

香港特別行政區政府
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

運輸及房屋局
香港九龍何文田
佛光街 33 號 1 座 6 樓



Transport and Housing Bureau
6/F, Block 1, 33 Fat Kwong Street,
Homantin, Kowloon, Hong Kong

本局檔號 Our Ref. HD 4-2/PS1/1-55/1/4 (2016) IV
來函檔號 Your Ref.

電話 Tel No. 2761 5049
圖文傳真 Fax No. 2761 7445

14 July 2016

Mr Derek Lo
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Housing
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Lo,

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Meeting on 1 February 2016

I enclose the supplementary information requested by Members at
the meeting on 1 February 2016 (**Annex**) for Members' reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Original Signed)

(Jerry Cheung)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

**Legislative Council Panel on Housing
Meeting on 1 February 2016**

Supplementary Information

PURPOSE

During the discussion of housing-related initiatives in the 2016 Policy Address and Policy Agenda at the Legislative Council Panel on Housing meeting on 1 February 2016, Members requested supplementary information from the Government. This paper provides the relevant information.

AVERAGE WAITING TIME

2. It is the objective of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) to provide public rental housing (PRH) to low-income families that cannot afford private rental accommodation, with the target of providing the first flat offer to general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants) at around three years on average. Waiting time refers to the time taken between the date of registration for PRH and the first offer, excluding any frozen period during the application period (e.g. when the applicant has not yet fulfilled the residence requirement; the applicant has requested to put his/her application on hold pending arrival of family members for reunion; the applicant is imprisoned, etc). The average waiting time (AWT) for general applicants refers to the average of the waiting time of those general applicants who were housed to PRH in the past 12 months. As at end-March 2016, the AWT for general applicants was 3.9 years.

3. It is difficult to predict the waiting time of individual applicants as this depends on a number of factors, which include the number of applicants, the supply of newly completed and recovered PRH units which is unevenly distributed in different districts, the district choices of applicants which may not match the supply of newly completed and recovered PRH units, etc.

Therefore, we are unable to predict when the AWT for general applicants could be restored to three years. Nevertheless, we will continue to adopt the long-term target of providing the first flat offer to general applicants at around three years on average, so that HA, relevant Government departments and the public can work together to identify land for PRH developments.

4. The Government has adopted 460 000 units as the ten-year housing supply target for 2016-17 to 2025-26, of which 200 000 are PRH units while 80 000 are subsidised sale flats (SSF). At present, there is still a gap between the land available for public housing construction and the supply target. The Government will continue to increase housing land supply in the short, medium and long term through a multi-pronged approach. The increased PRH production, coupled with the annual average net gain of about 7 000 units recovered from surrender of flats by existing tenants as well as enforcement actions against abuse of PRH resources; and the likely increase in PRH units recovered from those tenants who choose to buy new Home Ownership Scheme flats as they come on stream, should help address the housing needs of those who are unable to afford private rental accommodation.

5. For those low to middle-income families, SSF serves as the first step for them to achieve home ownership. SSF also provides an opportunity for PRH tenants whose financial conditions have improved to achieve home ownership, thereby releasing PRH resources to those in need. To this end, HA put up 2 160 HOS flats for sale in December 2014. HA and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) also put up a total of about 3 700 SSF for pre-sale in February this year; and will put up another 2 600 flats for pre-sale in 2017. Furthermore, HA decided to implement the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Pilot Scheme (GSH), and selected a PRH development at San Po Kong for conversion to GSH. The project will provide a total of about 860 flats. It is expected that the flats will be ready for occupation in mid-2017, and pre-sale can be launched in the second half of 2016.

THE LETTING ARRANGEMENT OF MARKETS IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES UNDER HA

6. Currently, markets in new public housing estates under HA are let to single operators. Such arrangement allows HA to capitalise on the private

