

政府總部  
民政事務局

香港添馬添美道二號  
政府總部西翼十二樓



**GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT  
HOME AFFAIRS BUREAU**

12TH FLOOR, WEST WING,  
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES,  
2 TIM MEI AVENUE,  
TAMAR,  
HONG KONG.

Tel : 3509 8118  
Fax : 2591 6002

26 January 2016

Ms Joanne MAK  
Clerk to Panel on Home Affairs  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms MAK,

**Panel on Home Affairs  
Youth Hostel Scheme –  
Pre-construction works by Po Leung Kuk  
for the youth hostel project in Ma Tin Pok, Yuen Long**

The Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs discussed in its meeting on 22 December 2015 the “Youth Hostel Scheme (YHS) – Pre-construction works by Po Leung Kuk (PLK) for the youth hostel project in Ma Tin Pok, Yuen Long”. Members requested us to provide further information on the youth hostel policy. The information is consolidated below.

Updates on Youth Hostel Projects

2. Apart from the PLK project, four youth hostel projects are currently

underway and their progress are as follows:

- (a) **Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) (Sheung Wan):** A technical feasibility statement (TFS) has been completed and approved by the Government. As the site is next to Man Mo Temple, a declared monument, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) was consulted twice on 4 March and 4 June 2015. The AAB endorsed the project, including its design, in June of the same year. The TWGHs is now conducting some technical assessments and will submit a revised town planning application to the Town Planning Board (TPB) for consideration. The project will proceed to detailed design stage subject to the approval of the TPB.
- (b) **The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (Tai Po):** Apart from a youth hostel, the proposed complex will include a youth centre, the construction of which will be funded by the Lotteries Fund. We are now processing the project's detailed design, which is in its final stage. We plan to consult the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs in the first half of 2016, and then seek funding approval for the main works from the Public Works Subcommittee.
- (c) **Hong Kong Association of Youth Development (HKAYD) (Mongkok):** The HKAYD is now finalising the draft TFS, and planning to consult the Yau Tsim Mong District Council in the first half of 2016. Meanwhile, the HKAYD is amending its development proposal for the site's proposed "Residential Institution" use for the TPB's consideration.
- (d) **The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (HKGGA) (Jordan):** Apart from the provision of a youth hostel, the proposed complex will house the new headquarters of the HKGGA, the construction cost of which will be financed by the association itself. The HKGGA is amending the TFS in response to comments from relevant bureaux and departments. We plan to consult the Yau Tsim Mong District Council about the relevant project in the first half of 2016.

Services provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

3. The introduction of the YHS is intended to provide a feasible alternative

to meet the aspirations of some working youths in having their own living spaces. Therefore, under the framework of the Scheme, participating NGOs may, according to their vision and mission, freely decide whether to provide extra youth development services and if so, the content of the relevant services.

Eligibility criteria for public rental housing (PRH) applications

4. The YHS and other government-subsidised housing schemes serve different purposes with different target groups. As housing is a precious resource in our community, it is necessary to avoid double benefits and create unfairness to non-youth-hostel tenants. As such, the following arrangements will be made for young people in three categories who are allocated youth hostel units:

- (a) single youth applicants for PRH – upon acceptance of tenancy offered by youth hostels, youth hostel tenants are required to withdraw their applications from the PRH Waiting List and are not allowed to re-apply for PRH throughout their tenancies;
- (b) two-person household applicants who are both allocated youth hostel units – upon acceptance of tenancy offered by youth hostels, the youth hostel tenants concerned are required to withdraw their applications from the PRH Waiting List and are not allowed to re-apply for PRH throughout their tenancies;
- (c) those who are applying for PRH together with their family – in order to prevent the personal decision of a YHS applicant affecting his or her family and to avoid family disputes, if a PRH application made by a family is already on the Waiting List, such an application will not be affected. If the young person concerned has moved in to youth hostels by the time his or her family is allocated a PRH flat, he or she would be required to notify the Housing Department. Their names will not be deleted from PRH tenancies. Instead, they will be regarded as taking “temporary absence” from the PRH, just as those who are having employment or medical treatment outside Hong Kong. Also, the income of the youth hostel tenants concerned will still be subject to the requirement of income and assets declarations under the “Well-off Tenants Policy”.

### Income and Asset Tests

5. The requirement for NGOs to provide hostel units at relatively lower rental is to encourage young people to save for their future development. As many young tenants should be developing their career, their income will likely increase during the tenancy period. To encourage the youth to aim high, and given there is an upper limit to the tenancy period, we should allow young people to fully utilise their increased income during their tenancies to accumulate savings, in order to fully prepare for future developments. Therefore, tenants are only required to undergo income and asset tests at the time of application, and not upon renewal of their tenancies. We endeavour to avoid seeing young people giving up on opportunities to advance for the sake of keeping their tenancies, as it is contrary to our policy intention.

6. However, given that housing is a precious resource in our community, we require applicants not to solely or jointly own any residential property in Hong Kong, or hold any residential property in Hong Kong through a company. If tenants subsequently become owners of residential properties, they are required to declare immediately to the NGOs concerned. In that case, the tenants will be given reasonable time to move out from the hostel units, so that other eligible youths can move in.

### Disposal of the Surplus from Hostel Operation

7. NGOs should establish a "mandatory reserve" at a level sufficient to cover the cost of maintenance for the hostel during the lease term. With prior approval from the Secretary for Home Affairs, NGOs are allowed to transfer the operating surplus arising from the "mandatory reserve" to their other non-profitable use(s). This enables NGOs to benefit more members of the community through the operation of youth hostels, instead of limiting their work to the young tenants living in the hostels. In addition, under this arrangement, NGOs will be encouraged to try their utmost to operate the hostels in a more cost-effective way and to avoid excessive enhancement of hostel services and amenities. If too many restrictions are imposed under the policy framework, the interested NGOs may be discouraged from joining the YHS, resulting in ineffective use of land resources. Young people would also lose the opportunity to have their own living space.

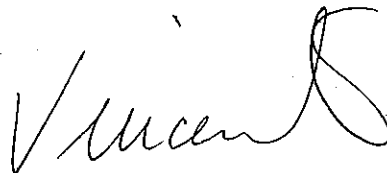
8. The Home Affairs Bureau reserves the final discretion to refuse participating NGOs to transfer any surplus from the operation of youth hostels to other uses.

Rental Level

9. Under the YHS, we require that the rental level should not exceed 60% of the market rent of flats of similar sizes in nearby areas. As for the youth hostel at Ma Tin Pok, Yuen Long, we note that PLK will set the rental at a level not exceeding 50% of the relevant market rent after taking reference from the rental of flats of similar sizes in the district. We are discussing in detail with PLK the mechanism to determine and adjust the rent.

10. May I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Members for their concern over the youth hostel policy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Fung', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Vincent FUNG)  
for Secretary for Home Affairs

c.c.

Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (Attn.: Ms Jasmine Choi) Fax:  
2523 5722