

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Review Findings of the Pilot Scheme on the Housing Advisory and Service Team in Tin Shui Wai

PURPOSE

This paper aims to brief Members on the review findings of the pilot scheme on the Housing Advisory and Service Team (HAST) in Tin Shui Wai (TSW) endorsed by the Subsidised Housing Committee of the Housing Authority (HA) on 16 November 2009, and its decision to extend the HAST scheme for two years, and to cover Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tung Chung Districts.

BACKGROUND

2. Members of the HA Subsidised Housing Committee endorsed on 31 January 2008 the setting up of HAST in TSW which was to operate for two years. The aim of the scheme was to strengthen the support services for the public rental housing (PRH) tenants in the district and to assist in the development of a mutual support network in the neighbourhood. The HAST scheme was launched on 16 April 2008.

3. On 2 February 2009, we reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Housing on the work progress of HAST and its way forward which included a review to be conducted 18 months after the commencement of the service to determine whether the HAST scheme should be extended to other districts.

THE HAST PILOT SCHEME

4. The strength of the HAST scheme is its strong communication network with non-government organisations (NGOs). Through proactive liaison, it can establish good partnership with all the social services institutions, District Council Members, Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs), etc. in the district.

5. At present, HAST provides services to 11 PRH estates in the TSW District. In the past 18 months, HAST has helped EMACs organise various types of neighbourhood functions and community-building activities, and conducted orientation briefings for some 4 000 prospective tenants in the district, 3 300 home visits and 55 roadshows / programmes. The telephone hotline set up by HAST has provided consultation services to about 2 000 tenants. In addition, HAST has referred needy families to local services providers in a timely manner so that problems can be solved at an early stage.

6. According to EMACs' views collected in a recent opinion survey on the effectiveness of HAST, and the feedback from the local NGOs, Social Welfare Department (SWD), Home Affairs Department (HAD), etc., the responses towards HAST were positive. They opined that HAST was able to help new tenants adapt to the new living environment and assist EMACs, SWD, HAD and NGOs in organising gatherings and activities to foster a stronger sense of belonging to build relationship among PRH tenants. In view of the encouraging results, HA Subsidised Housing Committee endorsed on 16 November 2009 the extension of the HAST scheme for two years, and to cover Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tung Chung Districts starting from 16 April 2010.

THE CONTINUATION AND EXTENSION OF THE SERVICES

7. The Tuen Mun and Yuen Long Region (with 20 PRH estates comprising about 103 000 flats) and Tung Chung District (with two PRH estates comprising about 13 600 flats) are relatively remote from the urban area. Since there are relatively more new arrivals living in these areas, and they are not familiar with the living environment in the vicinity with weaker support from relatives or friends, the extension of the HAST scheme to the PRH estates in these areas will facilitate their early integration into the new community.

8. The major scope of the services provided by HAST would basically remain unchanged after widening its coverage (as set out at the **Annex**). HAST will also assist EMACs in partnering with NGOs to organise activities in order to provide appropriate support and aid to the local PRH tenants more effectively.

9. The extended HAST scheme will operate for two years while the staff size will increase from 11 to 15. The HD will appoint an NGO on SWD's subvention list by means of tender for the provision of services to tenants in the three districts, and will encourage the organisation to recruit staff locally. The estimated cost is about \$5.4 million for a period of two years.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISORY WORK OF THE HD

10. The HD will continue to play the role of overall planning and supervision on the work of HAST. Apart from holding regular meetings and maintaining communication with HAST, we will request HAST to submit monthly reports on work progress so as to ensure its performance meet the requirements of the HA and the expectations of the tenants.

WAY FORWARD

11. To gauge the effectiveness of the extended scheme, we will conduct another comprehensive review in 18 months (i.e. October 2011) after HAST has widened the coverage of its services.

12. Members are invited to note the review findings of HAST and its way forward.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
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Major Scope of Services of HAST

- (a) To assist new tenants in adapting to their new living environment by conducting orientation briefings and home visits, and to refer needy families to the concerned Government departments or voluntary agencies for assistance as appropriate.
- (b) To assist EMACs in organising gatherings to strengthen the sense of belonging of tenants and foster community building.
- (c) To facilitate EMACs in engaging NGOs for organising activities under the newly enhanced partnering arrangement.
- (d) To facilitate NGOs in providing outreaching services to PRH tenants.
- (e) To assist PRH tenants in establishing contact with relevant Government departments and social organisations.
- (f) To coordinate with relevant Government departments and voluntary organisations in mobilising appropriate social services and community resources for the residents.
- (g) To provide any other advisory and counselling services necessary to PRH tenants as requested by the HD.