

**Memorandum for the Building Committee and
Subsidised Housing Committee of
the Hong Kong Housing Authority**

Members' Meeting with Concern Groups

Members are invited to note that the next meeting with concern groups will be held on **Thursday, 12 November 2015** at the **Oi Man Community Hall**, Oi Man Estate. Details of the meeting are as followings –

Concern Groups	Time
The Federation of Public Housing Estates	2:00 p.m.
石籬中轉屋清拆關注組	2:55 p.m.
葵涌劏房住客聯盟	3:50 p.m.
Concerning Grassroot Housing Rights Alliance	4:45 p.m.

2. Copies of the following are attached for your reference –

(a) reference information from the above groups –

- incoming letters of The Federation of Public Housing Estates –

(**Annex A1**)
- incoming letter of 石籬中轉屋清拆關注組 – (**Annex A2**)

- incoming letter of 葵涌劏房住客聯盟 – (**Annex A3**)

- incoming letter of Concerning Grassroot Housing Rights Alliance – (**Annex A4**)

(b) reference information prepared by the Housing Department –

- brief for discussion item proposed by The Federation of Public Housing Estates – (**Annex B1**)
- brief for discussion items proposed by 石籬中轉屋清拆關注組 – (**Annex B2**)
- brief for discussion item proposed by 葵涌劏房住客聯盟 and Concerning Grassroot Housing Rights Alliance – (**Annex B3**)

(c) the list of Members attending the meeting (**Annex C**)

(d) the location map of the Oi Man Community Hall (**Annex D**)

3. Members who wish to listen to public's views on public housing policies are welcome to attend the meeting. Members who intend to attend the meeting are requested to inform the Secretariat (Telephone No.: 2761 5036) before **noon 10 November 2015** so that necessary arrangements can be made.

Miss Michelle LAU
for Secretary, Subsidised Housing Committee
Tel. No.: 2761 5033
Fax No.: 2761 0019

File Ref. : HD 1-7/COMM1/CG-1 Pt.10
(Corporate Services Division)
Date of Issue : 6 November 2015

致
房委會秘書處

本會公屋聯會現報名出席，於11月12日舉行之「房委會委員與關注團體交流會」，主要議題為跟進食水含鉛事故，稍後附上相關的意見內容，敬希安排。謝謝。

公屋聯會總幹事
招國偉 謹啟
2015 年 9 月 15 日

致
房委會秘書

附上本會 11 月 12 日會議的意見重點

- 1.追究鉛水責任
- 2.盡快更換有問題喉管
- 3.為安裝濾水器住戶抽驗食水
- 4.向受影響居民作出補償
- 5.加強對水喉技工的監管
- 6.改用其他接駁喉管的方式
- 7.提升食水系統其他部件的安全性

敬希安排會議，謝謝。

公屋聯會總幹事
招國偉 謹啟
2015 年 10 月 14 日

敬啟者，

有關報名參與房委會委員與關注團體交流會(12/11/2015)事宜

石籬中轉屋清拆關注組欲報名出席交流會，大約 15 人，議題主要關注石籬中轉屋清拆事件、居民安置安排等。如有問題請致電 2423 5062 或傳真到 2494 7786 聯絡方志睿先生。謝謝!

此致

房委會秘書處

石籬中轉屋清拆關注組 謹啟

二零一五年十月十三日

敬啟者，

有關報名參與房委會委員與關注團體交流會(12/11/2015)事宜

葵涌劔房住客聯盟欲報名出席交流會，大約 10 人，議題主要關注公屋配房安排，體恤安置安排及中轉屋政策。如有問題請致電 2423 5052 或傳真到 2494 7786 聯絡吳堃廉先生。謝謝！

此致

房委會秘書處

葵涌劔房住客聯盟 謹啟

二零一五年十月八日

致區女士：

本聯席現報名出席上述會議，參與人數約20人。

本聯席期望與委員交流以下議題：

1. 臨時收容中心及中轉屋政策
2. 公屋配房安排
3. 體恤安置安排

敬希回覆會面流程安排。謝謝。

黎健基先生 謹啟
組織幹事
關注基層住屋聯席

Reference Information for Members' Meeting with Concern Groups

Concern Group : The Federation of Public Housing Estates

Discussion Item : Incident of excessive lead in drinking water in public housing estates

