

Establishment of a new sub-committee on Waste under the Advisory Council on the Environment

Purpose

This paper aims to inform members of the establishment of a new sub-committee on Waste under the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE).

Background

2. Waste prevention and recovery has been Government's main focus in tackling the waste problem. We envisage that in the coming years, waste management will become increasingly important and the complexity of the issues involved will call for more focused efforts on the part of the Government as well as the community. Therefore, in addition to implementing various waste reduction measures, we have also reviewed the relevant institutional structure with a view to facilitating our effort in further promoting waste prevention and recovery. In this connection, we have reviewed the role and work of the Waste Reduction Committee (WRC). The WRC, comprising mainly non-officials, was established in February 1999 to help coordinate waste reduction measures and advise on priorities in related policies and programmes. The terms of reference of the WRC are at *Annex*.

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3. We notice that many areas of the WRC's work are also concurrently being covered by other advisory bodies such as the ACE, the Environmental Campaign Committee¹ and the Provisional Construction Industry Coordinating Board (PCICB)². For instance, both ACE and WRC are tasked to advise Government on the appropriate waste reduction measures. Also, both the PCICB and the WRC's Task Force on the Construction Industry have taken on the task to encourage and facilitate the construction industry to adopt environmental improvement measures.

¹ The Environmental Campaign Committee promotes awareness of environmental issues so as to encourage and mobilize the public to contribute actively towards a better environment.

² The Provisional Construction Industry Coordinating Board serves as a forum for stakeholders to deliberate and forge consensus on strategic matters as well as to communicate their needs and aspirations to Government. One of its major tasks is to promote sharing of knowledge in industry good practices, innovative construction technologies and sound management techniques, including those relating to environmental improvements.

4. It is necessary to streamline the advisory structure and minimize duplication of work in order to achieve a more focused effort on waste reduction. Since waste management will be high on Government's agenda and we will be looking to ACE increasingly for substantial input, we consider it desirable to place the WRC under the ACE as a new sub-committee upon expiry of the WRC's current term of membership on 31 December 2003.

5. The new Waste Sub-committee under the ACE will be tasked to -

- Monitor the trends and problems related to the management of solid waste (including municipal solid waste, construction waste and special waste) in Hong Kong;
- Study waste reduction measures, including legislation and technologies, that are adopted in overseas economies, and examine their applicability to Hong Kong; and
- Advise on possible waste reduction policies and programmes, as well as measures to handle different types of waste.

6. We will shortly be inviting ACE members to indicate interest in participating in the new Waste Sub-committee. Given the expertise and experience of the existing WRC members on the area of waste management, we also consider it useful to co-opt some of them into the Sub-committee.

Conclusion

7. Members are invited to note the establishment of the Waste Sub-committee under the ACE outlined in paragraphs 3 - 6 above.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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Waste Reduction Committee

Terms of Reference

- To promote public and private sector action to reduce waste, recover and reuse resources, in accordance with the policies set out in the Waste Reduction Framework Plan and as subsequently directed by the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works;
- To co-ordinate the work of the waste reduction task forces;
- To monitor local and international developments in waste reduction, and materials recovery and reuse, and advise the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works on appropriate responses; and
- To provide an annual report to the Advisory Council on the Environment on progress towards achieving waste reduction targets.