

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Housing

**Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Transitional Housing and
Subdivided Units**

**Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 23 March 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2B of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP (Chairman)
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
- Public Officers attending** : Agenda Item I

Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr CHAN Nap-ming, BBS
Project Director (1)
Task Force on Transitional Housing
Transport and Housing Bureau

Mr Stephen WONG
Project Director (2)
Task Force on Transitional Housing
Transport and Housing Bureau

Agenda Item II

Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Kenneth LEUNG
Assistant Director of Housing (Housing Subsidies)

Ms Catherine FONG
Chief Housing Manager/Applications
Housing Department

Mr Ray PANG
Property Service Manager/S(T&Y)4
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Mr Derek LO
Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Mr Joey LO
Senior Council Secretary (1)8

Ms Michelle NIEN
Legislative Assistant (1)5

I. Update on the progress of supplying transitional housing units

(LC Paper No. CB(1)699/20-21(01) — Administration's paper on progress of the provision of transitional housing)

Discussion

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings in the **Appendix**).

2. The Subcommittee agreed to conduct a site visit to transitional housing projects in Kong Ha Wai, Yuen Long and Song Wong Toi Road, To Kwa Wan in mid-April 2021.

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(1)853/20-21 on 29 April 2021 that the site visit would be held on 20 May 2021 from 1:30 pm to 5:40 pm.)

II. Policies and facilities for rehousing

(LC Paper No. CB(1)699/20-21(02) — Administration's paper on policies and facilities for rehousing of persons affected by Government's enforcement actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)701/20-21(01) — Submission from MercyHK (English version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)701/20-21(02) — Submission from Mr LEUNG Tak-ming (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)701/20-21(03) — Submission from Union for Better Rehousing Policy (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)701/20-21(04) — Submission from Ms WEI Siu-lik, member of the Eastern District Council (Chinese version only)

- LC Paper No. CB(1)705/20-21(01) — Referral memorandum from the Public Complaints Office on policies for rehousing of residents affected by enforcement actions against unauthorized building works (Chinese version only) (Restricted to members))

Discussion

3. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings in the **Appendix**).

(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)720/20-21(01)) for the item were issued to members on 23 March 2021 via email.)

III. Any other business

Date of next meeting

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:26 pm.

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(1)738/20-21 on 29 March 2021 that the next meeting would be held on 26 April 2021 at 10:45 am.)

Panel on Housing

Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Transitional Housing and Subdivided Units

**Proceedings of meeting
on Tuesday, 23 March 2021, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2B of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
Agenda item I — Update on the progress of supplying transitional housing units			
000545 – 000850	Chairman Mr Wilson OR	Discussion on the proposed site visit to transitional housing ("TH") projects Mr Wilson OR proposed that the visit should also cover TH projects such as the Light Home.	
000851 – 001151	Chairman Administration	Briefing by the Administration on LC Paper No. CB(1)699/20-21(01)	
001152 – 001822	Chairman Mr Tony TSE Administration	<p>Mr Tony TSE raised the following concerns/enquiries—</p> <p>(a) from a business point of view, the conversion of industrial buildings ("IBs") into TH was not a viable investment given that the costs involved in conversion and restoration were high and the duration of use as TH approved by the Town Planning Board ("TPB") was short. More incentives and subsidies should be provided to raise the attractiveness of the Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings ("the Revitalisation Scheme") implemented by the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB");</p> <p>(b) more support should be provided to non-government organizations ("NGOs") in resolving difficulties encountered in implementing TH projects; and</p> <p>(c) progress of the pilot scheme to subsidize the provision of TH through NGOs using rooms in hotels and guesthouses ("the pilot scheme").</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) it had been actively spearheading and collaborating with NGOs on various initiatives proposed and implemented by them with a view to speeding up the provision of TH and wasted no time in taking forward TH projects;</p>	

