

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Land Supply for Public Housing

Purpose

This paper provides Members with information on the land supply for public housing development.

Background

2. The objective of the Government and the Housing Authority (HA) is to provide subsidised rental housing to low-income families who cannot afford private accommodation with an average waiting time (AWT) of around three years¹. Under the HA's current five-year Public Housing Construction Programme (PHCP), the forecast production of public rental housing (PRH) from 2007/08 to 2011/12 is about 76 000 flats (**Annex 1** refers), i.e. around 15 000 flats per year on average. The HA estimates that this level of production, together with the about 16 000 PRH flats estimated to be recovered from the existing stock of about 684 000 units every year², would allow it to meet the AWT pledge.

3. As at November 2007, there were over 110 000 applicants on the Waiting List (WL) for PRH, with an average of 2 000 to 3 000 new applications received every month. Whilst we would adjust the production requirements under the PRH development programme from time to time to take into account changes in population growth projections, household formation rate, etc., it remains a challenge for the HA to secure adequate and timely provision of suitable public housing land to meet the AWT pledge in a sustainable manner.

Land Supply for Public Housing

4. The projects under the PHCP for the coming five years have generally been firmed up and about 80% of the new flat production will come from the urban/extended urban areas³ with the remaining from the New Territories. Most of the projects within this period are either at the construction stage or

¹ The AWT pledge does not apply to non-elderly one-person PRH applicants on the WL.

² There were about 16 000 PRH flats recovered per year in the past five years.

³ Extended urban areas include Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Shatin, Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung.

advanced detailed design stage. Therefore, the flat production volume in the coming five years would not be subject to major variation.

5. However, most of the sites for PRH development beyond the coming five years are still at an early planning stage. A number of issues have to be resolved including:

(i) Different Views from the Local Communities

- Whether the proposed public housing sites are located near existing public housing estates or adjacent to private housing developments, and even though the sites are confirmed to be suitable and feasible for PRH use, the local communities often held different views when consulted and considered the sites not suitable for PRH development.
- Although some recent PRH projects such as Tai Pak Tin Street (Kwai Chung Area 9H), Tuen Mun Area 18 and Area 29 West, Tseung Kwan O Area 65B and Homantin South Phase 2, etc., have met the requirements of the relevant government departments, the local communities have raised various concerns including the adverse impact that the high density of the public housing developments might have on the living environment, infrastructure or community facilities in the neighbourhood.
- Similar problems have been encountered in the case of PRH redevelopment sites such as ex-Yuen Long Estate and Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate. There have been counter proposals that the cleared sites should be used for private development, commercial and community facilities or open space use.
- The land resources in Hong Kong are precious. While we would optimise the development potential of sites as far as possible, we would take full account of the views of the local communities. In taking forward PRH projects, we would need to take considerable time in discussing with the locals in an attempt to formulate mutually acceptable solutions, which may lead to delay in development programmes or reduction in flat production.

(ii) Provision of Community Facilities

In pursuing PRH developments, we may consider reserving part of the sites for community facility use having regard to requests from the local communities, requirements of the relevant departments and development needs of the districts concerned. This may affect flat production and development programmes. Take Lower Ngau Tau Kok (LNTK) Redevelopment as an example. The site was originally proposed to accommodate 6 000 PRH flats and community facilities including a primary school, a fire station and district open spaces. In order to meet the District Council's request for a civic centre, around 1.89 ha of land has been reserved for such use at the LNTK site. The flat production has therefore been reduced to 4 800 flats and the completion date deferred by one year from 2010/2011 to 2011/2012. Separately, part of the Tuen Mun Area 18 site has to be reserved for a community hall to meet the local needs.

(iii) Site Availability

Apart from quantity, the timely availability of land is also important for PRH development. As sites planned for public housing use are limited, we have to identify other sites for PRH development. However, even if suitable sites are identified, they may not be immediately available for PRH development as the following procedures may be involved:

- rezoning of sites (e.g. Tuen Mun Area 29 West has to be rezoned from "Government/Institutional and Community" to "Residential (Group A)")
- land resumption and clearance (e.g. Tuen Mun Area 54)
- technical feasibility study (e.g. Tuen Mun Area 56. The Planning Department and Civil Engineering and Development Department have commenced the planning and engineering study on Tuen Mun (East))
- large-scale site formation works (e.g. Anderson Road sites. The whole project involves 58 ha gross site area. About

40 ha of platform land will be formed, including about 10.6 ha for residential development)

- provision of infrastructure and ancillary facilities (e.g. an additional highway needs to be provided for access to Tuen Mun Area 18)

(iv) Site Development Constraints

Even if a site is confirmed to be suitable for public housing development, there may still be uncertainties to overcome at the planning stage such as traffic noise (e.g. Sai Chuen Road), building height restrictions (e.g. Shek Kip Mei Phase 2 and 5), and urban design considerations (e.g. Tung Tau Phase 9). Flat production may be affected as a result.

