

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Wednesday, 13 October 1999, at 11:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Briefing by the Bureau Secretary on
the Chief Executive's Policy Address 1999

Members present : Hon LEE Wing-tat (Chairman)
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP
Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Kam-lam

Members attending : Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon SZETO Wah

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Public officers attending : Housing Bureau

Mr Dominic WONG, JP, Secretary for Housing

Mr Andrew Wells, JP, Deputy Secretary for Housing

Housing Department

Mr Tony Miller, JP, Director of Housing

Clerk in attendance : Ms LEUNG Siu-kum, Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Pauline NG, Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Rosalind MA, Senior Assistant Secretary (1)9

I Briefing by the Secretary for Housing on the Chief Executive's Policy Address 1999

The Secretary for Housing (S for H) briefly reported on the progress of the policy commitments in 1997-99. He informed members that except for two targets which had to be achieved through the introduction of legislation, the majority of the 45 targets were either completed or being done on schedule. He highlighted three major proposals in the 1999 Policy Address for members' information as follows:

- (a) to consider the extent to which the subsidized home ownership flat production should be replaced by the provision of additional loans and the advantages of this proposed arrangement;
- (b) to review with the Housing Authority ways to meet the housing requirements of both local and newly arrived families fairly and effectively and to make additional land available to the Housing Authority subject to the outcome of the review; and
- (c) to address the housing needs of non-elderly singletons with plans to provide 6,000 additional public rental housing (PRH) units in the coming five years so that their average waiting time could be reduced to three years by 2005, and to consider providing loans to eligible singletons under various subsidised home ownership schemes and the Home Starter Loan Scheme.

(Post-meeting note: a copy of S for H's speaking note was attached for members' information.)

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2. On the *provision of public housing* for elderly persons, Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed concern about whether the scope of the overall review of the provision of public housing for the elderly scheduled for completion in 2000 would cover the issue of shared accommodation in PRH. He pointed out that the existing arrangement of shared accommodation for two unrelated elderlies was found to be a source of conflict which might in some cases, lead to tragedy. He urged the Administration to look into the matter in the review and to consider providing additional public housing units to meet the demand of those elderlies who wish to split their tenancies.

3. The Director of Housing (D of H) replied that the Housing Department had been studying with the Health and Welfare Bureau's Elderly Commission to work out the types of housing which would suit the needs of the elderly. In the past year, the Housing Authority had provided different types of public housing to the elderly to cater for their special needs e.g. hostels and Housing for Senior Citizens with warden services. He assured that although there was no immediate solution to the problem of shared accommodation, the Administration would make continuous effort to explore means to cater for the housing needs of the elderly and to coordinate with relevant agencies for immediate mitigations where friction arose. Other members also shared Mr TAM Yiu-chung's concern and remarked that the progress in solving the problem of shared accommodation was too slow.

4. On the *quality of public housing*, Mr CHAN Kam-lam enquired about the supervision and quality control of public housing projects, as well as the punishment that would be imposed on misconduct contractors. D of H explained that housing projects were under close supervision and the Administration would exercise its rights to request the contractors to take immediate remedial measures to ensure that standards specified in the contracts would be maintained. He informed members that the misconduct contractors would be subjected to punishment ranging from a 3-months suspension from tender application to a termination order depending on the severity of their misconduct. He informed that the Administration was working on a comprehensive plan for further strengthening of project supervision and quality control of the constructions.

5. On the *Tenant Purchase Scheme*, Ms CHAN Yuen-han commented that the complaint arising from the arrangements of holding flat owners under the Tenant Purchase Scheme responsible for the maintenance and repairs of adjacent areas such as nearby slopes, hiking trails, etc had not been dealt with properly.

6. S for H responded that it was a general rule for the flat owners to share maintenance and repair responsibilities for common areas within the site boundary of the lot which was set by relevant Departments during the allocation of land for development. This general rule applied to both owners of private housing and those under the Tenants Purchase Scheme. As regards the existence of channel for appeal in respect of site boundary and maintenance responsibility of owners of private developments, S for H said he would check whether any appeal channel was in place.

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7. On the *supply of land for housing development*, Mr NG Leung-sing asked about the means to intensify the development density of housing areas. S for H explained that subject to the availability of infrastructure, suitable space would be identified within existing public housing estates for further construction of housing blocks. He supplemented that this would be done in consultation with the Planning Department to ensure that all housing developments were in compliance with the prevailing planning standards.

