

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

**Enhanced Partnering Arrangements among
Estate Management Advisory Committees and
Non-Governmental Organisations to Promote Neighbourliness
in Public Rental Housing Estates**

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of implementation of the enhanced partnering arrangements among Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to promote neighbourliness in public rental housing (PRH) estates.

BACKGROUND

2. In 2009, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) implemented the enhanced partnering arrangements in PRH estates, under which EMACs can use up to 30% of the EMAC Funds to carry out various community building functions in partnership with NGOs with reference to the needs and preference of individual estates.

3. The aim of this initiative is to build up a caring and cohesive community in housing estates. The EMAC Chairman will invite NGOs to submit proposals and budgets of activities for vetting and approval by the EMAC. Depending on the size of the estate, each EMAC will organise two to four functions per annum¹. Since its implementation in 2009, an average of 400 partnering functions of diversified themes had been organised each year.

4. In order to enable tenants residing in estates with fewer NGOs in the neighbourhood to have the opportunity to participate in community building activities, the HA introduced a new initiative in March 2013, allowing EMAC to organise one thematic function per annum on its own without partnering with NGOs to cater for local needs after exerting efforts to identify suitable NGO partners but in vain. The funding arrangement and control measures are same as those adopted for partnering arrangements with NGOs.

¹ According to the prevailing guidelines, two to three partnering functions with NGOs should be arranged for small estates (with 3 000 or less flats), and three to four functions for large estates (with 3 001 or more flats) per annum. The funding ceiling for each function is \$30 000 for small estates and \$50 000 for large estates.

PROGRESS OF THE PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS

5. The initiative has been well received by the tenants and EMAC members. In 2013/14, about 420 partnering functions were held in PRH estates. The functions were in the form of seminars, workshops, variety shows, carnivals and other participatory activities. The themes covered care and supporting services for different target groups (including the elderly, women, children and youth), as well as promotion of family cohesion, healthy living, environmental protection and green lifestyle. Indeed, we have been utilising this partnering platform with the Department of Health since 2010 to launch community health programme in some 40 estates, where the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating were promoted. In 2014/15, 17 estates have been nominated to join this programme.

6. To encourage more NGOs to take part in the partnering functions, the Housing Department will invite NGOs to partner with EMACs at the beginning of the year. Only a few EMACs had encountered difficulties in engaging sufficient NGO partners and organised functions on their own. In 2013/14, all EMACs have successfully organised the functions as planned.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PARTNERING FUNCTIONS

7. After the completion of each function, EMAC members will evaluate the performance of NGOs and the effectiveness of the functions. The fulfillment of the activity objectives and achievement of the expected benefits are the major evaluation items. Other factors, such as the number of participants, their feedback and the cost effectiveness of funds used are also covered in the assessment. In general, the results are very encouraging with an overall average of 99% of the functions being assessed as satisfactory or above. EMAC members have found the partnering functions effective in meeting the objectives and intended results in fostering neighbourliness and strengthening tenants' sense of belonging towards the community. The Housing Department also took the opportunity of the biennial seminar for EMAC members held in March 2014 to solicit their continued support for the partnering arrangements.

CONTROL AND MONITORING OF EXPENDITURE

8. The use of the EMAC funds for partnering functions is subject to stringent monitoring by EMACs and estate management staff, by making reference to the funding arrangements for standard expenses adopted by District Councils. In addition, random checks are conducted by the Housing Department at headquarters level to ensure the principle of value for money is upheld in the use of resources.

WAY FORWARD

9. Given the positive response received by the partnering functions and its effectiveness of fostering harmonious living in the community and promoting care among family members, the HA will continue with the partnering arrangements with NGOs and enhance activities in promoting neighbourliness and harmonious living.

10. Members are invited to note the progress of the partnering arrangements among EMACs and NGOs to promote neighbourliness in PRH estates.

Transport and Housing Bureau
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