If the above issues could not be promptly resolved, the PRH construction programme and the pledge of maintaining the AWT at around three years might be affected.

Return of Public Housing Sites

6. The factors for determining whether a site is suitable for public housing development include the timing of site availability, development potential, compatibility with the neighbourhood, developable area and technical feasibility. To meet the objective of maintaining the AWT at around three years, and in view of the increasing difficulties in securing suitable land for public housing development, cleared PRH sites will be retained for public housing development as far as possible even if they are located in prime urban locations. These include Un Chau Estate, Sau Mau Ping Estate, Lam Tin Estate, Upper Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Chai Wan Estate, Shatin Pass Estate, Hung Hom Estate, Shek Kip Mei Estate, So Uk Estate, etc.

7. Since 2001, the HA has returned/will return 19 PRH sites to the Government (**Annex 2** refers) for other uses to tie in with local development needs, or to fully utilize the economic benefits of individual prime sites. During this process, the Government has pledged to reserve necessary land for PRH development in order to maintain the AWT for public housing at around three years.

Way Forward

8. To ensure an adequate and steady land supply for public housing development, we will :

- (i) continue to actively discuss with the relevant District Councils and local communities. We are aware of their concerns about the public housing development plans and will strengthen communications with them with a view to reaching agreements on mutually acceptable plans. In 2008, we will consult the District Councils concerned on the revised schemes of a number of projects after taking into account local concerns;
- (ii) continue to liaise closely with the relevant bureaux and departments to identify suitable sites for public housing development in different parts of the territory;
- (iii) retain cleared PRH sites for public housing development as far as possible; and
- (iv) optimise the development potential of all available public housing sites to make more effective use of our precious land resources. Irrespective of the sizes of individual sites, we will devise the development plans on the principles of cost effectiveness and sustainable development so as to meet the needs for public housing.

Production of Public Rental Flats in the Coming Five Years

Year of Completion / District	Planned Flat Number
2007/2008	
Eastern	716
Kwun Tong	2,397
Sham Shui Po	3,533
Kwai Tsing	1,983
Sha Tin	2,333
North	1,598
Yuen Long	3,836
Sub -Total :	16,396
2008/2009 *	
Kwun Tong	14,811
North	3,167
Sub -Total :	17,978
2009/2010	
Eastern	1,600
Kwun Tong	6,355
Wong Tai Sin	2,791
Sha Tin	1,958
Yuen Long	2,365
Sub -Total :	15,069
2010/2011	
Kowloon City	1,158
Kwun Tong	7,205
Kwai Tsing	1,470
Sha Tin	2,506
Sai Kung	1,974
Sub -Total :	14,313
2011/2012	
Kowloon City	780
Kwun Tong	4,080
Sham Shui Po	5,536
Wong Tai Sin	1,351
Kwai Tsing	839
Sub -Total :	12,586
Total :	76,342

* Excluding 640 HOS flats in Yuen Long District
(Base on Public Housing Construction Programme as at September 2007)

**PRH Redevelopment Sites Returned/To Be Returned to Government
(Since 2001)**

	PRH Redevelopment Site	Land Use after Return
(A)	Returned Already to Government	
1	Cheung Sha Wan Estate	District open space.
2	Chai Wan Estate Phase 3	District open space and primary school.
3	Shek Yam Estate Phase 1 & 4	District open space.
4	San Fat Estate	West Rail development.
5	Upper Wong Tai Sin Phase 2	Government/Institution and Community facilities and district open space as per Metroplan proposal.
6	Tai Hang Tung Phase 2	District open space.
7	Homantin Redevelopment Phase 4	School development.
8	Shek Lei Phase 11	District open space.
9	Sau Mun Ping Phase 11	School development.
10	Valley Road	Site returned as a result of the cessation of HOS. Phase 2 currently included in the Application List.
11	Kwai Chung Phase 3 (part)	District open space.
(B)	To be Returned to Government	
1	Kwai Chung Phase 2A	Planned for district open space.
2	Lam Tin Phase 9	Proposed to be returned to LCSD.
3	Sau Mau Ping Phase 12	Planned for district open space.
4	Tai Hang Tung Phase R1	Planned for district open space.
5	Shek Kip Mei Phase 3 & 7	Planned for adaptive re-use of heritage.
6	Shek Kip Mei Phase 4	Planned for school development.
7	North Point Estate	Land use under review by Government.
8	Wong Chuk Hang Estate	Planned for South Island Line development.