8. As regards the initiative of adopting a new approach to redevelopment in older urban areas, S for H explained that the new approach was to maximize utilization of existing infrastructure and facilities in the older areas to achieve a more rational and efficient use of land for new residential developments.

9. On *relief of overcrowding in PRH estates*, Mr Fred LI expressed concern over the rehousing needs of the overcrowded households, in particular those with living area below 4.5 square metres per person. He commented that at present, there was still no proper solution to solve the overcrowding problem in PRH. He enquired whether the demand arising from the overcrowding relief had been included in the housing need projection. He urged the Administration to properly assess the demand and allocate additional flats to these households to satisfy their needs.

10. S for H said that the needs of overcrowded households would be properly assessed though an immediate relief for all these households could not be offered taking into account the housing needs of the large number of families awaiting PRH allocation on the Waiting List. The Deputy Secretary for Housing (DS for H) added that the situation of overcrowded households was under review at least twice a year and any significant changes in the number of these households within particular housing areas would not be neglected.

11. On *urban renewal*, Mr James TO opined that since the Bill relating to the establishment of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) would be released for public consultation in late 1999, the related resettlement plans should be drawn up as soon as possible so that it could be included in the public consultation exercise. He suggested that the Administration should make urgent arrangements with the Housing Authority and Housing Society for discussion of the resettlement plans.

12. S for H explained that this matter had been given considerable attention and discussion among relevant policy Bureaux. The Administration was well aware of the urgency of this matter and was planning to bring this for discussion with the Housing Authority and Housing Society shortly. He hoped that it would not take long for the relevant bodies to reach agreement on the basic principles and approach of the resettlement arrangements and the enactment of the Bill for URA should not be affected in this regard.

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13. Mrs Selina CHOW commented that a major issue concerning urban redevelopment was the feasibility of providing re-housing arrangement for affected households, in particular, the elderly persons within the same district. S for H responded that the Administration had never made any pledge of rehousing affected households within the same district. In-situ rehousing would be made when sufficient resources were available.

14. As regards Mrs Selina CHOW's concern over the insufficient coordination and communication among different policy Bureaux in the planning and problem solving of issues, in particular the rehousing arrangement for households affected by urban redevelopment, S for H stressed that there were close coordination and discussion between Bureaux on common issues which were related to their area of work. In order to have a better understanding of the coordination between the Housing Bureau and the Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau, Mrs Selina CHOW suggested that the Secretaries of the two Bureaux be invited to meeting of the Panel on Housing to brief members on their coordination work regarding the issue of rehousing arrangement.

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15. On *residence requirement for allocation of public rental housing flats*, Mr Edward HO asked why a decision could not be made in respect of the review of the residence rule applicable to the newly arrived families before the Policy Address. S for H said that consensus had been reached on the relaxation of residence requirements. Subject to a decision to be made at the Housing Authority's meeting next month, the Administration would take urgent action to work out the details with the Housing Authority. He supplemented that additional land required due to the relaxation of the residence requirements would not be significant and it was anticipated that the demands could be met without any adverse effect on the provision of public housing to other applicants on the Waiting List.

16. On the *quality of domestic dwellings*, Mr Gary CHENG Kai-nam commented that when considering housing standards, the Administration should take into account both the housing quality and housing quantity. For example, efforts should be made to upgrade the quality of the residential units as well as the communal facilities of the public housing estates. S for H advised that the quantity and quality of public rental housing had been improved since 1980's. Apart from upgrading the standard in the design and construction of the public housing estates, the Administration had been launching a Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme to improve the overall living environment of public rental housing estates. He added that in the past years, 80% of the old estates had been redeveloped.

17. In conclusion, the Chairman commented that with the introduction of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance, the Housing Department should review in detail the criteria and guidelines for application for public housing and other subsidized housing schemes to avoid any terms which would be discriminative, in any respect e.g. sex, age, family status, etc.

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18. S for H said that there was an on-going review on existing criteria and guidelines to avoid any discrimination against any person because of their sex, age, or family status. D of H said that the Administration would maintain contacts with the Equal Opportunities Commission to ensure that its policies would not be in violation of the Equal Opportunities Ordinance.

II Date of the next meeting

19. The next meeting of the Panel would be held on 20 October 1999 at 8:30 am.

III Any other business

20. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

19 November 1999