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For discussion on 13 June 2016

Progress Report on the Promotion of Charter on External Lighting

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of implementing the Charter on External Lighting (“the Charter”).

BACKGROUND

2. In the information paper submitted to the Advisory Council on the Environment in January 2016, we reported the following issues:

- (a) the Environment Bureau (“ENB”) promulgated guidelines which require all Government departments to switch off external lighting of decorative, promotional and advertising purposes at 11 p.m. at all properties owned or managed by the Government. Government departments responsible for the management of Government buildings or facilities would also observe the Guidelines when planning for or managing their external lighting installations;
- (b) the formation of the Working Group on the Promotion of the Charter on External Lighting (“the Working Group”) to plan and undertake preparatory work to promote the Charter;
- (c) the key features of the Charter drawn up in accordance to the recommendations of the Task Force, including its purpose, target, preset time, scope of switch-off requirement and exemptions; and

- (d) the implementation of the Charter. A launching ceremony was held on 11 January 2016. Nearly 1 000 organisations / shops / properties pledged to sign up to the Charter. TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (“API”) were rolled out to encourage the switching off of external lighting installations during the preset time of 11 p.m. or midnight to 7 a.m. to minimise light nuisance and energy wastage. The television API is available at ENB’s website on external lighting (www.enb.gov.hk/external_lighting).

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS OF THE CHARTER

3. ENB continues to implement the Charter. Progress made since January 2016 is set out from paragraph 4 to 10 below.

Recruitment of Signatories

4. ENB has been actively promoting the Charter by working closely with the Working Group and liaising with the relevant trade bodies and organisations to invite property management companies, advertising sign owners, hotels, shopping malls, shops, catering establishments and public bodies which own or manage external lighting installations to sign up to the Charter. Besides, ENB invited owners of external lighting installations which have attracted complaints to join the Charter. ENB also conducted on-site investigations in districts with a higher concentration of external lighting to collect information about the external lighting installations, and to invite the owners of these installations to sign the Charter. We have issued over 4 000 invitations to various organisations, trade bodies and companies.

Signing Ceremony

5. The signing ceremony of the Charter was held on 1 April 2016. A video clip about the event is available at ENB’s website on external lighting (www.enb.gov.hk/external_lighting). Over 4 000 organisations / shops / properties signed up to the Charter. The list of signatories is at **Annex**. Signatories include premises from different sectors, such as property development, building management, hotels and catering, retail, banking, travel and cinemas, as well as schools, public utilities and public/non-governmental organisations. The active participation of these organisations and their positive response corresponds with the objective of the

Charter, which is to build consensus through collaboration among the Government, the business community and the public, with a view to progressively bringing about changes across the community. The switch-off arrangement could provide residents with a better environment conducive to sleep, and at the same time promote energy saving and low-carbon living for the purpose of combating the profound impact of climate change.

6. ENB has published the list of participating organisations on newspapers and ENB's website. Stickers and certificates have been distributed to the signatories for display at their properties to signify their participation and to raise public awareness of the Charter.

The Guidelines

7. ENB has engaged a consultant to organise a series of seminars on Good Practice for External Lighting Installation. A total of 30 seminars would be held from May 2016 to June 2017 to appeal to Charter signatories and members of the relevant professional organisations, trade bodies and public bodies to observe the Guidelines and to adopt the good practices in the Guidelines when planning or managing their external lighting installations. Issues covered at the seminars include operating hours for lighting, controls for lighting, light nuisance control measures, energy efficiency measures, lighting project design planning and prevention of glare impact.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST EXTERNAL LIGHTING

8. The Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") continues to take proactive actions to handle complaints against external lighting. Upon receipt of complaints about light nuisance caused by external lighting, EPD would relay the complainants' concerns and requests to the persons responsible for the lighting installations in question, invite them to sign the Charter, and advise them to refer to the Guidelines and take appropriate measures to minimise the impact of the lighting installations on the residents in the vicinity. If the nuisance is caused by a signatory to the Charter and the signatory refuses to take remedial action by switching off the lighting during the preset time, the organisations concerned will be removed from the list of participating organisations in the Charter. Experience indicates that most of the persons responsible for the lighting installations would, upon receipt of complaints, adopt measures to minimise light nuisance as far as practicable. No organisation has been removed from the list of Charter signatories so far.

WAY FORWARD

9. ENB will continue to invite organisations in both the public and the private sectors to sign up to the Charter, in particular tenants located in the shopping malls / premises which have participated the Charter; Charter signatories with branches / stores / shops that have not yet signed up to the Charter; and the owners of external lighting installations that have become the subject of complaints lodged with EPD or as reported in the media.

10. We plan to organise award ceremonies in 2017 and beyond in recognition of the efforts made by signatories to adhere to the switch-off requirement under the Charter. As it takes time for the charter to gather momentum and for the Government to refine the charter in the light of the experience gained, the Government will assess the effectiveness of this administrative measure about two to three years after the launch of the Charter, including the conduct of survey on public perception of light nuisance, response to the Charter, and how the business establishments respond to complaints from the public, etc. We will also continue to study the overseas regimes and experience in regulating external lighting, and to assess whether those standards and practices are applicable to Hong Kong.

ADVICE SOUGHT

11. Members are invited to note the implementation of the Charter.

Environment Bureau
June 2016