

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Construction Programme of Public Housing and the Implementation of Building Guidelines

Purpose

This Paper briefs Members on the construction programme for Public Rental Housing (“PRH”) and the Housing Authority (“HA”)’s implementation of its internal building guidelines.

Background

2. The Public Housing Construction Programme (“PHCP”) is a 5-year rolling programme which is updated annually in the light of the latest demand for PRH. Subsequent to the HA’s report on the land supply for PRH to the Legislative Council Panel on Housing meeting in June 2008, we would like to present the latest situation when PHCP is rolled forward by one year (2009/10 – 2013/14).

3. The objective of the Government and the HA is to provide PRH to low-income families who cannot afford private rental housing. At present, the Average Waiting Time (“AWT”) for general applicants is 1.9 years which is shorter than the target of 3 years.

4. As at end March 2009, there were 114 400 applicants on the Waiting List (“WL”) for PRH, with a monthly average of about 2 800 new applicants received in 2008/09. The HA forecasts that the production of PRH in the five-year period of 2009/10 – 2013/14 is about 74 000 flats (see Annex), i.e. an average of about 15 000 flats per year. The HA estimates that this level of production, together with the recovered flats from the existing stock, could allow it to meet the AWT target of about 3 years.

Public Housing Construction Programme (PHCP)

5. Most of the new PRH production for the coming five years will come from urban and extended urban areas¹ with the remaining from the New Territories. While projects in the coming five years have generally been firmed up (under construction or advanced design stage), those beyond the coming five

¹ Extended urban areas include Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Shatin (including Ma On Shan), Sai Kung (including Tseung Kwan O) and Tung Chung.

years are still at an early planning stage. The HA still encounters problems in securing timely provision of land. Such problems mainly include –

- the timing at which sites can be made available (e.g. rezoning of sites as in Tuen Mun Area 29 West; land resumption and clearance as in Tuen Mun Area 54, and large-scale site formation works in Anderson Road sites);
- site development constraints (e.g. building height restrictions and urban design considerations as in Sheung Shui Area 36 West); and
- different views from the local communities.

Strengthening Ties with Local Community

6. New PRH estates are planned and designed to meet the development needs of the community. To achieve this, we would submit every public housing project to District Councils (“DC”) for consultation so as to gather views from the local communities and to cater for their aspirations as far as possible. Some of the PRH sites can proceed as scheduled in the PHCP after such consultation, e.g. ex-Cheung Sha Wan Police Quarters, ex-Shatin Police and Firemen Quarters, Shatin Area 4C, Kai Tak Sites 1A and 1B, Sai Chuen Road in Sham Shui Po etc. Some other projects met with different views initially from the local community. However, after rounds of discussion, we have made a number of balanced and positive responses on the planning and design works to address the needs of the local community which ultimately lead to mutually acceptable solutions. For example, we have successfully worked out a comprehensive development plan for the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate Redevelopment which comprises a Cross District Community Cultural Centre, a district open space and other community facilities together with the PRH development. Also, as for the Kwai Chung Area 9H (Tai Pak Tin Street) project, a covered multi-purpose hall, passive open space and footbridge linkages will be provided.

7. For the other sites, we are under active discussion with the relevant DCs and local communities with a view to reaching consensus. However, prolonged discussion and consultation may sometimes lead to delay in the development programme. The PRH sites for which we are soliciting support from the local communities include Tung Chung Area 56, ex-Yuen Long Estate, Homantin South Phase 2, Tuen Mun Area 29 West, part of the ex-San Po Kong Flatted Factory etc.

8. We have regularised the consultation process for major PRH developments by organising community engagement workshops led by officers at Assistant Director-level to gather views from the local residents. We have

recently convened community engagement workshops for the Anderson Road PRH Development and So Uk Estate Redevelopment projects. For the case of Anderson Road PRH Development, we have established strong networking and good mutual understanding through continuous communication in the last few months with the local concerned groups regarding the provision of pedestrian linkages and community facilities. As a result, the project was well received and supported by the DC at both meetings in January and March 2009. We will continue to work together with the local communities to create a harmonious and high-quality living environment for the public, and to promote social cohesion in the district. We believe that future PRH estates will be able to meet the needs of the local community in both its design and provision of ancillary facilities.

9. We will adopt an “Integrated Procurement Approach” for the design and construction of Kai Tak Site 1B so as to achieve a cost-effective, high-quality, environment-friendly design and construction solution holistically. This approach not only allows an integration of design and construction expertise from designers, builders and manufacturers with synergistic results at an earlier stage, but also enables the development programme to be advanced by about three months which in turn advances the provision of employment opportunities for the construction industry.

