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本局檔號 Our Ref. DEVB(PL-CR) 4-35/19

來函檔號 Your Ref. CB(4)/PAC/R62

9 June 2014

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(vnmyuen@legco.gov.hk)

Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Mary So)

Dear Ms So,

**Consideration of Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 62
Planning, construction and redevelopment of public rental housing flats**

Thank you for your letters of 9 and 16 May 2014 to the Secretary for Development requesting for additional information to facilitate the further consideration by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the above Chapter. Further to our reply of 29 May 2014 and after consultation with the Transport and Housing Bureau and Planning Department (PlanD), we set out in the ensuing paragraphs our replies to Questions (c), (d) and (e) in PAC's letter dated 9 May 2014 and Questions (a), (c) and (d) in its letter dated 16 May 2014. We understand that the Housing Department (HD) have already replied to the other questions in the letters.

Question (c) (letter dated 9 May 2014): What are the reasons for returning the three public rental housing (PRH) redevelopment sites to the Government during the current-term Government; and what are the location, size and intended use of the sites involved?

Please refer to HD's response to question (s) in PAC's letter (ref. CB(4)/PAC/R62) dated 9 May 2014 addressed to the Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH).

Question (d) (letter dated 9 May 2014): Whether the Government had conducted any impact assessments before the return decision was made; if not, why not?

The Government, when making the decisions regarding sites returned from the Housing Authority (HA) for other uses, would take into consideration a host of factors including the local context, planning parameters, technical feasibility, housing mix, provision of government, institution or community and open space facilities, other social needs, the prevailing policy, etc. More importantly, while certain PRH sites were returned to the Government, the Government has pledged to provide sufficient land to HA for PRH production so as to meet the set production target.

To this end, PlanD and HD have been and are in close liaison to identify sufficient sites for development of public housing. For instance, a number of sites including those in Fanling Area 49, Tung Chung Area 39, Mok Cheong Street, Wah Fu North, San Hing Tsuen, Sau Mau Ping, and the Fanling North and Kwu Tung North New Development Areas have been identified as additional/replacement sites for PRH development over the years. The Government will continue to strive to provide sufficient land for public housing development for meeting the set production target, with PlanD and HD working closely on this front.

Question (e) (letter dated 9 May 2014): Why the development costs for the sites returned to the Government referred to in paragraph 2.62 of the Audit Report were not borne by the Government?

Please refer to HD's response to Question (u) of PAC's letter (ref. CB(4)/PAC/R62) dated 9 May 2014 addressed to STH.

Question (a) (letter dated 16 May 2014): What are the principles in identifying sites for PRH production?

In reserving sites for public housing, the Government will adopt a prudent approach to maintain a healthy balance between public and private housing, taking into account various considerations such as location, site area, local character, accessibility and housing mix. In general, sites which are considered suitable for PRH include: (i) those located within or in close proximity to the existing PRH or Home Ownership Scheme estates as they are suitable for extension of the existing estates or for redevelopment purpose; (ii) preferably sizable sites that will facilitate comprehensive planning of mass housing with supporting community facilities and achieve cost-effectiveness of housing projects; (iii) those located in areas that are considered suitable for high-rise, high-density developments; and (iv) sites that are/will be conveniently accessible and/or well-served by public transport. To build a balanced community, it is also necessary to maintain an appropriate mix of public and private housing in a district.

Question (c) (letter dated 16 May 2014): Notwithstanding the need to adhere to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, what are the other considerations in assessing the redevelopment of aged PRH estates with a plot ratio lower than the maximum permissible?

In assessing the development potential of redeveloping aged PRH estates, apart from making reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Government will consider a host of factors including the development restrictions on the statutory plans (such as the maximum plot

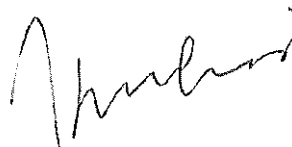
ratio/total gross floor area, building height and site coverage), development constraints, local context, environmental, traffic, air ventilation and visual impacts of the redevelopment on the surrounding area, infrastructure capacity, the concerns from the locals, provision of government/community facilities required by relevant departments/District Council, etc.

However, we need to reiterate that the development potential of aged estates is just one of the factors to be taken into account in considering redevelopment. According to HA's current policy, there are four basic principles. Apart from development potential, the structural conditions of the housing blocks, their economic repair and the availability of suitable rehousing resources nearby will also be taken into account. Please refer to the answers of HD to the relevant questions issued on 30 May 2014.

Question (d) (letter dated 16 May 2014): What steps would be taken to ensure that the development and redevelopment of PRH sites would not adversely impact on the surrounding living environment?

HA will conduct various technical studies on traffic, environment, ventilation, visual impacts, supporting facilities, etc., and consult the relevant government departments to ensure that the public housing development would be compatible with the development of the district concerned.

Yours sincerely,



(Kevin Choi)

for Secretary for Development

c.c.

Secretary for Transport and Housing (Fax No.: 2523 9187)

Director of Housing (Fax No.: 2762 1110)

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Fax No.: 2147 5239)

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