1. Accountability for the lead-in water incident

- 1.1 After excess lead was found in drinking water in public rental housing (PRH) estates, Housing Authority (HA) already stated that it would hold the contractors concerned accountable. The four contractors concerned have been cooperative in carryout out follow-up actions with HA.
- 1.2 As for holding the contractors accountable, in “punishing” contractors who do not comply with contracts, HA has all along acted in accordance with the established mechanism, including giving due consideration to the actual situation and details of non-compliance. In this incident, HA fully agrees to take necessary regulatory actions against the contractors involved. HA’s Tender Committee decided on 30 September that for new works tenders invited by HA during the period from 1 March to 30 September 2015 (i.e. seven months), the four contractors (and two related companies) would not be considered. There are seven contracts involved, with around 18 000 public rental units and subsidized sale flats. The Tender Committee also decided to remove China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited, Shui On Building Contractors Limited, and Yau Lee Construction Company Limited from HA’s Premier League of contractors with effect from 1 October 2015.
- 1.3 HA set up the Review Committee on 24 July 2015 to comprehensively review the present arrangements for quality control and monitoring in relation to the installation of fresh water supply system in PRH estates. The Review Committee submitted its interim report to HA Chairman on 6 October 2015. HA Chairman has said that he agreed with the Review Committee’s view that HA and Housing Department (HD) had lacked awareness in the past and the past mechanism also had certain inadequacies. We have also expressed on various occasions that the past mechanism did have certain inadequacies. The Review Committee was of the view that while HA’s past quality control mechanism before

the incident was consistent with the industry's practice, the law and other Water Supplies Department (WSD)'s requirements, it had only been geared towards known issues about safety and quality of fresh water in the past; it did not focus on the presence of lead in water; and it did not target soldering materials as a high risk item.

- 1.4 Therefore, the Review Committee agrees that interim enhancement measures need to be put in place by HD, in respect of new PRH projects under construction, to immediately reduce the risk of occurrence of the presence of lead in solder on joints and of excess lead content in fresh water. These measures include testing water samples for heavy metal content (including lead) in accordance with WSD's latest requirements since 13 July 2015, requiring the contractor to submit and comply with a management plan and to monitor the delivery, storage and usage of soldering materials, and using quick test methods by both HD and the contractors to check for the presence of lead in soldering joints during construction state. HD will also consider using, where possible, non-soldering water pipe connection methods in future projects.
- 1.5 The independent Commission of Inquiry into excess lead found in drinking water appointed by the Chief Executive in Council has begun its hearings. HA will assume full responsibility as the owner of PRH estates, fully cooperate with the work of the Commission of Inquiry. If the independent Commission of Inquiry considers that follow-up action is required in respect of the responsibilities of any person or organization, HA will follow up solemnly in accordance with the established mechanism.

2. Replacement of water pipes in question

- 2.1 The contractors concerned have all submitted proposals on a comprehensive investigation as well as replacement of water pipes which do not comply with the requirements. HD and WSD are now studying the proposals in detail. As the works will involve complex procedures as well as technical and staffing arrangements, the pipe replacement works will take time to complete. The contractors plan to conduct trial works in certain blocks of the affected estates, and then work out a more detailed work plan and timetable based on practical experience. The current plan is to replace the water pipes in the common area first, before replacing the water pipes inside individual

units. We will ask the contractors to minimize the inconvenience caused by the works to tenants. We will announce the details of the arrangements as soon as possible after such details are confirmed.

3. Water test for filtered water

- 3.1 Filters installed by the contractors had to attain NSF 53 certification for lead reduction and the Government Laboratory has also conducted tests to confirm the effectiveness of the filters. To ease tenants' concerns on the filters' effectiveness, HA would conduct water tests again for the units in the 11 affected estates in which water samples had been found to contain excess lead and filters were installed by the contractors. The relevant water tests have now been completed. Among the 91 units in which water samples had been found to contain excess lead, 78 units installed with filters by the contractors. Among these, two units refused the relevant water tests. Therefore, we conducted water tests again for 76 units and all samples taken met the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s standard.

