

**Information Paper for LegCo Panel on Housing
Sub-committee on Rehousing Arrangements for Residents
Affected by Clearance of Squatter Areas**

**Administration's response to Members' suggestions
at meeting held on 10 January 2000**

Purpose

Members were informed of the general rehousing policy for squatter clearnees at the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Housing on 1 November 1999. At meetings of this Sub-committee held on 15 December 1999 and 10 January 2000, Members were informed of current rehousing arrangements for squatter clearnees, arrangements in relation to the 1984-85 Squatter Occupancy Survey and relevant decisions by the Housing Authority in September 1995.

2. This paper sets out the Administration's response to Members' suggestions raised at the meeting of 10 January 2000.

Provision of interim housing in urban areas

3. The Administration has re-examined Members' suggestion to provide interim housing (IH) in urban areas. We still consider that such a measure would be undesirable for reasons explained in our submissions to previous meetings. We wish to make the following additional points –

- (a) to avoid queue-jumping, all squatter clearnees rehoused to IH are required to register on the Waiting List. Their subsequent rehousing to public rental housing (PRH) is dependent upon their registered numbers on the Waiting List, and is subject to their satisfying the eligibility criteria prevailing at the time when their Waiting List applications mature. As new Waiting List applicants can only apply for PRH in the extended urban area and the New Territories, IH accommodation should likewise be provided in the New Territories;
- (b) the Administration is aware of the concern of some clearnees that they may have difficulty in adjusting to their new living environment. To assist clearnees, the Housing Department has been organising visits by clearnees to IH in Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun. An information booklet on the environment and the community facilities of IH is made available to all clearnees. In addition, the Housing Department works closely with the Social Welfare Department to offer assistance to clearnees with specific and genuine difficulties.

1984-85 Squatter Occupancy Survey

4. At the previous meeting, some Members suggested that the average waiting time, for example six years at present, should be set as the baseline for rehousing instead of the 1984-85 Squatter Occupancy Survey.

5. There are practical difficulties in implementing the above suggestion. It is difficult, if not impossible, to verify the length of stay in each and every claim. The Housing Department actively encourages squatters to register on the Waiting List. When their application numbers mature, they will be able to be rehoused to PRH, subject of course to meeting normal eligibility criteria.

6. Moreover, as explained previously, changing the baseline will defeat the original purpose of conducting the freezing survey. It will inevitably create unnecessary disputes and unjustified claims, and encourage new squatting.

Housing Department
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