

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Enhanced partnering arrangements among Estate Management Advisory Committees and non-government organisations to promote neighbourliness in public rental housing estates

Purpose

This paper aims to brief Members on the enhanced partnering arrangements among Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) and non-government organisations (NGOs) in promoting community building and neighbourliness in public rental housing (PRH) estates.

Background

2. Since 1995, the Housing Authority (HA) has established a total of 136 EMACs which serve as a communication channel with PRH tenants. EMACs provide feedback and reflect tenants' views on daily management matters, including maintenance and improvement works. They also play a role in assessing the performance of cleansing and security contractors, as well as in strengthening tenants' sense of belonging towards the community through organising various community activities.

3. To promote community building, EMACs usually engaged private production companies in the market to organise carnivals once or twice a year in the past, but the effect was limited. In view of the well-established community network of NGOs, their rich experience in providing social services and their ability to provide PRH tenants with a multitude of social services according to their needs, the HA has invited local NGOs to organise community activities as pilot schemes in certain PRH estates. The outcome was satisfactory. To solicit views on the feasibility of partnering with NGOs in organising various types of community activities, the HA then conducted a survey with EMACs and representatives of the local community. A majority of EMAC Members supported the proposal of partnering with NGOs in organising community activities. Representatives of the local community also shared that EMACs with good knowledge of their estates as well as their operation could serve as a useful platform for NGOs to provide a wide range of services to tenants.

4. As such, the HA endorsed on 31 July 2009 the proposal to invite NGOs to organise EMAC functions to foster community building and neighbourliness through the following enhanced system and funding arrangement –

Enhanced System and Funding Arrangement

(i) Formulation of an Annual Workplan

5. The EMAC Chairmen would invite local NGOs to express their interest in organising activities as stated in the Annex. The activity areas include supporting services for the elderly/ families/ women/ children or other target groups, youth outreaching service, educational/ health/ training/ learning programmes, environmental/ green activities, etc.

6. In order to provide EMAC Members with a better understanding of the services provided by the NGOs, the EMAC Chairmen would invite local NGOs to brief them on their work areas by attending EMAC meetings by rotation. Upon consultation with Members, the EMAC Chairmen would draw up an annual workplan and invite the concerned NGOs to submit proposals and budgets for organising these functions.

(ii) Procedures for Approving Partnering Functions

7. The HA plays the role of a facilitator. To avoid duplication of effort and services with other government departments and the local NGOs, the EMAC Chairmen would seek the views of the Home Affairs Department and form an advisory panel with representatives of the Social Welfare Department to conduct a preliminary assessment on the proposals. The concerned EMAC would then discuss and approve the proposals, the sequence of events to be held, the selection of NGOs, funding arrangement, etc.

(iii) Funding Arrangement

8. In order to foster community building, the HA has agreed to set aside more resources for EMACs to organise respective services or activities. Under the enhanced arrangement, EMACs are allowed to use 30% of the EMAC fund of their respective PRH estates (a total of about \$17.35 million) to partner with NGOs. The actual expenses incurred would be paid on a reimbursement basis. The maximum amount of funding reserved for each function is about \$30 000 to \$50 000, depending on the number of households of the PRH estates.

(iv) Monitoring Mechanism

9. To ensure that EMAC funds would be used in accordance with their respective approved budgets and purposes, NGOs which have been awarded the funds are required to submit to the relevant EMAC secretariats a summary report within two months upon completion of the functions. EMACs are responsible for monitoring and assessing the performance of the selected NGOs for future reference.

Date of Implementation and Review

10. This initiative has been implemented in end October 2009. The HA will conduct a review and seek to make further enhancement of the relevant arrangements on the basis of the experience gained after holding such activities.

11. Members are invited to note the enhanced partnering arrangements among EMACs and NGOs to promote neighbourliness in PRH estates.

Transport and Housing Bureau

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The scope of community activities that NGOs can provide

Elderly

1. Supporting services for identifying singleton elderly/ hidden elderly
2. Visits, meal delivery, home maintenance services, home help, home cleaning and escort teams (e.g. attending medical appointments) for the elderly

Families/ Women/ Children

3. Supporting services for neighbourhood child care
4. Supporting services for families with parenting problems/ single parent/ newly arrivals
5. Supporting services against domestic violence/ child/ women abuse

Youth

6. Outreaching services for night drifters
7. Tackling juvenile drug abuse
8. Mentor scheme with professionals/ volunteers as mentors providing advice/ encouragement for young people

Education/ Health/ Training Activities/ Learning Programmes

9. Health promotion and health education
10. Promoting a healthy living environment
11. Home/ fire safety campaign
12. Training for volunteers as care ambassadors
13. Campaign against gambling/ throwing objects from height
14. Singing/ cooking/ dancing contests to promote personal development/ potential and to promote neighbourhood cohesion

Environmental Protection/ Greening Activities

15. Tree-planting/ Activity-day to promote environmental-friendliness in PRH estates
16. Carnivals to promote environmental-friendliness

Other Activities

17. Supporting services to promote HA's theme of "Living in Harmony"
18. Supporting services for the disabled, ex-mentally handicapped patients, persons with suspected mental health problems
19. Orientation briefing/ welcome parties for new tenants/ new arrivals/ ethnic minority groups
20. Local beautification activities to conserve local history/ characteristics and to strengthen the sense of pride/ belonging (e.g. in redeveloped estates)
21. Other community activities endorsed by EMACs