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		<p>(b) as an example, the developer which owned the land for the large scale TH project in Kong Ha Wai, Kam Tin, Yuen Long, announced in November 2019 that it would lease the land to an NGO at a nominal rate for TH development;</p> <p>(c) in June 2020, the project obtained TPB's temporary planning approval. It was now under construction and the first phase was anticipated to complete in end-2021 or early 2022. It was estimated that the project would only take around two years from conception to first intake of flats;</p> <p>(d) online briefing sessions would be held in the final week of March 2021 to brief the hotels and guesthouses industry and NGOs respectively on details of the pilot scheme, with a view to receiving applications in April; and</p> <p>(e) the Administration would draw on the experience of the first project under the Revitalisation Scheme in mapping the way forward.</p>	
001823 – 002408	Chairman Mr Wilson OR Administration	<p>Mr Wilson OR made the following suggestions –</p> <p>(a) THB's Revitalisation Scheme had a low participation rate compared to the revitalization initiatives of IBs implemented by the Development Bureau. If THB was unable to overcome the institutional barriers to the smooth implementation of the Scheme, it should consider shelving the Scheme and putting its resources to other more worthwhile TH initiatives;</p> <p>(b) given the importance of TH in alleviating the society's housing needs, the Administration should consider incorporating TH into the housing ladder and make greater commitment to the supply of TH; and</p> <p>(c) as there were multifarious organizations participating in TH projects, the Administration should consider providing a one-stop platform with information to help TH applicants find the units which best suited their needs.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) as an integral component of THB's effort to increase TH supply, the Revitalisation Scheme would continue to be in place. The Administration would review the Revitalisation Scheme and consider if flexibility could</p>	

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		<p>be offered in the handling of planning, land lease and building design requirements;</p> <p>(b) the Long Term Housing Strategy had formulated a strategic direction for housing policies. As TH was not meant to be a long-term solution to the housing problem, the Administration considered it not suitable to incorporate TH into the housing ladder. That said, the Administration remained committed to the provision of TH. In fact, many developers which owned the land used for TH projects had already indicated their willingness to renew the contracts with the NGOs upon expiry; and</p> <p>(c) the Administration was exploring some initiatives to disseminate more comprehensive information to TH applicants.</p>	
002409 – 002853	Chairman Mrs Regina IP Administration	<p>Mrs Regina IP strongly objected to delegating the management and aftercare services of TH projects to NGOs. In her view, the above tasks and the maintenance of the proposed information platform on TH and subdivided units ("SDUs") should be the duties of the District Offices under the Home Affairs Department and the Social Welfare Department, which should be responsible for maintaining strong ties with the people. By doing so, the Administration could come to grips with people's expectations better, and would be able to collect first-hand information on TH and SDUs, which would be useful for policy formulation.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) cross-sector collaboration was one of the key features of TH. From policy inception to project implementation, the Administration actively promoted close collaboration with community organizations with the aim of bringing together community efforts and social resources, and allowing different community organizations to showcase their creativity in providing flexible and diversified TH projects; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration noted Mrs IP's concern and would monitor the vetting of applications from NGOs and the implementation of TH projects.</p>	
002854 – 003933	Chairman Mr SHIU Ka-	Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed agreement that the provision of TH required the collaboration of various sectors and	

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	fai Administration	<p>different government organizations. He requested the Administration to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) elaborate the benefits of delegating the management and aftercare services of TH projects to NGOs; (b) take up the coordination work and maintain a central database on the supply of TH by different organizations in order to facilitate the matching of TH resources with the needy families, and compile a waiting list for TH. This would reduce the need for subsidizing NGOs' administrative expenses and raise the cost-efficiency of TH projects; and (c) identify more privately-owned idle farmlands in the New Territories for building TH by the modular integrated construction method and strive to remove the institutional barriers to building TH on idle sites in rural areas. <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) by participating in TH projects, NGOs could bring into play their vision, experience, local network and resources as well as community intelligence, thus contributing to the diversity of TH projects. For example, among the completed TH projects, some were targeted at single-parent families, while others might be targeted at rehabilitated offenders or ethnic minority groups; (b) the Government would not provide subsidy for NGOs' administrative expenses in addition to the amount permitted under the pilot scheme. NGOs would have to rely on the rents collected from residents of TH to pay the rent committed to the owners and their own administrative expenses; and (c) construction of TH on idle sites in the New Territories required planning permission by TPB under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131), which would involve detailed environmental, ecological and transport impact assessments. For example, the TH project in Kong Ha Wai was subject to the above stringent assessments. 	
003934 – 004556	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman expressed the following views –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration's greater participation was crucial in 	

