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Panel on Environmental Affairs

Meeting on 26 November 2012

**Proposal to set up a subcommittee on issues
relating to air, noise and light pollution**

Purpose

This paper seeks the views of the Panel on Environmental Affairs ("the Panel") on the setting up of a subcommittee to study issues relating to air, noise and light pollution for better protection of public health. It also sets out for members' consideration the proposed Terms of Reference and work plan of the subcommittee.

Background

2. Problems of air pollution and noise pollution have all along been of wide public concern in Hong Kong. In recent years, there has also been increased public awareness about the impact of external lighting, as reflected by the increasing number of complaints against light nuisance from advertisement signboards, decorative lightings, and spot lights on the external wall of buildings. Given the public concern and the significant impact of air, noise and light pollution on public health, at the Panel meeting held on 22 October 2012, members supported the proposal of setting up a subcommittee under the Panel to facilitate more focused discussion and exchange of views on the Government's efforts to tackle environmental problems in these areas.

Proposed Terms of Reference of the subcommittee

3. "To monitor and review government policies on and initiatives to address problems of air, noise and light pollution for better protection of public health."

Proposed work plan of the subcommittee

4. In the current legislative session, the proposed subcommittee will focus its work on the following major areas –

- (a) Examining and reviewing the Government's initiatives to address the air pollution problem, including measures to control emissions from motor vehicles, power plants, and local industrial and commercial processes, progress of the joint efforts with the Guangdong Provincial Authorities to tackle the regional air pollution problem, and implementation of the new Air Quality Objectives;
- (b) Examining and reviewing the Government's initiatives to address the noise pollution problem, with particular focus on traffic noise from existing roads and railway and the related traffic noise abatement measures;
- (c) Examining and reviewing the Government's initiatives to address public concern on light pollution, including the progress made in developing the technical standards and related parameters to tackle nuisance caused by and energy wastage of external lighting installations;
- (d) Examining the possible impacts of air, noise and light pollution on public health; and
- (e) Making recommendations on improvement measures for consideration of the Administration as and when necessary.

Proposed time frame for completion of work

5. As continuous efforts are required for combating air, noise and light pollution and monitoring the implementation of relevant improvement measures, it is not envisaged that the proposed subcommittee can complete its work within the current legislative session. A report on the subcommittee's work will be submitted to the Panel at the end of this session and members will be invited to consider the need for continuation of work of the subcommittee.

Advice sought

6. Members are invited to decide on the setting up of the proposed subcommittee and if so, the proposed Terms of Reference and work plan of the subcommittee as set out above.

7. Subject to members' endorsement, the Secretariat will invite Panel members to signify membership for the proposed subcommittee and make arrangements for the first meeting.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 November 2012