

**MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE
ANTIQUITIES ADVISORY BOARD**

**REVIEW OF THE URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY –
CONSENSUS BUILDING STAGE**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Paper is to -

- (a) update Members on the progress of the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) Review; and
- (b) seek Members' views on ten preliminary proposals on the future direction of urban renewal for consensus building, particularly regarding the Urban Renewal Authority (URA)'s future role on heritage preservation.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government published, after public consultation, the URS in November 2001 to provide broad policy guidelines to the work of the URA. As urban renewal involves many complex social and economic issues directly related to people's values and aspirations on the quality of life, which are changing over time, the Government has decided to conduct a comprehensive review of the URS to ensure that it will continue to reflect the aspirations and priorities of the community on issues related to urban regeneration.

3. The URS Review was launched in July 2008 and would take about two years to complete. The review process is structured in three stages, namely "Stage 1 – Envisioning" (July 2008 – January 2009), "Stage 2 – Public Engagement" (February 2009 – December 2009) and "Stage 3 – Consensus Building" (January 2010 – mid 2010). We have now completed the first two stages and moved to the final stage of "Consensus Building".

4. A Steering Committee on Review of the URS has been set up to guide and monitor the whole review process. The Committee is chaired by the Secretary for Development with members who are experienced in urban renewal, city planning, heritage conservation and community work.

PROCESS OF THE REVIEW

Stage 1 – Envisioning (July 2008 – January 2009)

5. The URS Review is a comprehensive review without pre-determined agenda. During the “Envisioning” Stage, we had commissioned a consultant to study urban renewal policies of six Asian cities and organized 20 focus group sessions and special meetings with various stakeholders so that we could set the agenda of the review together with the community.

Stage 2 –Public Engagement (February 2009 – December 2009)

6. The seven topics identified at the “Envisioning” Stage for more in-depth examination, namely, (i) Vision and Scope of Urban Regeneration; (ii) 4R¹ Strategy in Urban Regeneration; (iii) Role of Stakeholders (public and private sector participation and owner participation in urban redevelopment); (iv) Compensation and Rehousing Policies; (v) Public Engagement; (vi) Social Impact Assessment and Social Service Teams; and (vii) Financial Arrangement, were presented to the public for thorough discussion during this Stage. A booklet on these key issues was published in May 2009 and widely distributed.

Stage 3 – Consensus Building (January 2010 – Mid 2010)

7. The Review is now into its final and most important stage of Consensus Building. Having analysed the public views collated during the “Public Engagement” Stage and the findings of the various research studies, the Steering Committee has completed its own analysis and come up with ten preliminary proposals on the future direction of urban renewal under the seven topics identified during the “Envisioning” Stage and discussed at the “Public Engagement” Stage. To facilitate public participation and to encourage public discussion, we have produced a Booklet for this “Consensus Building” Stage, summarizing the policy background and development of the current policies of the URS, the public engagement process of the current Review, highlighting the gist of the various research studies; the Steering Committee’s analysis of public views under the seven topics and a summary of ten preliminary proposals on which we would wish to build consensus with the public. A copy of the Booklet “Public Views and Future Direction – Paper for the Consensus Building Stage of the Urban Renewal Strategy Review” is attached for Members’ reference.

URA’S ROLE IN HERITAGE PRESERVATION

8. Heritage preservation is part of urban renewal under the URS promulgated in 2001. It is stated therein that “URA should preserve heritage buildings if such preservation forms part of its urban renewal projects” and “as far as practicable the preserved heritage buildings should be put to proper community, public or other beneficial use”.

¹ 4R refers to “Redevelopment”, “Rehabilitation”, “pReservation” and “Revitalisation”.

9. Over the years, the URA has preserved or plans to preserve a total of over 60 historic buildings. These historic buildings are mostly within URA's redevelopment projects; but in recent years some of these preservation projects are outside of its redevelopment project areas (as in the case of tenement buildings in Mallory Street, the pre-war shophouses in Shanghai Street and Prince Edward Road West, and most recently the Central Market). In the current Review, the Steering Committee is of the view that the URA's role in preservation should be reviewed in the context of the Government's policy and initiatives on heritage conservation rolled out since the Chief Executive's announcement in his 2007 Policy Address and upon the setting up of the Commissioner for Heritage's Office. Particular features of the new policy include the use of economic incentives (instead of cash compensation) to preserve privately-owned heritage, revitalising heritage buildings via collaborative partnership with non-profit making organisations, and providing more opportunities for the public to enjoy the use of these revitalised buildings.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note the progress of the URS Review and to offer their views on the ten preliminary proposals for consensus building, in particular those proposals related to preservation highlighted in paragraph 9 above.

ATTACHMENT

Public Views and Future Direction – Paper for the Consensus Building Stage of the Urban Renewal Strategy Review (Both English and Chinese)

Development Bureau
June 2010

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