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ACE Paper 14/2013

For discussion on 11 November 2013

Task Force on External Lighting Engagement of Stakeholders and the Public

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the engagement exercise conducted by the Task Force on External Lighting (the Task Force).

BACKGROUND

2. The Government set up the Task Force in August 2011 to advise it on the appropriate strategy and measures for tackling nuisance and energy wastage problems caused by external lighting, having regard to international experience and practices. Members of the Task Force are drawn from a wide cross section of the community, including professional bodies, relevant trades, the academic community and green groups.

3. The Task Force focuses on the following two issues –

- (a) ***light nuisance*** caused by external lighting to residents nearby, usually as a result of strong, sometimes flashy, light; long operating hours and proximity to light sensitive receivers, etc.; and
- (b) ***energy wastage*** due to excessive light intensity, use of inefficient lighting installations and long operating hours.

4. The Task Force has studied the technical standards and parameters as well as implementation approaches adopted by overseas regulatory regimes in tackling the problems of energy wastage and nuisance caused by external lighting. In addition to document-based studies and discussion at meetings, the Task Force has visited locations in Hong Kong where external lighting has been the subject of complaints, including Causeway Bay, Wan Chai, Tsim Sha Tsui and Mongkok, etc, to assess the applicability of the parameters and standards to Hong Kong.

ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE

5. Having thoroughly studied and discussed the technical issues associated with the regulation of external lighting, the Task Force firmly believes that the requirement to switch off external lighting of decorative, promotional or advertising purposes affecting the outdoor environment after the preset time is the appropriate way forward for Hong Kong. The switch-off requirement represents an appropriate balance between the need to preserve the spectacular night scene of Hong Kong on the one hand, and the need to minimize the adverse impact of external lighting on our daily lives on the other.

6. The Task Force is aware that the issue of external lighting is a complicated one, and attracts a wide range of response from different sectors of the community. The Task Force would like to listen to the views and comments from the public and the stakeholders before drawing up specific recommendations for the Government's consideration.

7. In this context, the Task Force published on 19 August 2013 the Document for Engaging Stakeholders and the Public (**Annex**) to invite comments, by the deadline of 18 October 2013, on the Task Force's proposal on switch-off requirement, including the following issues –

- (a) the appropriate preset time;
- (b) scope of the switch-off requirement and exemptions to be granted;
and
- (c) the implementation approach.

8. The Task Force announced on 10 October 2013 that its stakeholder and public engagement exercise would be extended by one month to 18 November 2013. The extension would give stakeholders and members of the public more time to consider the Task Force's proposal.

WAY FORWARD

9. The Task Force would like to invite comments on the issues set out in the engagement document. It will give careful consideration to comments received before drawing up recommendations for the Government's consideration.

Task Force on External Lighting October 2013