

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

**Supplementary information on
new contract residential care homes for the elderly**

At the Panel meetings on 8 December 2014 and 9 February 2015, Members requested the Government to provide information on:

- (a) the number of subsidised residential care places for the elderly to be provided in public rental housing (PRH) units in the coming five years;
- (b) which of the seven new contract residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs)/RCHEs with day care units (DCUs) commencing service from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 would be located on the ground floor of PRH domestic blocks;
- (c) a list of the vacant or idle space/premises in PRH estates, the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) courts and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) public markets; and
- (d) stand-alone RCHEs and RCHEs located in PRH development sites under the 12 sites earmarked for the construction of new contract RCHEs and contract RCHEs with DCUs.

2. The information referred to in paragraph 1(a), (b) and (d) above was provided to Members in April 2015 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1266/14-15(01)). This note sets out the information requested in paragraph 1(c) above after consultation with the Housing Department (HD) and FEHD.

3. According to HD, all vacant non-domestic premises in existing PRH estates and HOS courts have been committed to various kinds of use including, among others, use for welfare premises. For premises already reserved by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for provision of subsidised welfare services, the services concerned will commence operation as soon as the necessary planning work (including consultation with local stakeholders, etc.) and renovation works have been completed. HD will closely monitor the vacant premises situation in PRH estates, and where practically feasible, optimise the utilisation of such premises for, among others, suitable welfare purposes.

4. Regarding spaces such as empty bays at the ground level of domestic rental blocks of PRH estates, the Panel was briefed on the item “Provision of Social Welfare Facilities in Public Rental Housing Developments” (LC Paper No. CB(2)1390/14-15(06)) at its meeting on 11 May 2015. As HD then explained, empty bays were designed at the outset to maintain proper ventilation or to serve as pedestrian passages for the estates and some had been deployed for provision of recreational facilities for local residents. The conversion of such empty bays for welfare uses would require a detailed assessment of the technical constraints, the views of local residents received during consultation and other relevant considerations. With this in view, these spaces should not be regarded as idle, and it may not be feasible to convert the empty bays for alternative use. Nevertheless, HD welcomes comments from the community on its empty bays, and will, upon receipt of concrete site-specific proposals, study the practicability of converting such spaces for alternate uses.

5. According to FEHD, the first floor of the Peng Chau Market, which is now vacant, is being explored by FEHD and SWD for conversion into welfare facilities. FEHD will continue to review from time to time if there are vacant spaces in other markets suitable for welfare uses or conversion for such uses.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
Social and Welfare Department
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