4. Compensation to affected tenants

- 4.1 Rent is a complicated issue since it involves the Rent Policy. Under the existing Rent Policy, the costs could not be fully recovered and there is subsidy. Under the law, the rent cannot be raised exceeding 10% every two years even though the calculation based on median rent-to-income ratio (MRIR) exceeds 10%. Therefore, HA cannot recover the recurrent expenditure for estate management fully under the existing Rent Policy. Therefore, any rent relief will have a chain of implications and cannot have a decision easily. Some people claimed rent relief due to the lead-in water incident, rent is a complicated issue and we have immediately taken relief measures to assist affected tenants first.
- 4.2 Regarding measures to assist tenants in the 11 affected estates, HA have immediately arranged for the supply of bottled water and temporary water supply. The four contractors of the affected estates have extended connection pipes from the roof-top water tanks to each floor of the building and installed filters with NSF 53 certification for lead reduction for the affected households free-of-charge, and to replace the filter cores for them free-of-charge within two years.

4.3 The contractors concerned have all submitted proposals on a comprehensive investigation as well as replacement of water pipes which do not comply with the requirements. HD and WSD are now studying the proposals in detail. As the works will involve complex procedures as well as technical and staffing arrangements, the pipe replacement works will take time to complete. The contractors plan to conduct trial works in certain blocks of the affected estates, and then work out a more detailed work plan and timetable based on practical experience. The current plan is to replace the water pipes in the common area first, before replacing the water pipes inside individual units. We will ask the contractors to minimize the inconvenience caused by the works to tenants. We will announce the details of the arrangements as soon as possible after such details are confirmed.

5. Enhancement on plumbing works supervision

5.1 The Housing Authority has enhanced the specification requiring Contractors to submit a Subcontractor's Management Plan covering stringent plumbing subcontractor supervision and on-site monitoring to ensure that all workers will use only lead-free category of soldering / brazing materials for jointing of copper pipes, and define the roles of Licensed Plumbers in supervising plumbing installation works. We also require Licensed Plumbers to submit monthly report on quality control and progress of plumbing works.

6. Alternative piping connection method

6.1 We will work with Water Authority, the industry and other stakeholders to explore practical means of using alternative piping materials and jointing method with a view to mitigating the risk of wrongfully using solder containing lead.

7. Enhancement on safety of fresh water system components

7.1 We will work with Water Authority, the industry and other stakeholders to explore enhancing the safety in the use of various components in fresh water system. In view of the Report of the Task Force on investigation of excessive lead content of Drinking Water, we will firstly implement the testing of the four heavy metals in water samples

for fresh water inside services of newly completed buildings. We will further consider other recommendations of the report and those from other stakeholder to explore enhancing the safety in the use of various components in fresh water system.

Reference Information for Members' Meeting with Concern Groups

Concern Group : 石籬中轉屋清拆關注組

Discussion Item : The policy on clearance and rehousing arrangement of
Shek Lei Interim Housing

(1) Background Information

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- Shek Lei Interim Housing (SLIH), completed in 1960s, is situated in Kwai Chung. It comprises Blocks 10 (1 076 units) and Block 11 (852 units) of Shek Lei Estate (II), which were then converted from public rental housing to interim housing (IH) in 1999 and 1997 respectively. A Layout Plan is at **Appendix**.
 - Under the prevailing policy, victims of calamities and households becoming homeless upon government's enforcement operations (e.g. clearance and public housing tenancy enforcement actions) would normally be rehoused to Transit Centre/IH in the New Territories. However, with recommendation of Social Welfare Department, they could be rehoused to SLIH located in Extended Urban Area by discretion.
 - Besides, Housing Department had converted the use of a portion of SLIH into Temporary Accommodation (TA) for those victims of calamities in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung districts as referred/recommended by Home Affairs Department or Social Welfare Department. However, they are required to move out from the TA upon their original premises becoming suitable habitation, e.g. after repealing of temporary evacuation order, completion of refurbishment.

