

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Improving the Living Environment of Po Tin Estate

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the measures implemented by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) to improve the living environment of Po Tin Estate.

BACKGROUND

2. Po Tin Estate is located in Tuen Mun Area 29 with a site area of 49 000m². It was completed in 2000 and was originally designed as an interim housing estate. There are nine 28-storey blocks comprising 8 736 units. The internal floor areas of these units range from 8.19m² to 28.28m², which are suitable for allocation to households of one to five-persons.

3. Due to the decline in demand for interim housing, the occupancy rate of Po Tin in 2004 fell to 52.3%. To maximize the utilization of public rental housing (PRH) resources, the HA endorsed in June 2004 to gradually convert the vacant and any subsequently recovered units in Po Tin Estate into PRH units for allocation after enhancing the building security system. As at end April 2013, of the 8 736 units in Po Tin Estate, there are 1 916 interim housing units and 6 820 public rental units. The overall occupancy rate is 95 %.

ENVIRONMENT AND FACILITIES OF THE ESTATE

4. Although the original design of Po Tin was an interim housing estate, the environment and facilities are comparable to other PRH estates. All units of Po Tin Estate are self-contained with kitchen and small but functional bathrooms. All units are provided with PRH standard fittings and facilities, each unit is provided with town gas supply, communal aerial broadcasting distribution system, metal gate, wash basin, kitchen sink and cooking bench, etc. The communal facilities of Po Tin Estate are also planned and designed to the standard similar to other PRH estates, thus providing quality estate surroundings. The facilities include rest garden, ball court, children playground, youth center, elderly centre, recreational area, kindergarten, shopping centre and market, etc.

INCENTIVE MEASURES

5. The allocation of PRH units in Po Tin Estate aims at providing an additional choice to the PRH applicants. However, having regard to the relatively small size bathrooms, PRH applicants who are allocated a unit in Po Tin Estate are offered the following incentives-

- (i) the rent of the units (range from \$334 to \$1 148) are fixed at the level of the licence fee of interim housing, which is equivalent to 95% of the district best rent for PRH units;
- (ii) additional 1-month rent free period in addition to the normal 14 days rent free period is granted to new rent contracts; and
- (iii) the applicants will still be given a maximum of three other allocation offers even if the applicants eventually reject the allocation offer of PRH unit in Po Tin Estate.

MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS

6. With a view to maintaining the estate's condition and to provide a better living environment, HA has implemented various maintenance and improvement works. These include upgrading the security system, estate redecoration, barrier free access and environmental improvement works.

7. Furthermore, HA has been exploring the feasibilities of additional measures to improve the living environment of Po Tin Estate, including the possibility to enlarge the bathrooms. We have studied the viability of unit layout re-configuration or combining two units to enlarge the bathroom. However, given the constraints of the building structure and the nuisances that might be caused, the re-configuration or enlargement works are considered to be impracticable.

8. Nonetheless, to address tenants' aspiration for a more spacious bathroom, HA provides tenants with enhancement measures for free since 2006. These include relocating wash basin from the bathroom entrance to the inside corner by using a new type of "corner basin" and repositioning the shower. As at April 2013, HA has already carried out the above modification works in around 5 400 units.

ARRANGEMENT FOR SPECIAL TRANSFER

9. As is the case in all our estates, the HA always tries to cater for special needs or difficulties experienced by the tenants or their families. To this end, Housing Department will consider arranging special transfer for Po Tin Estate's tenants who have special needs or experience genuine difficulties (such as persons with disabilities) when using the small size bathroom after they move-in.

REDEVELOPMENT

10. There are no plans to redevelop the Po Tin Estate at this time.

11. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Transport and Housing Bureau
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