Way Forward for Public Housing Development

10. In view of the increasing difficulties in securing suitable land for public housing development, we would retain cleared PRH sites for public housing development as far as possible, such as ex-Yuen Long Estate and So Uk Estate. Apart from cleared PRH sites, we would use vacated departmental quarters sites for PRH development such as ex-Shatin Police and Firemen Quarters, ex-Cheung Sha Wan Police Quarters, ex-Kwai Chung Police Quarters and ex-Au Tau Departmental Quarters. In sum, we will continue to liaise closely with the relevant bureaux, departments and DCs to identify suitable sites for public housing development in different parts of the territory.

Independent Checking of New Building Development

11. According to the internal Quality Management System of the HA, all new design and construction projects have to be submitted to the Independent Checking Unit (“ICU”) for approval. The requirement of ICU on new projects is consistent with the standards of the Buildings Ordinance (“BO”) adopted by Buildings Department (“BD”).

12. ICU was established in October 2000. One of its main tasks is to enforce independent administrative control on new developments of the HA to ensure compliance of the technical and safety standards of the BO, its subsidiary legislations and Codes of Practices on new development of the HA. To ensure the independence of the ICU, it reports directly to the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing).

13. The administrative control of ICU on the new buildings of HA aligns with the spirit of BO and is modeled on the practice of BD including the following –

- An approval-consent system is in place to strengthen building control and to ensure that all works executed are compliant with the BO. New building works can only commence after obtaining the approval and consent from ICU.
- Occupation permit application is required upon the completion of the approved building works so as to verify that site works completed have conformed with the plans approved by ICU.
- Modeling on BD's practice, a 3-tier checking system is in place for new submissions. The system involves a case professional as the first tier, a case senior as the second tier and a review meeting with the advisors seconded from BD and the case chief as the third tier.

14. To ensure the compatibility and consistency with BO's requirements and BD's practice, a Senior Buildings Surveyor and a Senior Structural Engineer have been seconded from BD to ICU since 2000. They assist by advising the administrative and regulatory control mechanism as well as regulatory interpretations of the BO. They also foster the communication between BD and ICU by advising ICU on and updating ICU with the relevant information and BD's practice. Besides, status reports of ICU are submitted to BD regularly, and meetings with BD's directorate staff are held on a need basis.

15. To ensure the effective communication with Development and Construction Division ("DCD") of the Housing Department on the building control and requirements, ICU issues "ICU Instructions" to project teams to promulgate its control mechanism and requirements, and "ICU Alerts" are issued for updating and clarifications on a need basis. Besides, ICU also conduct bi-monthly meetings with the project chief professionals of DCD as well as experience sharing forums and briefing sessions with project teams regularly to discuss any areas for improvement.

16. ICU reports regularly to the Building Committee of HA on its status and achievement.

17. Members are invited to note the construction programme of public housing and the implementation of building guidelines.

Transport and Housing Bureau
April 2009

Production of PRH Flats in the Coming Five Years (2009/10 – 2013/2014)

Year of Completion/District	Sub-District	Planned Flat Number
2009/2010		
Urban	Eastern	1 600
	Kwun Tong	8 000
	Wong Tai Sin	1 500
Extended Urban [#]	Shatin	2 000
New Territories	Yuen Long	2 400
Sub-total		15 500
2010/2011		
Urban	Kwun Tong	7 200
	Kowloon City	1 200
	Wong Tai Sin	1 300
Extended Urban	Kwai Tsing	1 500
	Shatin	2 600
	Sai Kung (Tseung Kwan O)	2 000
Sub-total		15 800
2011/2012		
Urban	Kwun Tong	4 200
	Kowloon City	800
	Wong Tai Sin	1 300
	Sham Shui Po	5 600
Sub-total		11 900
2012/2013		
Urban	Kowloon City	7 400
	Sham Shui Po	2 700
Extended Urban	Kwai Tsing	800
	Shatin	2 800
New Territories	Tuen Mun	1 000
Sub-total		14 700
2013/2014		
Urban	Kwun Tong	400
	Kowloon City	5 900
	Sham Shui Po	600
	Wong Tai Sin	1 000
Extended Urban	Kwai Tsing	1 400
	Sai Kung (Tseung Kwan O)	1 900
	Shatin	2 900
New Territories	Yuen Long	2 000
Sub-total		16 100
Total		74 000

(Based on the Public Housing Construction Programme as at March 2009)

[#]Extended urban areas include Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan, Shatin (including Ma On Shan), Sai Kung (including Tseung Kwan O) and Tung Chung.