

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

**Progress Report of the Enhanced Phasing-out Programme of
Housing for Senior Citizens of HS1 Design**

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the progress of the Enhanced Phasing-out Programme (EPP) of Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) of HS1 Design by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA).

BACKGROUND

2. HSC¹ was introduced in mid 1990s as a hostel type of public rental housing (PRH) accommodation with 24-hour welfare worker service targeting the elderly. Due to PRH applicants' preference for self-contained PRH units with independent facilities, the vacancy rate of HSC had been high since the introduction of HSC. To maximise the utilisation of resources and shorten the waiting time for PRH allocation of non-elderly one-person applicants, HA lifted the age limit of HSC units in October 2001. However, the vacancy rate of HSC remained high, especially among the HS1 Design units. In view of this, HA launched a Phasing-out Programme in 2006 to convert HSC blocks with high vacancy rates for other uses. Under the Phasing-out Programme, HS1

¹ HSC has three design types. HS1 Design is the earliest design that divides a normal domestic unit into two to four smaller units with shared toilet and kitchen facilities by internal partitioning. HS2 Design has common kitchen and toilet facilities, while HS3 Design has shared common kitchen facilities and an independent toilet inside each unit.

Design blocks with a vacancy rate over 30% and HS2/HS3 Design blocks with vacancy rate over 50% would be identified for conversion. 17 HS1 Design blocks and one HS2 Design block were subsequently included in the programme. To expedite the conversion process, the Housing Department has ceased the allocation of HS1 Design units since 2009.

3. With a view to fully utilising public housing resources, HA endorsed the EPP in March 2011, extending the original programme to cover all the remaining HS1 Design blocks and took proactive measures² to encourage affected tenants to voluntarily move to small self-contained units or HS2/HS3 Design units. Domestic Removal Allowance (DRA) was provided, and subject to availability of resources, new PRH units would be allocated to affected tenants.

4. To further expedite the EPP, HA imposed the “Management Transfer” arrangement to all the 163 non-elderly tenants of HS1 Design units since February 2013. Non-elderly tenants were provided with a maximum of three allocation offers in the same estate or an estate in the same District Council constituency. Other incentives were also provided, such as, DRA and allocation of a new PRH unit subject to availability of resources. Those who failed to accept allocation offers without justifiable reasons were subject to termination of tenancy.

5. HA has completed a comprehensive review of the EPP, the latest progress of which is illustrated as below.

LATEST PROGRESS

² To deploy frontline management staff to conduct briefings, home visits and guided flat visits to new PRH units for affected tenants to encourage them to move out, and also briefings for Members of District Council and Estate Management Advisory Committee to solicit their support.

Occupancy Rate of HS1 Design Units

6. Since the implementation of the Phasing-out Programme in August 2006, HA had recovered 2 681 HS1 Design units and converted them into 1 228 ordinary PRH units as at December 2014. Among the remaining 2 310 HS1 Design units in 847 PRH units, the number of units still being occupied solely by elderly tenants was further reduced to 960 units (with an occupancy rate at 42%).

Management Transfer for Non-elderly Tenants of HS1 Design Units

7. As stated in paragraph 4 above, starting from February 2013, HA has imposed the “Management Transfer” arrangement to non-elderly residents occupying HS1 Design units. During the period from February 2013 to December 2014, HA had handled all 163 cases of non-elderly tenants, among which three tenants were approved to stay in their units due to medical grounds.

Age Profile of Remaining Elderly Tenants of HS1 Design Units

8. As at 31 December 2014, the age profile of elderly tenants occupying HS1 Design units is shown below –

No. of Elderly Tenants	Age Distribution			
	60 - 69	70 - 79	80 - 89	90 & above
960	65 (7%)	223 (23%)	559 (58%)	113 (12%)

9. Over the years, HA has been taking proactive measures to encourage elderly tenants to apply for transfer. However, the remaining elderly tenants

show little interest to apply for transfer, since they prefer to live in an environment and neighbourhoods that they are familiar with, and they are unwilling to adapt to a new living environment. Some elderly tenants might be interested in moving to PRH units nearby, but no suitable unit was available for allocation then. Others might have plans to apply for elderly homes and therefore do not prefer moving repeatedly.

WAY FORWARD

10. Since the vast majority of elderly tenants in HS1 Design units are of very old age (93% of them are above 70 years old) and are rather reluctant to leave their HS1 Design units, HA will continue to carry out the EPP with a voluntary transfer approach for these remaining elderly tenants.

11. Members are invited to note the progress of the EPP of House for Senior Citizens of HS1 Design.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
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