

### **Green council will take lead in drive to cut energy use**

New buildings will be assessed from 2017, with rewards for developers who reduce waste

The Hong Kong Green Building Council will begin stringent assessments of new buildings in 2017 as the city strives to cut energy consumption in line with an Environment Bureau blueprint.

Older buildings, which account for 90 per cent of the city's electricity consumption, will be subject to more flexible assessments from early next year to encourage the retrofitting of energy-saving technology.

The exercise is harder in older buildings because of space constraints and multiple ownership, so owners will have three years to meet targets on areas such as energy, water and waste.

The council will also introduce new assessment criteria to encourage greener habits in buildings, such as cutting and recycling food waste.

For new buildings, rating standards will become more stringent by 2017 to catch up with new technologies and updated regulations. For example, buildings will be required to label their low-carbon products to achieve a higher rating.

Recognition schemes will also be launched for office and retail developments with outstanding energy-saving performance by the fourth quarter of this year and the second quarter of next year, respectively.

Under the city's first energy-saving blueprint, Hong Kong aims to cut energy intensity by 40 per cent by 2025 from 2005 levels. That replaces the old target of reducing consumption by 45 per cent by 2035, which was adopted at the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. This translates into a target of reducing consumption by 6 per cent from the 2012 level in the next decade.

**Vincent Ho** Kui-yip, president of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, said the council's new measures would make it easier for older buildings to attain a green rating but he was not optimistic that many would be retrofitted in a short period of time.

“Existing buildings need more incentives like government subsidies, which will speed up the installation of glass in commercial buildings that block heat from coming in and hence reduce

the consumption of air-conditioning,” Ho said.

“Financial incentives will also help residential buildings facing multiple ownership retrofit faster or encourage large estates to install renewable energy equipment.”

The council’s green building assessments are a voluntary scheme. However, it will attract developers as the council is empowered to give new buildings a concession of extra floor area, capped at 10 per cent of the total area, when a development has been assessed. But there are no incentives for existing buildings.

Secretary for Development Paul Chan Mo-po said earlier that developers could be required to attain a certain rating to obtain the concession.

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