(2) Change of Use of SLIH to Public Housing Development

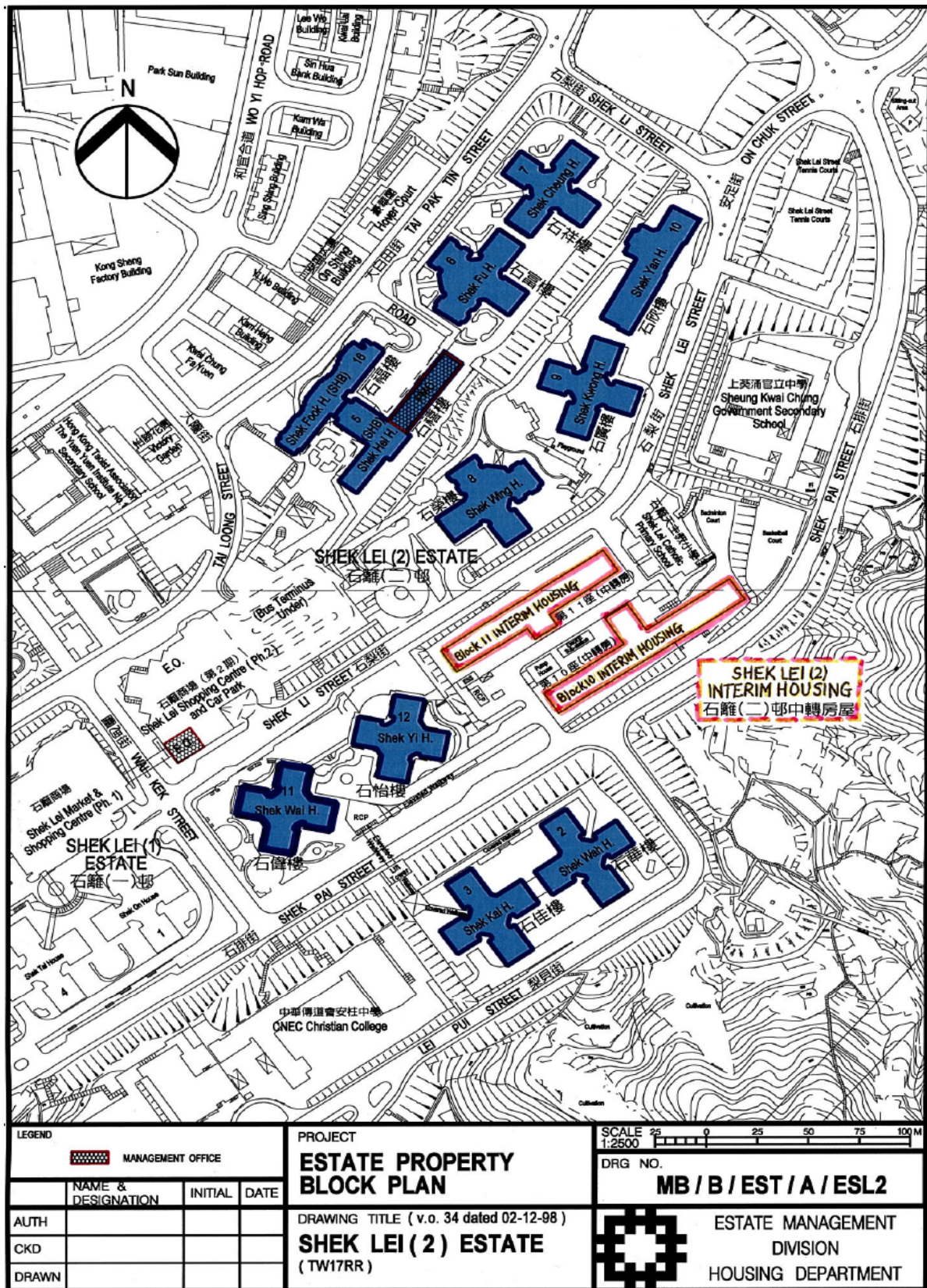
- Given the high vacancy rate all along in SLIH, and the acute shortage of public housing resources, we have been actively exploring the feasibility to change the use of IH to public housing on the recommendations of Audit Commission since 2006.
- We have decided to change the use of SLIH for public housing development. After completing the requisite technical feasibility studies, we would consult or apply to relevant government departments

including Town Planning Board for approval, and submit to Subsidized Housing Committee for consideration and endorsement in due course.