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		<p>meeting the supply target of TH of 15 000 units in the coming three years. About 2 400 TH units were expected to be completed in 2021 and 2022. Added to the 1 100 units already completed, these 3 500 units made up only 23% of the supply target of 15 000 units; and</p> <p>(b) the supply target of 2 400 units for 2021 to 2022 was too conservative given that the supply target for the coming three years was 15 000 units, and the target should be raised to around 10 000.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) it noted members' view on the progress of TH supply and would report the progress to the Panel on Housing annually;</p> <p>(b) regarding members' concern on the management of TH projects by NGOs, their performance would be monitored by the Task Force on Transitional Housing to ensure their compliance with the grant agreement with the Government;</p> <p>(c) in addition to the 3 500 TH units already completed and to be completed in 2021 and 2022, projects involving some 9 800 units had been activated, among which the project in Tung Tau, Yuen Long involving some 1 800 units would commence works very shortly and would be completed in the second half of 2022; and</p> <p>(d) projects under in-depth study were those currently in stuck in a bottleneck but would be taken forward in full steam as soon as the hurdles were removed.</p>	
004557 – 005106	Chairman Mr Wilson OR Administration	<p>Mr Wilson OR requested the Administration to –</p> <p>(a) elaborate the progress of and the bottlenecks faced by the TH project involving Dah Way Industrial Building in Kwun Tong; and</p> <p>(b) reconsider his proposal of incorporating TH into the housing ladder in order to ensure the quality of the management of TH projects and consistency in policy direction, given that the operation of a TH project might span over 10 years.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) the duration of TH projects was subject to a number of</p>	

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		<p>factors, including the owners' intention and planning restrictions, etc;</p> <p>(b) in the Kwun Tong project, much time had been taken in negotiation between the NGO and the owner; and</p> <p>(c) while the Administration had no plan to incorporate TH into the housing ladder at this juncture, it would not be contented with achieving the supply target of 15 000 units for the coming three years.</p>	
005107 – 005558	Chairman Mrs Regina IP Administration	<p>Mrs Regina IP expressed agreement that TH should be incorporated into the housing ladder, and that the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and the Hong Kong Housing Society should be held responsible for taking forward the related work.</p> <p>Discussion on the tenancy period and exit arrangement of tenants under the pilot scheme to subsidize the provision of TH through NGOs using rooms in hotels and guesthouses.</p>	
005559 – 005930	Chairman Administration	The Chairman's suggestion and the Administration's response on making more use of social media to promote its work in the provision of TH.	
Agenda item II — Policies and facilities for rehousing			
005931 – 011238	Chairman Administration	Briefing by the Administration on the rehousing arrangements for persons affected by Government's enforcement actions (LC Paper No. CB(1)699/20-21(02)).	
011239 – 012346	Chairman Mr Tony TSE Administration	<p>Mr Tony TSE made the following enquiries/suggestions –</p> <p>(a) whether the policy objective that no person should be rendered homeless as a result of Government's enforcement operations or natural disasters had been achieved, and whether there had been any case whereby a person who had no alternative accommodation was allowed to stay in a Transit Center ("TC") for over three months;</p> <p>(b) whether the cleansing service and sanitation facilities of TCs had been enhanced in the midst of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19") pandemic;</p> <p>(c) for those who were affected by the Buildings Department ("BD")'s enforcement actions, whether there were any differences in rehousing arrangements between persons living in illegal rooftop structures ("IRS") on residential buildings erected on or before 1 June 1982</p>	

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		<p>and those living in IRS erected after that date; and if so, whether the Administration had reviewed the suitability of maintaining the above date as the watershed for imposing the different arrangements, given that it had been used for some 40 years; and</p> <p>(d) penalties for unauthorized building works ("UBWs") should be raised to tackle the rehousing problem at source.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) TC was for those who claimed to be homeless as a result of natural disasters or Government's enforcement actions. The affected persons were arranged to be accommodated temporarily in TC for three months in order to verify their claim of being homeless. During these three months, Housing Department ("HD") staff would conduct inspections to TC to ascertain whether they are genuinely homeless. If these persons had stayed in TC for three months and passed the homeless test which proved that they had no alternative accommodation, they would be arranged for admission to Interim Housing ("IH"). However, persons failing to meet the eligibility criteria (e.g. in terms of assets or income) for public rental housing ("PRH") application would be advised to leave the TC;</p> <p>(b) the occupancy rate of TC would change from time to time depending on Government's enforcement actions and natural disasters. Currently, the occupancy rate was relatively low. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, HD had taken a number of precautionary measures which included keeping appropriate distance between bed spaces for affected persons, distributing face masks to them and stepping up cleansing of the premises;</p> <p>(c) there were differences in rehousing arrangements between persons living in IRS on residential buildings erected on or before 1 June 1982 and those living in IRS erected after that date. Details were set out in footnote 2 on page 2 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)699/20-21(02));</p> <p>(d) IH and PRH were scarce housing resources, and the Administration should be prudent in the allocation of housing resources. The date of 1 June 1982 as mentioned above is one of the current criteria in the rehousing arrangement; and</p>	

