with apologies

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Action

Item 1: Role and Operation of the Steering Committee **(SC Paper 1/2008)**

The Chairperson welcomed all Members and government representatives to the first meeting of the Steering Committee on Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy (the Committee).

2. The Chairperson reiterated that Government would conduct the Review in the most open manner with no pre-determined agenda. The results of the Review would depend largely on majority consensus to be emerged in the community.

3. The Chairperson briefed Members on the role of the Committee. The meeting noted the followings:

- (a) the Committee was set up to guide and monitor the whole review process and make recommendations to the Government on how the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) should be revised;
- (b) Members were appointed for a two-year term starting from 17 July 2008. Their tenure might have to be adjusted, if necessary, so that Members could see through the Review;
- (c) senior representatives of Development Bureau, relevant government departments and Urban Renewal Authority (URA) would attend meetings of the Committee to provide information and to facilitate Members' deliberation;
- (d) proposals to amend the existing URS would have to go through internal discussions within the Administration, especially for matters involving policy and operational issues outside the ambit of the Development Bureau, or recommendations that would have substantial financial implications to the public coffer. The Development

Bureau would coordinate discussions of the Committee's recommendations within the Administration.

4. Members noted the arrangements for declaration of conflict of interests and that such declaration would be recorded in the relevant notes of meeting.

5. Members noted that to facilitate free exchange of views and ideas, meetings of the Committee would not be open to the public. Except for documents containing market sensitive information, all papers and confirmed notes of meeting would be made available to the public.

6. Members discussed the operation and administrative issues of the Committee. Below is a summary of the discussions -

- (a) Development Bureau will take charge of the Review. URA, as a key implementation agent of the URS, will provide support but will not steer the Review;
- (b) Members are free to discuss URS-related issues with other parties and express their own personal views in the public, but they should not quote the views of other parties expressed at meetings of the Committee without first obtaining their consent; and
- (c) the Secretariat would serve as a focal point for invitations by the media and other organisations for Members to attend discussion forums or public engagement activities. Copies of government's public responses to questions related to the Review would also be provided to Members for information.

Secretary

7. The meeting endorsed the proposed role and mode of operation of the Committee.

Item 2: Process of Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy
(SC Paper 2/2008)

8. The Chairperson invited Members' suggestions on important areas that the Review should focus on, e.g. the proposal for URA to

implement 225 urban renewal projects within 20 years; policy on rehabilitation of older buildings; experience and results of urban renewal since promulgation of the current URS, etc.

9. Below is a summary of the discussions:

- (a) Macau and London should be included in the policy study and overseas visits. URA will convey the suggestions to the consultants; URA
- (b) the Review should consider whether urban regeneration work should be extended, on a need basis, to built-up areas outside the nine target areas identified in the URS;
- (c) on the coordination between heritage conservation and urban regeneration, Members considered that the need for conservation should not depend solely on grading by the Antiquities Advisory Board. The local community should be engaged early to develop consensus on the optimal extent of conservation required in individual projects;
- (d) A Member suggested to carry out tracking studies on communities displaced by urban redevelopment projects to examine the social impact on them. After deliberation, it was noted that while it was very difficult to trace the residents affected because URA did not have records of their new addresses, it would be possible to locate the shop operators affected by some redevelopment projects, e.g. Lee Tung Street (H15) Project. The consultants would be asked to make some analysis of the impact on them; Policy study consultant
- (e) Members would generally wish to know more about URA's financial status. URA explained that the actual financial results of individual projects would only be available when all the units built under a particular project were sold. Whilst the financial performance of on-going projects would be commercially sensitive, URA would consider how to provide further information on completed projects to the Committee; URA
- (f) Members suggested to examine URA's business model (e.g. maintenance vs redevelopment, proportion of

existing buildings preserved, open tenders, leasing policy, etc.) as well as financial model (e.g. project viability, projected financial performance, cross-subsidisation among projects, etc.) in undertaking urban renewal projects. Members would consider what key objectives URA projects should achieve that would set them apart from other redevelopment projects initiated by private developers. Members also noted that the role of URA would, to a large extent, depend on provisions in the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance;

- (g) Members noted that given the importance of the issue, continuous engagement with LegCo members in the Review would be essential;
- (h) Members emphasised the need to inform and convince the public that there were many alternatives in urban renewal and the discussions during the Review should not be reduced to a simple choice between conservation and redevelopment. To this end, the policy study consultant should introduce to the public overseas experience in urban regeneration and the Government should give a clear message to the community that the Review would be an open process and the public was expected to play an active role in it; and
- (i) Members agreed that the community should be engaged not only through formal seminars and workshops, but also other means more accessible to the general public. Prevailing web technology should be employed to help disseminate information and solicit views from the community. Also, new media such as YouTube could be used to approach the younger generation. Members also agreed that the public engagement consultant should make effort to involve students and school teachers so that people without immediate personal interests in urban renewal matters would also take part in the Review.

Item 3: Any Other Business

- 10. Members requested and the Chairperson agreed that newspaper Secretary

cuttings relating to the URS Review would be provided to Members for reference.

[Post-meeting notes: The Secretariat would forward to Members newspaper cuttings on the URS Review every Friday through e-mails.]

11. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.

**Secretariat, Steering Committee of the Review on URS
August 2008**