(3) Rehousing Arrangement

- Currently, the Housing Department has no detailed implementation and rehousing arrangements for the clearance of Shek Lei Interim Housing. Before the formal announcement of the clearance, we will submit the proposal to the Housing Authority Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) for approval.
- Generally speaking, households who are eligible for rehousing to PRH before the target clearance date will be offered PRH. For affected households who are not yet eligible for PRH upon clearance, they will be rehoused to Interim Housing. Affected households will be provided with Domestic Removal Allowance, while affected singleton and two-person households can opt for Singleton Allowance / Doubleton Allowance in lieu of rehousing. Subject to the approval of the relevant sales arrangements of individual pre-sale exercises by SHC, if affected households are eligible for PRH and wish to purchase HOS flats, they will be accorded Green Form Status and priority in flat selection.

Layout Plan of Shek Lei Interim Housing



Reference Information for Members' Meeting with Concern Groups

Concern Group : (1) 葵涌劏房住客聯盟
(2) Concerning Grassroot Housing Rights Alliance

Discussion Items: (A) Allocation Arrangements for Public Rental Housing (PRH)
(B) Arrangements for Compassionate Rehousing
(C) Policy Brief on Transit Centre and Interim Housing

(A) Allocation Arrangements for Public Rental Housing (PRH)

1. Present situation

- Housing Authority (HA)'s objective is to provide PRH to low-income families who cannot afford private rental accommodation, and the target is to maintain the average waiting time (AWT) at around three years for general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants).
- Waiting time refers to the time taken between registration for PRH and first flat offer, excluding any frozen period during the application period, e.g. when the applicant has not yet fulfilled the residence requirements; the applicant has requested to put his/her application on hold pending arrival of family members for family reunion; the applicant is imprisoned, etc. The AWT for general applicants refers to the average of the waiting time of those general applicants who were housed to PRH in the past 12 months.
- To cope with the great increase of non-elderly one-person application and to accord priority to general applicants (including family applicants and elderly one-person applicants) over non-elderly one-person applicants in the allocation of PRH units, the Quota and Points System (QPS) was introduced in 2005 to rationalize and to re-prioritize the allocation of PRH to non-elderly one-person applicants. Besides, the HA's Subsidised Housing Committee, at its meeting held on 14 October 2014, endorsed to revise the QPS. Under the QPS, the points of applicants are determined by a series of factors, including the age of the applicants, whether the applicants are living in PRH and the waiting time. The relative priority of allocation for non-elderly one-person applicants is based on the points that have

scored and the quota available. Generally speaking, the older the applicant and the longer the applicant has waited, the higher the number of points. The higher the points the applicants have scored the higher priority for allocation. The AWT is not applicable to non-elderly one-person applicants.

- According to the prevailing allocation policy of PRH, public housing resources are allocated by random computer batching according to the relative priority of the applications, family size, district choice and the resources available when their applications are due for allocation. Eligible applicants are entitled to 3 housing offers (one at a time). The HA strives to ensure that all public housing resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner. As soon as newly completed flats or refurbished flats become available, they are promptly allocated to PRH applicants or other rehousing categories.
- We understand that PRH applicants wish to have speedy allocations, but the progress of PRH allocation depends on various factors, including the number of applications with same family size in each individual district, the supply of new and refurbished PRH units in each individual districts, whether applicants with higher priorities will accept flat offer, etc. The demand of applicants on different types of flats also varies among districts as a result of applicants' switching of district choice; addition/deletion of family members; changing of qualification under the residence rule. As such, the waiting time of applicants in individual district may vary and Housing Department (HD) cannot predict the waiting time of individual applicants.
- Applicants may make reference to the allocation progress of PRH applications of different districts promulgated by HD on a monthly basis through the press and the HA/HD website. Those PRH applicants eligible for joining the Express Flat Allocation Scheme may increase their chances of accelerated allocation through the scheme.

2. Way Forward

- The Government has adopted the target of 480 000 flats as the overall housing supply target for the next decade, of which 290 000 would be public housing, including 200 000 PRH flats and 90 000 subsidized sale flats. Besides, following the gradual completion of new HOS flats in coming years, flats recovered from PRH tenants as a result of purchase of these flats will likely increase. We believe that through

the increase in supply of public housing, the housing need of low income families can be effectively addressed to.

- The continued upsurge in number of PRH applicants has resulted in increasing challenge for HA to maintain AWT at round 3 years. Though there is a possibility of occasional departure from this target, we will strive to maintain it.

