

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Implementation Arrangement for the Clearance of Long Bin Interim Housing

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the implementation arrangements for the clearance of the Long Bin Interim Housing (IH) site.

Background

2. Long Bin IH is situated in Yuen Long. It occupies an area of 3.07 hectare and consists of eight low-rise blocks with 840 units built by proprietary prefabricated building system in 1999. At present, there are 510 households housed on the site as well as two welfare premises and a plant nursery. The location plan of the Long Bin IH site is at **Annex**.

3. At its meeting held on 13 September 2013, the Housing Authority's (HA) Strategic Planning Committee approved the clearance of Long Bin IH for public housing development. Subsequently, upon approval by HA's joint Commercial Properties Committee and Subsidised Housing Committee, the clearance of Long Bin IH and its implementation arrangements were formally announced on 9 January 2014.

Clearance arrangement

4. To allow time to conduct vetting and arrange rehousing for the affected households, and to give them reasonable notification, a clearance period of 24 months with target clearance date in January 2016 has been set for the clearance of Long Bin IH.

Rehousing arrangements for domestic households

5. The 510 affected households are grouped under three categories. The first category comprises six households which were exempted from Comprehensive Means Test (CMT) at the time of their admission to IH. Similar to the arrangement adopted for the Kwai Shing East IH Clearance, a 'direct offer' status will be given to these six households and they will be eligible for rehousing directly to public rental housing (PRH) flats.

6. Under the second category, according to the current policy, about 345 households will have their Waiting List (WL) applications due for verification prior to clearance. They will be offered PRH either through the Anticipatory Housing Scheme (AHS)^{Note 1} or normal WL allocation, subject to fulfilling the prevailing eligibility criteria for WL and IH clearance. There are another 62 households under this category whose WL applications are frozen. They may be offered PRH if their WL applications are defrozen before the due day of clearance.

7. Under the third category, about 63 households with immature WL applications will be rehoused to Po Tin IH in Tuen Mun, New Territories. For those households with medical or social considerations and recommended by Social Welfare Department (SWD) for rehousing to PRH; or those who are nearly due for PRH under the AHS, in order to avoid causing them inconvenience arising from a double move within a short period of time, departmental directorate officers at Chief Housing Manager level have delegated authority to approve justified cases for direct rehousing to PRH on individual merits. There are also 34 households without WL applications which are allowed to stay in IH for a maximum of one year, mainly due to failure to meet the CMT. Notice to Quit will be served to these households once their period of stay expires.

Associated Arrangements for domestic households

8. The affected households of Long Bin IH will be granted an ex-gratia Domestic Removal Allowance (DRA)^{Note 2} to meet part of their expenses of moving to PRH or other IH. Affected single-person and two-person households are eligible for payment of Singleton or Doubleton Allowance (SA/DA)^{Note 3} respectively in lieu of rehousing to PRH/IH. For those affected households who are eligible for PRH, if they wish to purchase Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats, they will be accorded Green Form status and priority in the upcoming HOS sales exercises. We will also work closely with local voluntary agencies and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to provide necessary support and social services to the elderly households in their move.

^{Note 1} Through AHS, eligible households who are subject to involuntary rehousing, including IH clearers, will be offered advance rehousing up to a maximum of 12 months. One-grade up allocation of the flats, i.e. from New Territories to Extended Urban (EB) or from EB to Urban can also be made. However, upon one grade-up, only refurbished flats will be offered.

^{Note 2} The prevailing rates of DRA are \$4,209 for one-person households, \$9,704 for two to three-person households, \$12,617 for four to five-person households and \$16,169 for six-person and above households.

^{Note 3} The allowances for singleton and doubleton families are \$40,560 and \$50,230 respectively. Recipients of these allowances are neither eligible for any form of subsidized housing nor the allowances in the subsequent two years.

Letting measures associated with the clearance of Long Bin IH

9. Since the size of all 1-P and 2-P flats in Long Bin IH are comparatively larger than flats of corresponding household size in Po Tin IH, transfer of the 1-P and 2-P families from the Long Bin IH to 2-P and 3-P flats of Po Tin IH will be allowed.

10. The Po Tin Estate in Tuen Mun will become the only IH in the New Territories upon clearance of Long Bin IH. As Po Tin Estate is currently providing both IH and PRH flats, a number of the PRH flats will have to be recovered through a voluntary transfer exercise for use as IH to meet future demand. In order to encourage the sitting PRH tenants of Po Tin Estate to apply for voluntary transfer, we will allow transfers from NT (Po Tin Estate) to Urban (Tak Long Estate), Extended-urban (Shui Chuen O Estate) or NT (Hung Shui Kiu Area 13) with an eligibility criterion of a minimum 5-year residence in PRH for cross-district transfers.

Arrangements for Welfare Facilities and the Plant Nursery

11. We have requested SWD to assess the re-provisioning needs of the two welfare facilities. Subject to availability of resources, we will assist the operators to seek suitable accommodation in other estates if re-provisioning is necessary. The land currently occupied by the HA's plant nursery is large and it is difficult to find a re-provisioning site. Therefore, the HA appointed landscape contractors will be asked to provide the services in future. All staff affected will be redeployed to job elsewhere in the Housing Department.

Way Forward

12. After the clearance of Long Bin IH, the recurrent demand for New Territories IH will be met by the recovered units in Po Tin IH. Subject to further studies and discussion with relevant bureaux and departments, it is estimated that about 2 300 PRH flats will be built on the Long Bin IH site.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
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