

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

**Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues
Related to Inadequate Housing and Relevant Housing Policies**

Supplementary Information

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues Related to Inadequate Housing and Relevant Housing Policies held on 19 November 2019, Members requested the Government to provide relevant information on how it would help improve communication between departments and streamline procedures to expedite the implementation of transitional housing projects by community organisations. The Government now provides the supplementary information below.

2. In order to improve communication between departments and streamline the procedures on transitional housing projects, the Under Secretary for the Transport and Housing from time to time chairs an inter-bureaux/departmental meeting. So far, six meetings were convened to deliberate ways to resolve obstacles from the policy perspective and facilitate feasibility study for community organisations –

- (a) The Buildings Department (BD) promulgated the Guidelines on Applications for Special Modification or Exemption for Transitional Housing Initiatives in Domestic Buildings in October 2018. Regarding proposals involving wholesale conversion of industrial buildings into transitional housing, BD will adopt a similar pragmatic approach to favorably consider granting transitional housing projects certain exemptions from requirements on site coverage, plot ratio, open space within the site and service lane for domestic buildings under the Buildings Ordinance.
- (b) The Town Planning Board (TPB) announced in November 2018 its agreement that transitional housing projects co-ordinated by the Task Force under the Transport and Housing Bureau in permanent buildings, including wholesale-converted industrial buildings in the ‘Commercial’, ‘Comprehensive Development Area’ and ‘Other Specified Uses’ annotated ‘Business’ and ‘Residential’ zones in the urban and new town areas, can be regarded as for temporary use, which is always permitted under the Outline Zoning Plan if such projects are for a period of five years or less.

- (c) In addition, under the Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings, the Government will exercise flexibility in the handling of planning, land lease and building design requirements including exemption from payment of waiver fees for the specific use of transitional housing for proposals supported by the Task Force involving the revitalisation of industrial buildings into transitional housing.
- (d) The Chief Executive-in-Council approved the exemption of waiver fee, rent and associated costs for land applications related to the provision of transitional housing in April 2019 to further lessen the financial burden of community organisations with a view to facilitating more community initiated transitional housing projects.

3. The above-mentioned inter-bureaux/departmental meeting also deliberated on many other proposals. Since these projects are currently still at their advocacy stages, we consider it better to defer to the proponents to announce them when they have reached a more mature stage.

4. The Task Force provides comments to community organisations frequently on the architectural layout, environment, traffic, fire services and infrastructure provision, etc. of the transitional housing projects. It has also accompanied community organisations and their professional consultants to meet with relevant government departments (including BD, Lands Department, Transport Department, Fire Services Department and other relevant government departments) with a view to resolving outstanding issues and obtaining relevant approvals as soon as possible. There were more than 100 of such meetings and enquiry discussions held in the previous year.

5. The Task Force is currently studying several pieces of idle land in the New Territories. Constructing transitional housing on these lands involves obtaining town planning submissions under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance, covering environmental, ecological and transport impact assessments. The Task Force will conduct initial assessment, and assist community organisations to seek the approval of assessments and apply appropriate funding to undertake the preliminary works, detailed design and construction work. The Government will participate proactively and continue to communicate with the community with a view to making better use of the potential and resources in the community outside the Government and offering those in need with flexible and multiple social services.