

CHAPTER FOUR

KEY ISSUES

1. Key issues associated with the three medium-term options relate to the generation, treatment, and disposal of liquid wastes. The rural areas of the NWNT provide particular cause for concern as a result of development pressures forecast especially under the NT-Biased Option. Other environmental issues include the need to review the phasing of the developments with respect to the provisions already made under the Sewerage Master Plans (SMPs) for the collection, treatment and disposal of liquid wastes. Key areas of concern relate to the sewage collection facilities in the NWNT region and most particularly the capability of the existing and planned treatment and disposal facilities to accommodate the forecast increases in flow rates and pollution loads. Concern has also been expressed in connection with the disposal of effluent (whether treated or not) to Deep Bay and in terms of the potential impacts on the fragile ecosystem of the Mai Po Marshes.
2. Key concerns for the present assessment are:
 - in the currently unsewered areas for the NT-Biased Option the planned infrastructure could be grossly overloaded or developments so fragmented that small local sewage treatment works may be used which could cause concern regarding effluent disposal;
 - the assimilative capacity of receiving water bodies would be stressed, particularly for the North Western waters under the NT-Biased Option; and
 - "greenfield" sites in HB-Biased Option could be accommodated with expansion of existing facilities and implementation of SSDS Stage 1. The implementation of the later stages of the SSDS may however need to be accelerated.
3. Vehicular emissions are a key issue requiring further study especially in the context of the AQOs in Harbour, Tsuen Wan - Kwai Chung and Tuen Mun Air Control Zones (ACZs). Dust is also seen as a territory-wide problem from multifarious sources (including construction and vehicle emissions). Vehicle-related air pollution associated with goods vehicles is likely to be more serious causing exceedance of AQOs in the Tuen Mun ACZ for the NT-Biased Option. Similarly, emissions would be slightly higher in the Harbour air control zone for the HB-Biased Option as a consequence of extensive development in the Metro areas.
4. Elevations in ambient noise levels as a result of the burgeoning development, especially in hitherto rural areas (NWNT, NENT, Border Area), could be as significant on account of the increase in traffic demand and the requirement to create transport corridors to keep pace with the forecast demand. Issues pertaining to noise would be more adequately addressed at district planning level rather than under the TDS Review.
5. With the increases in population forecast even in the short term, issues relating to solid waste disposal will require further consideration especially in connection with the adequacy of the existing disposal facilities. The dispersed development in NT will have more trip generations and the inadequate (local) road networks which could lead to greater congestion, air and noise pollution and societal impacts. Growth areas in

the HB-Biased Option would be expected to be more conveniently accommodated by major waste disposal facilities, thus creating less overall impacts.

6. While noise levels are forecast to increase for both the HB and NT-Biased Options, dispersed development in the NWNT is of particular concern due to additional associated traffic, and port-related activities.
7. In terms of the NT-Biased Option, the dispersion of population in this area could impact on conservation areas, Special Areas, Country Parks and SSSI's. The dispersion of the population and job places has ramifications on the provision of appropriate levels of infrastructure. If the bias is towards the Metro Area, the concerns focus on the adequacy of the planned and existing infrastructure and the ability to expand these facilities.