sector's expertise and flexibility in the mode of management and operation to actively respond to market trend, thus improving the shopping environment and enhancing the choice and quality of retail service. Through the terms in the tenancy agreement and daily management measures, HA has put in place a series of control measures to monitor the performance of the single-operators, and restrict the single operators from charging stall operators fees other than rent, air-conditioning charges, rates and management fees. The single operators are also required to provide sufficient manpower for management and to maintain 24-hour security services. The tenancy agreement also stipulates that single operators shall ensure that the premises are operated as a traditional market with the provision of a certain proportion of food and miscellaneous trades. The single operators will let out all the market stalls as far as possible for selling various kinds of goods to meet the daily needs of PRH tenants and residents in neighbouring areas. Generally speaking, prices of goods in the markets will be fixed having regard to the costs of goods, market supply and demand and consumer purchasing power etc. At present, a variety of channels are available for the public to purchase fresh groceries and the shopping patterns of the public are continuously evolving. With the convenient transport network in Hong Kong, residents are free to patronise in other markets or supermarkets. Given the competition, there are economic incentives for single market operators and stall tenants to cater for residents' shopping needs and respond to market signals appropriately to maintain the viability of their businesses. All in all, prices of goods in the single operated markets under HA are generally accepted by the residents.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF LABOUR IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

7. According to the statistics of the Census and Statistics Department, the composite labour wages index for construction labour has increased by about 44% over the past three years (from November 2012 to November 2015), whereas the costs of major construction materials used in HA's works projects fluctuated during the past three years. On the whole, as the volume of construction works in Hong Kong remains at a high level, it is expected that the upward trend of the tender prices for HA's new works projects will continue in the coming year.

8. Owing to the shortage of labour in the construction industry, the construction progress of several projects in 2015-16 was affected. The projects include Anderson Road Site D and Shatin Area 52 Phase 3 and 4, etc. The anticipated completion of these projects will be delayed to 2016-17. HA will closely monitor the construction progress and has also carried out remedial actions to minimise the delay. HA will regularly report the latest progress of works projects to its Building Committee.

9. HA has been introducing a series of measures to enhance productivity of HA's new works contracts. HA has also been implementing safety and health care plan to foster a safe and healthy working environment. Relevant measures include the adoption of Modular Flats Design for wider use of standardisation and mechanisation in order to reduce the labour content on site; adoption of prefabrication off site for reducing the demand for skilled workers on site; use of hard paving construction for enhancing housekeeping and safety of construction sites, as well as environmental awareness among workers. To address the problem of labour shortage and to attract more young and new workers to work at public housing construction sites, HA has also implemented a caring programme for new workers and a series of training schemes, provided workers with uniform to cope with heat stress, and promoted the image of the workforce.

10. In compliance with the "Supplementary Labour Scheme" launched by the Development Bureau (DEVB), HA will thoroughly assess the applications by contractors for any works contracts prior to their submissions to the Labour Department, and provide written support to the applications as appropriate. To enhance flexibility in manpower deployment, HA will also allow imported skilled workers to work across HA's works projects under the same contractor.

11. HA will closely liaise with the Construction Industry Council and DEVB regarding the manpower resources of the construction industry, monitor the issue of workers shortage and continue to provide training opportunities to the workers on sites, with a view to addressing the shortage of workers.

PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN POK FU LAM AREA

12. Following the partial lifting of the administrative moratorium on development of Pok Fu Lam in 2014, the Government is exploring the development of public housing at six government sites. Five of the sites (i.e. Wah Fu North, Wah King Street, Near Chi Fu Road, Wah Lok Path and Kai Lung Wan) would serve as the major decanting resources for the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and will provide additional HOS flats and PRH units. The Government has commenced various technical assessments on the above five government sites. The study aims at assessing the feasibility of public housing development on the basis of various aspects, such as ecology, environment, infrastructure, transport, visual impacts, air ventilation, etc. The technical assessments are expected to be completed by the second half of 2016. The Government will provide the relevant information for reference at a later stage.

EFFECTIVENESS OF “THE DESIGN MANUAL: BARRIER FREE ACCESS 2008”

13. “The Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008” (Design Manual) issued by the Buildings Department primarily sets out the design requirements of providing proper access to and appropriate facilities in a building for persons with disabilities, the elderly and other persons who at times require the same provisions. The Design Manual has included a chapter on the provision of facilities for the elderly, with a view to providing a better environment in terms of safety and health, and facilitating their movement within buildings. The "barrier-free" design requirements, design considerations and recommended design requirements set out in the Design Manual would facilitate greater independence of the elderly, particularly those with physical frailty, infirmities or limitations. Furthermore, Chapter 6 of the Design Manual specifically lists out the design guidelines and considerations for the elderly and elderly with frailty. The implementation of the requirements of the Design Manual has resulted in greater awareness among the property developers on the topic of barrier-free access and the importance of making the built-environment more accessible for the elderly.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
Buildings Department
July 2016**