

LegCo Panel on Housing
Subcommittee on Rehousing Arrangements for Residents Affected by
Clearance of Temporary Housing Areas, Squatter Areas and Cottage Areas

Policy on Interim Housing

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the current policy on interim housing (IH).

BACKGROUND

2. The Housing Authority is responsible for providing temporary accommodation to those clearnees who are rendered homeless for one reason or another and are not immediately eligible for allocation of public rental housing (PRH). The existing supply of temporary accommodation is as follows-

(a) Temporary Housing Areas (THAs)

Timber structures in THAs were built from 1974 to 1990 on land with short tenure in various locations in the urban/extended urban areas and the New Territories. In the 1997 Policy Commitments, the Government pledged to clear all remaining old-style THAs by 2000 in order to improve the living condition of those affected and to free land for development.

(b) Refurbished Old Rental Blocks for Use as IH

Due to the high and immediate short-term demand for temporary housing accommodation arising from planned clearance of THAs and time required for building permanent structures for interim purpose, Block 12 of Kwai Shing East Estate and Blocks 10 & 11 of Shek Lei (II) Estate, being old PRH blocks vacated as a result of the Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme, were refurbished into IH blocks in 1995, 1997 and 1999 temporarily. However, such conversions delay housing developments and compromise better use and planning of valuable land.

(c) Low-rise Prefabricated IH Blocks

In order to provide IH in a short time to meet urgent demand prior to the completion of permanent IH blocks, low-rise prefabricated IH blocks were built in Sai Kung and Yuen Long in 1998 and 1999 respectively. Due to the low-rise nature and the short tenure of the sites, the land utilization rate of this type of development is low, resulting in high development and life-time costs. Besides, it is very difficult to obtain temporary land for such a purpose.

(d) New Vertical IH Blocks

In view of the continuous and increasing demand for IH, a new form of vertical IH with self-contained units which could meet the demand efficiently and cost-effectively was introduced in 1995. This kind of multi-storey IH with well planned ancillary facilities provides maximum number of flats within a given site and achieves better land use and economies of scale. Two sites, in Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai respectively, were identified for IH developments providing a total of 12,700 units. Intake for Po Tin IH in Tuen Mun started in June 2000 while the IH in Tin Shui Wai will be completed in early 2001. Both IH developments are well served by public transport and supported by comprehensive community facilities.

3. A breakdown of the existing stock of IH is at Annex.

POLICY ON PROVISION OF IH

4. The new vertical IH developments in Tuen Mun and Tin Shui Wai provide the most effective and economical means to meet the long term demand for IH. The supply of IH units in these developments, together with the other existing IH accommodation, will be adequate to meet the projected demand in the coming years. No IH provision from conversion of old rental blocks nor prefabricated IH blocks is necessary in the light of the adequate supply of IH and for reasons mentioned at paragraph 2(b) and (c) above.

USE OF VACANT REFURBISHED PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING IN URBAN/EXTENDED-URBAN AREAS AS INTERIM HOUSING

5. The Administration has studied the proposal of letting vacant PRH units in urban/extended urban areas as IH to clearerees. We consider such a measure undesirable for reasons stated below -

- (a) Under the current policy, vacant PRH flats are allocated to Waiting List (WL) applicants in accordance with the applicants' choice of districts. New WL applicants are not allowed to apply for PRH in urban areas. In line with the existing policy, IH residents are required to apply for PRH through the WL to avoid queue-jumping. Clearerees who are only eligible for IH should, therefore, be rehoused to IH in the New Territories as the main supply of new PRH flats is in the New Territories.
- (b) Allocation of PRH units in urban/extended urban areas as IH to clearerees would adversely affect the supply of PRH flats, WL applicants would have to wait for a longer time as a result. This will also affect the Government's pledge of reducing the average waiting time for WL applications to three years by 2003.
- (c) Many WL applicants have been waiting for years for refurbished PRH flats in urban/extended urban areas. It will be unfair to them if IH-eligible clearerees are allowed to occupy PRH units in the urban/extended urban areas.
- (d) The proposal would induce people to move into urban squatter areas with clearance potential in order to get rehousing in urban/extended urban PRH estates for use as IH. This would also create an adverse effect on the Government's policy to reduce squatters by improving their living condition as well as bring about a negative impact on the environment.
- (e) Ample warnings are erected in squatter areas to forewarn squatters not to buy squatter structures and remind those not covered by freezing surveys that they will not be offered rehousing in the event of future clearance. It is, therefore, unreasonable for those squatters who choose to ignore these warnings and erect or buy squatter structures in the urban area, to demand urban IH units.

- (f) A mixed provision of PRH and IH units in the same block/estate will create management problems due to different allocation standards and expectations of occupants.

**Housing Bureau
Government Secretariat
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Total Stock of Interim Housing
(as at 27.11.2000)

Interim Housing	No. of storeys	No. of blocks	No. of units
(i) Kwai Shing East, Block 12	19	1	823
(ii) Shek Lei (II), Block 11	15	1	850
Block 10	15	1	1076
(iii) Sai Kung	6	1	144
(iv) Long Bin	4-6	8	840
(v) Po Tin at Tuen Mun Area 29	29	9	8736
(vi) Tin Shui Wai Area 101 (to be completed in early 2001)	29	4	3976
		Total	16445