(B) Arrangements for Compassionate Rehousing

1. Present situation

- The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has put in place Compassionate Rehousing (CR) to provide public rental housing (PRH) to individual or family applicants who have pressing and long-term housing needs on social or medical grounds.
- The Social Welfare Department (SWD) assesses individual cases and recommends eligible households to Housing Department (HD) for CR. HD will immediately arrange for flat allocation after completion of the normal procedures. Unless the applicant has special allocation arrangement recommended by SWD, such as the need to reside in a particular district or estate, in general HD can offer a PRH unit to the applicant within a short period of time.
- HA draws up the PRH Allocation Plan annually and 2 000 PRH units were reserved in the plan for CR in the past few fiscal years. We have to stress that this is only a guiding figure for the allocation work and is not a quota.
- Our policy is that for any CR cases recommended by SWD which meet other eligibility criteria for PRH, we will arrange for flat allocation and this is not subject to any quota. As a matter of fact, so far HD has not refused CR cases recommended by SWD.

2. Way Forward

- We will continue to work in close collaboration with SWD in order to address the citizens' pressing housing needs for PRH.

(C) Policy Brief on Transit Centre and Interim Housing

1. Prevailing Policy

- **Eligibility Criteria for admission to Transit Centre**

It is the Government's policy that no one will be rendered homeless as a result of Government's enforcement actions, natural disasters, and emergency incidents. If people are rendered homeless due to Government enforcement actions (e.g. clearances of unauthorized structures, eviction of unauthorized persons from public housing units or eviction by Court Bailiff in private tenement cases in exercising court orders), natural disasters or emergency incidents, they can apply for admission to Housing Department's (HD) Transit Centre (TC) through referrals by relevant government departments such as Building Departments, Lands Department or Bailiff Office while they wait for eligibility vetting for further rehousing or look for alternative accommodation themselves.

- **Duration of Stay**

Transit Centre is to provide temporary accommodation for the needy, period of stay should normally not exceed three months.

- **Homeless Test**

After the admission into TC, staff of the HD will examine the occupants' actual housing needs and make surprise inspections to TC to ascertain whether they are genuine homeless. The staff will also conduct surprise visit to the alternative accommodation of suspected cases where necessary. In addition, HD will also check through the computer system to ensure that they will not enjoy double housing benefits.

If those households have stayed in the TC for three months and passed the "homeless test", subject to fulfillment of eligibility criteria for public rental housing (PRH) including income and asset vetting and "no domestic property" rule, HD will arrange for their admission to Po Tin Interim Housing (IH) in Tuen Mun while awaiting PRH through PRH

application.

- **Special consideration**

Persons with medical or social grounds and have imminent housing need, HD will, upon their consent, refer them to SWD to assess whether they fulfill the eligibility for immediate allocation of PRH through “Compassionate Rehousing”.

2. Policy on Admission to Interim Housing

- Apart from the aforesaid persons qualified for IH by passing of homeless test and fulfillment of eligibility criteria for PRH, clearances affected by squatter clearance and illegal rooftop structures enforcement actions who fulfill other rehousing eligibility criteria except the seven-year residence rule will also be rehoused to IH awaiting for PRH allocation. Unlike PRH application, IH is not open for application.

3. Explanation why residents of illegal sub-divided units (SDUs) are not allowed for admission to IH

- PRH and IH are both valuable housing resources of the community that involve heavy public subsidy. At any point in time, HD must have sufficient vacant IH units to cope with the emergency situations. The Government has to allocate the IH units in a fair and rational manner. Allowing residents of SDUs to be admitted to IH directly irrespective of whether they meet the eligibility for PRH or whether they are waiting for PRH allocation, is unfair to the many PRH applicants who have been waiting for a long time and those currently staying in TCs and undergoing the “homeless test”. Besides, it will also convey a wrong message to the community that living in illegal SDUs is a shortcut for admission to IH and even PRH. This may induce more households to live in illegal SDUs and threaten the safety of both the public and those households.

**Attendance List of
Members' Meeting with Concern Groups
on Thursday, 12 November 2015**

Mr Stanley WONG Yuen-fai, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Mr WONG Sing-chi
Mr Alan LUI Siu-lun
Mr LEE Ping-kuen, JP
Ms Cleresa WONG Pie-yue

愛民社區會堂位置圖

LOCATION MAP OF OI MAN COMMUNITY HALL