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		<p>(e) as UBWs often failed to meet statutory safety standards and posed fire hazards, BD had an established enforcement policy against UBWs. Mr TSE's view on enhancing enforcement was noted.</p>	
012347 – 012918	Chairman Mr LAU Kwok-fan Administration	<p>Mr LAU Kwok-fan raised the following concerns/enquiries –</p> <p>(a) as the problem of squatters and IRS needed to be tackled at source, the authorities concerned should be more vigilant in taking enforcement actions and vetting and approving building conversion plans; and</p> <p>(b) compared to the three IHs which HA used to operate in Po Tin, Shek Lei and Long Bin, whether the Po Tin IH (which was the only IH left) was sufficient to meet the existing demand for interim housing.</p> <p>The Administration noted Mr LAU's concerns and advised that Po Tin Estate in Tuen Mun had a total of about 8 700 units which comprised about 4 700 PRH units and about 4 000 IH units. Currently, there were some 800 vacant IH units which should be sufficient to meet the demand of interim housing.</p>	
012919 – 013625	Chairman Mr SHIU Ka-fai Administration	<p>Mr SHIU Ka-fai made the following enquiries –</p> <p>(a) the total number of TC bed spaces provided by HA and whether there had been instances where the demand for bed spaces could not be met;</p> <p>(b) the average vacancy rate of IH in Po Tin; and</p> <p>(c) whether there were cases of direct rehousing to IH without routing through TC.</p> <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <p>(a) there were 340 bed spaces in Po Tin TC and 76 bed spaces in Lung Tin TC in Tai O. There had not been any instance where the demand could not be met;</p> <p>(b) of the 4 000 IH units in Po Tin Estate, 800 units were currently vacant. The occupancy rate would change as eligible persons living in TC would be rehoused to IH from time to time; and</p> <p>(c) apart from accommodating clearerees affected by Government's operations as well as homeless</p>	

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		households transferred from TC to IH, HA also provided IH to ex-PRH tenants who would otherwise become homeless due to various reasons such as divorce or tenancy enforcement actions (e.g. rent arrears).	
013626 – 014346	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman raised the following concerns/enquiries –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as occupants of illegal domestic premises in IBs were one of the most vulnerable groups affected by BD's enforcement actions, enhanced enforcement actions should be taken against illegal conversion of IBs into domestic premises which posed serious safety hazards to the occupants; (b) given that relocation allowance was currently provided under the Community Care Fund ("CCF") to occupants of illegal domestic premises in IBs, whether the Administration would consider providing relocation allowance to occupants of IRS affected by BD's operations as well; (c) more focused and people-oriented support (e.g. emotional support) should be provided by the social worker teams under BD responsible for rehousing matters; and (d) whether a family with members of both sexes was accommodated in the same place in a TC. <p>The Administration advised that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) as IBs were not designed for residential purposes and posed substantial safety hazards to the illegal inhabitants, the Administration would take stringent enforcement measures against the use of IBs for domestic purpose; (b) CCF approved the launching of the Relocation Allowance for Residents of Illegal Domestic Premises in Industrial Buildings who have to move out as a result of the BD's Enforcement Action ("the Relocation Allowance") in October 2011, aiming to facilitate the timely relocation of the affected residents from the illegal domestic premises in IBs for BD to carry out enforcement action. BD and the Development Bureau were reviewing the scope of the Relocation Allowance and would report the findings of the review to CCF and the Commission on Poverty; (c) social workers team under BD would provide support to 	

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		owners and residents affected by BD's operations through family visits, counseling services and briefings on BD's operations, and referring their cases to suitable government departments for assistance; and (d) a whole family would be accommodated in a same cubicle in TC.	
Agenda item III — Any other business			
014347 – 014522	Chairman Mr SHIU Ka-fai	Site visit arrangements	

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
13 August 2021