

香港特別行政區政府  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

發展局(規劃地政科)

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11 January 2010

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

(Attn : Ms Serena CHU)

Dear Ms CHU,

**Follow-up to Public Accounts Committee Report No. 39  
Small house grants in the New Territories**

Thank you for your letter of 23 December 2009 on the above subject.

The Small House Policy involves many complicated and sensitive legal, human right, land use and planning issues and the interests of different parties and stakeholders. The review therefore needs to be carried out prudently and completion of the review takes time. As indicated in our letter of 29 January 2009, we have already identified a number of important aspects of the policy for review, including village layout plans (VLPs), Small House application procedures, Village Expansion Area projects and unauthorised building works in New Territories Exempted Houses. During the year, despite the above-mentioned complications, we have made progress on various fronts.

On VLPs, we have reached agreement with Heung Yee Kuk (HYK) and put in place a new mechanism since March 2009 to optimise the use of private land within VLPs for Small House development. Under this mechanism, after a due review process including consultation with the relevant Rural Committees, amendments will be made to the VLPs to release sites on private land reserved in the VLPs for developing open space for villagers for Small House development. So far, six VLPs have been reviewed. Small House applications previously held up because of sites reserved for open space use could now be processed by the Lands Department. Similar arrangement will be extended to other VLPs where appropriate at the request of the HYK, and each case will be considered on its merits.

Over the years, HYK and small house applicants have expressed concern about the processing time for Small House applications. In consultation with HYK, the Lands Department has simplified during the year a number of application procedures relating to the classification of cases and drainage arrangements and as a result the processing time has been shortened.

We have also explored with HYK the feasibility of taking forward some of the suitable Village Expansion Area (VEA) projects taking account of specific circumstances of each site and the availability of funding resources. The Development Bureau and HYK have agreed to form a joint working group to further study the feasibility and implementation issues.

On the handling of unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs), we are reaching an advanced stage on the details of a rationalisation scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to rationalise existing UBWs that are safe and not serious, and is in line with a previous recommendation of the Ombudsman on this subject. Meanwhile, we will continue to take enforcement action against UBWs under construction to curb the proliferation of UBWs.

We will continue to take forward the Small House Policy review using a practical approach in close liaison with HYK, and will consult the rural and general community at large when concrete and specific proposals are available.

Yours sincerely,



(Raymond Wu)

for Secretary for Development

c.c. AA/SDEV  
Director of Planning  
Director of Lands  
Director of Buildings