

3rd January 2014

Mr Nicholas Brooke, SBS, JP, FRICS, FHKIS
Chairman of Harbourfront Commission
17/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices
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Dear Chairman of Harbourfront Commission,

**Phase 1 Public Engagement on the
Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority**

In response to the Phase 1 Public Engagement on the Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority which has been jointly undertaken by the Development Bureau and the Harbourfront Commission (“**HC**”), Harbour Business Forum (“**HBF**”) is pleased to submit its views on the optimum institutional setup to develop and manage the new harbourfront sites in a holistic manner. Specifically, our written submission addresses the questions set out on page 19 of the Public Engagement Consultation Digest.

As an initiative of Business Environment Council (“**BEC**”), HBF was formally launched in June 2005 and has undertaken a number of research studies on how best to turn Hong Kong's harbour and harbour-front areas into a genuinely vibrant, accessible and sustainable world-class asset. HBF has been actively participating in the Harbourfront Commission since the establishment of HC in 2010.

1. The Harbour Business Forum (HBF) wholeheartedly supports the proposal to establish a Harbourfront Authority (HA) capable of delivering a harbourfront which residents and visitors will find accessible, attractive, lively and worthy of one of the major harbours of the world.
2. HBF considers that the new Authority should be an independent, statutory authority with dedicated resources and a single mission – to pursue integrated planning, design, construction, operation and management of the harbourfront in a holistic manner.
3. Ideally HBF is of the view that in so far as planning and design is concerned all harbourfront areas should fall within the remit of the HA as otherwise an integrated and holistic approach will be hard to achieve.
4. As regards construction, operation and design, it is noted that “vesting” of land is proposed on a phased basis, commencing with the most readily available opportunities (e.g. Central harbourfront) and expanding in due course. A phased approach is considered reasonable but HBF anticipates Phase 2 of the public engagement exercise will put forward additional/alternative approaches to providing the HA with the necessary control over the harbourfront areas which

could address any concerns in the community (including Legco, DC's and the real estate sector) regarding the potential for the HA to become a "commercial developer" in its own right, rather than balancing social and commercial community benefit.

5. HBF is in agreement that the functions/benefits set out on Page 16 of the Public Engagement Digest should be targeted by a properly structured and resourced HA. Again, it is anticipated that proposals detailing how these are to be achieved will be set out in Phase 2 of the engagement exercise.
6. HBF is in agreement with the Governance aspirations set out in the Table on Page 17 of the Digest.
7. HBF considers that the Harbourfront Commission should be disbanded and the HA should take on both advisory and advocacy roles, subject to adequate checks and balances and a meaningful level of public participation.
8. HBF considers that the HA should have an independent, properly qualified and experienced executive arm.
9. The establishment process should be expedited wherever possible given the degree of public support for an HA expressed at the Phase 1 public engagement meetings and public concern to see real progress in regard to all aspects of harbourfront enhancement, particularly connectivity and accessibility; should there be any anticipated delay in the legislative process, then HBF considers that an interim HA should be established (perhaps the current Harbourfront Commission's powers could be appropriately expanded for a temporary period) to ensure that there is no unnecessary vacuum in the planning and design of the new waterfront areas, the drafting of a business plan for the new HA, etc.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Rhyddian Cox
Chairman
Harbour Business Forum

c.c. Mr. Paul Chan, MH, JP – Secretary for Development
c.c. Mr. Vincent Ng – Chairman of Harbourfront Commission's Core Group for Public Engagement
c.c. Mrs. Winnie Kang – Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), DEVB
c.c. Ms. Agnes Li – CEO of BEC