

Harbourfront Commission

For discussion
on 21 July 2010

HC/06/2010

Establishment of Panels Under the Harbourfront Commission

PURPOSE

This paper invites Members to consider the establishment of Panels under the Harbourfront Commission to focus discussions and work on specific issues under its terms of reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. We recommend that –
 - (a) the Commission establish three Panels at the outset to assist in its key roles and functions –
 - (i) Planning and Design;
 - (ii) Public-Private Partnership (PPP); and
 - (iii) Branding and Promotion;
 - (b) the modus operandi of Panel meetings should be in line with that of the Commission; and
 - (c) the terms of reference and chairmanship of Panels should be discussed at their first respective meetings.

PAST PRACTICE

3. The former Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) had established various sub-committees and task groups to assist in its work on specific long-term projects or ad hoc tasks. Notably, HEC

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established a Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review (HPR Sub-com), which had been in operation throughout the existence of HEC. Among various duties, HPR Sub-com was responsible for identifying, advising on and monitoring enhancement projects along the existing and new harbourfront. It also gave input to district studies pertinent to the harbourfront and oversaw the creation of quick-win enhancement projects, such as those in West Kowloon, Kwun Tong and Hung Hom.

4. HEC also established dedicated sub-committees and task groups to provide input, dovetailing with the planning studies and reviews commissioned by the Government, such as the Sub-committee on South East Kowloon Development Review, the Sub-committee on Wan Chai Development Phase II Review, the Task Force on Harbour-front Enhancement Review – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas, and the Task Group on Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront.

5. Other task groups were established to focus on specific duties under the HEC's terms of reference, such as the Task Group on Harbour Planning Principles and the Task Group on Management Model for the Harbourfront. The sub-committees and task groups, with the exception of HPR Sub-com, were of a time-limited nature and ceased operation on completion of the respective duties.

ESTABLISHMENT OF PANELS

6. According to the recommendation report endorsed by HEC at its final meeting in February 2010, the Harbourfront Commission may set up a number of Panels to assist it in carrying out its key functions. The Panels are to be convened by and made up of Commission Members. If necessary, the Commission may co-opt additional Members into these Panels to provide expertise on specific projects.

7. With reference to HEC's recommendations and the terms of reference of the Harbourfront Commission, it is proposed that three

Panels be established at the outset to focus discussions and provide specific input on key functions of the Commission. The detailed terms of reference may be deliberated and finalised at the first meetings of respective Panels.

Panel on Planning and Design

8. A Panel on Planning and Design is recommended to provide input and monitor harbourfront developments from the angle of harbourfront planning and design. The scope of work will cover projects advocated by the public and private sectors. The Panel will succeed the regular duties of the former HPR Sub-com, undertaking tasks such as advising users or project proponents of harbourfront developments (such as private developments, utility facilities, advertising signage, temporary uses and events) on how to maximise public enjoyment and minimise adverse impact in accordance with the prevailing Harbour Planning Principles and Guidelines.

9. The Panel may also advocate, formulate and oversee enhancement projects along the harbourfront. These projects will be carried out in the spirit of achieving a more vibrant, active and accessible harbourfront for public enjoyment. The Panel may commence its work on the basis of the specific recommendations made by the former HEC, under the 22 Action Areas on both sides of Victoria Harbour.

10. The Panel may also use its expertise on planning and urban design to provide input to the harbourfront district studies, such as the ongoing Hong Kong Island East Harbourfront Study, as well as any interfacing issues pertinent to marine uses and adjoining water bodies of Victoria Harbour.

Panel on Public-Private Partnership

11. The recommendation report endorsed by HEC at its final meeting has also proposed wider application of PPP in harbourfront

enhancement in Hong Kong. This will lead to more attractive models being drawn up for the public to examine and allow the pursuance of more sustainable and flexible modes of management.

12. In this connection, a Panel on PPP may be established to foster and explore opportunities for partnership in harbourfront enhancement between the Government and the private sector. As pointed out in the HEC's recommendation report, the private sector encompasses a wide range of entities including commercial organisations, social enterprises, community-based trusts, special purpose companies and other non-governmental organisations.

13. The Panel may also advise on the detailed terms and conditions in the Government's agreements with the private sector in respect of financing, construction, management or design in harbourfront enhancement on a site-specific or project-specific basis.

14. Specifically, the Government currently has plans under way to develop parts of the new Central harbourfront through PPP. In this connection, the Panel on PPP may comprehensively advise on the prospects of private partnership at this prime waterfront site. The Panel may also be consulted as the Government explores PPP opportunities in other areas in the long run, such as the development of Hoi Yu Street waterfront promenade in North Point.

15. HEC's recommendation report has highlighted that the community may have different views or concerns about PPP, particularly on the issue of balancing business viability with public accountability. The Panel on PPP may serve as a platform for balanced discussions, with a view to forging consensus through the multi-stakeholder approach of the Commission.

Panel on Branding and Promotion

16. With reference to its studies of successful waterfronts overseas, HEC had expressed the view that brand-building and marketing are

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important to promoting a sense of ownership of the harbour as an important public asset shared by the community. A Panel on Branding and Promotion is therefore recommended for the Commission to formulate strategies in this respect.

17. The Panel may initiate, oversee and advise on branding and promotion opportunities of Victoria Harbour. It may also devise and participate in public engagement strategies on harbourfront projects.

18. The Government is currently preparing a Harbourfront Signage Scheme cum Logo Design Competition, with a view to improving accessibility to the harbourfront and promoting the harbour. HEC was consulted on the proposal in 2009 and the project would benefit from the continuous input from a Panel on Branding and Promotion of the Commission as the design competition is launched in the latter part of this year. The Panel may oversee this project as one of its first duties and devise further strategies in branding and promotion in future.

MODUS OPERANDI OF PANEL MEETINGS

Membership of Panels

19. All Members of the Commission who are interested in the work of the Panels are welcome to join them. Their Chairmen will be elected among Members registered with the secretariat at the respective first meetings of the Panels. Additional Members may be co-opted into the Panels if necessary to provide expertise for specific projects.

Meeting Arrangements

20. Panel meetings may operate under house rules similar to that of the Commission. Secretariat services will be provided by the Government. Agenda, papers and confirmed minutes of Panel meetings will be posted on the official website of the Commission for

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public browsing. However, exception may be applied at the discretion of Panel chairmen, for example in situations where matters of commercial sensitivity and confidentiality are involved.

21. As set out in the paper on the Commission's House Rules, Panels shall make regular progress report to the plenary meetings of the Commission on its major findings and recommendations, and the Commission will have the final decision on such recommendations.

WAY FORWARD

22. Further Panels may be established on a need basis, subject to future discussion at plenary meetings of the Commission.

ADVICE SOUGHT

23. Members are invited to comment on the establishment of Panels as proposed in paragraph 2 above.

Secretariat

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