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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 10 July 2018

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat on
use of non-domestic premises of the Hong Kong Housing Authority**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the use of non-domestic premises of the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA"), and gives a summary of the views and concerns expressed by Members on issues relating to the subject.

Background

2. According to the Administration, when drawing up plans for new public housing developments, HA refers to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and consults relevant government departments and organizations, such as District Councils ("DC") and local communities, in order to provide suitable estate facilities, which may include educational, social welfare, recreational, leisure, retail and carparking facilities, with a view to meeting the basic needs of the residents.

3. Given the limited space in existing public housing estates, HA will, on the premise of ensuring that adequate open space is available for residents' access and leisure, endeavour to balance residents' needs for various facilities and consider increasing the provision of non-domestic facilities where feasible to provide residents with various community, educational, welfare and retail facilities.

Letting arrangements for welfare premises

4. For Government-funded welfare premises in HA's public housing estates, a nominal rent of \$1 per annum plus a management and maintenance charge, if applicable, will be charged for the leasing of the premises to non-government organisations ("NGOs") nominated by relevant government departments or policy bureaux. In addition, under HA's established practice, eligible NGOs¹ providing direct services of welfare or community nature to estate residents may apply to HA, and concessionary rent² will be charged for the leasing of welfare premises in public housing estates on the recommendation of the relevant government departments, including the Social Welfare Department. Up to end-January 2018, there were about 1 500 tenancies let by HA under the above-mentioned arrangements for the provision of various types of welfare and community services in public housing, including children and youth services, community services, elderly services, family welfare services, as well as child care, medical and rehabilitation services, etc.³

Members' views and concerns

5. Members have expressed views on matters relating to the use of non-domestic premises of HA at meetings of the Legislative Council and its committees. The major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Use of non-domestic spaces in public housing estates for providing community facilities

6. Some Members opined that the Administration should consider making use of empty bays at ground level and domestic units on lower floors of public rental housing ("PRH") blocks, and other vacant non-domestic spaces in PRH estates for providing community or welfare facilities.

¹ These include charitable or non-profit making organizations with exemption under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112).

² The current rate for concessionary rent is \$55 per square metre per month exclusive of rates and Government rent (if any). The concessionary rent is subject to review by HA's Commercial Properties Committee every three years. The next review will be conducted in April 2019.

³ LC Paper No. CB(4)800/17-18(01)

7. The Administration advised that the Housing Department ("HD") had been providing community facilities at ground level of domestic blocks whenever spaces were available for use, in order to fully utilize the available areas. Feasibility studies would be conducted if there were proposals for converting suitable empty bays at ground level of existing domestic blocks into welfare premises. Depending on the design and planning, HD would provide community or welfare facilities on lower floors of domestic blocks in new public housing development projects.

Leasing of non-domestic units for setting up District Councillors' offices

8. In response to a question at the Council meeting of 22 February 2017 about how the Administration would assist incumbent DC members to set up ward offices in their constituencies, the Administration advised that according to the existing mechanism, HD would try to provide as far as possible suitable non-domestic units in PRH estates at market rent for DC members to set up their ward offices during their term of office. Out of 431 DC constituencies, there were PRH estates in 223 constituencies and there were no PRH estates in the remaining 208 constituencies. Of the 223 constituencies with PRH estates, DC members' ward offices had been set up in PRH estates in 200 constituencies, applications for setting up ward offices had been received in three constituencies, and no application for setting up ward office had been received in the remaining 20 constituencies.

Latest development

9. The Administration will brief the Panel on the utilization of non-domestic premises in public housing estates at the meeting on 10 July 2018.

Relevant papers

10. A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Appendix

Use of non-domestic premises of the Hong Kong Housing Authority

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Papers
Council	22 February 2017	Council question on assisting District Council members in setting up their ward offices
Panel on Housing	5 June 2017	Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)52/17-18)
Panel on Housing	12 October 2017	Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)170/17-18)
Panel on Housing	-	Supplementary information paper provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)437/17-18(01))
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Shopping Centres, Markets and Carparks in Public Rental Housing Estates and Home Ownership Scheme Estates	26 March 2018	Administration's paper on planning of commercial and social welfare facilities in new public housing estates (LC Paper No. CB(4)800/17-18(01))