



規劃為民 開拓新猷

Planning for
the Community

將軍澳的部分公營房屋發展。
Part of the public housing development
in Tseung Kwan O.



■ Hung Fuk Estate in Tin Shui Wai becomes one of the 170 PRH estates in the HA portfolio.

The role of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in “building for the community” is a multi-layered one; our work benefits many different community segments. Our primary role is to provide public rental housing (PRH) to low-income families that cannot afford private rental accommodation. As at the end of March 2015, about 744 100 PRH units in 170 PRH estates under the HA were providing accommodation to about 2 million Hong Kong people, around 30% of the population. The HA also provides subsidised sale flats, mainly in the form of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats.

Long-term goals

The Government’s Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS), promulgated in December 2014, adopts a supply-led strategy with a view to averting the current serious imbalance between housing supply and demand. The Government has adopted a housing supply target of 480 000 units for the 10-year period from 2015/16 to 2024/25. Public housing accounts for 60%, which consisting of 200 000 PRH units and 90 000 subsidised sale flats. The Government has identified land for building about 254 000 public housing units in this 10-year period, assuming that all sites identified can be delivered on time for housing

construction. Additional land to meet the target is currently being sought. Our rolling five-year Public Housing Construction Programme aims to produce about 77 100 PRH units and 10 600 subsidised sale flats in the five-year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

Flat allocation

In 2014/15, we allocated around 13 400 flats to general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants) and non-elderly one-person applicants under the Quota and Points System (QPS). Our target is to provide the first flat offer to general applicants at around three years on average, but we are facing increasing challenges due to growing demand for PRH. As at the end of March 2015, the average waiting time¹ for general applicants was 3.3 years, while the average waiting time for elderly one-person applicants was 1.8 years.

¹ Waiting time refers to the time 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 requirement, has asked for his / her application to be put on hold pending arrival of family members for family reunion, is in prison, etc). The average waiting time for general applicants refers to the average of the waiting time of those general applicants who were housed in PRH in the previous 12 months.

It is the policy of the Government and the HA to accord priority to general applicants over non-elderly one-person applicants in the allocation of PRH units. Towards this end, the HA introduced QPS for non-elderly one-person applicants in September 2005. Unlike general applicants, the allocation of flats to applicants under QPS is subject to an annual quota. The priority of QPS applicants is determined by a points system, and the target of providing the first flat offer at around three years on average is not applicable to QPS applicants. During the public consultation on the LTHS, a considerable number of respondents agreed that older applicants under QPS might have relatively limited upward mobility and so should be given higher priority. In his Report No. 61 on the allocation and utilisation of PRH units, the Director of Audit observed that there was built-in incentive for applicants to apply for PRH early under QPS, and recommended the HA to conduct a comprehensive review of QPS and consider the need to screen out ineligible QPS applicants on a periodic basis. The Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee also considered that the HA should review QPS.

Taking into account the above views and recommendations, the HA's Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) decided in October 2014 to refine QPS by awarding a one-off bonus of 60 points to applicants when they reach the age of 45, and increasing the scale of "age points" from three to nine points per year of age at the time of application to reduce the incentive for early registration. The refined points system was put into effect from 1 February 2015. The SHC also agreed, starting from the 2015/16 PRH Allocation Plan, to increase the annual allocation quota under QPS from 8% to 10% of the total number of PRH units to be allocated to general and QPS applicants, subject to a cap which was increased from 2 000 to 2 200 units. With effect from 1 February 2015, regular checking of eligibility would also be conducted on those QPS applicants who had waited for five years but were not yet due for detailed vetting within the next two years.

Affordable housing

As at the end of March 2015, PRH rents (which include rates, as well as management and maintenance costs) per PRH unit ranged from \$315 to \$4,264 per month, with the average monthly rent standing at \$1,703. At the same date, around 16 400 tenants with temporary financial difficulties benefited from our Rent Assistance Scheme, which provides a rent reduction of 25% or 50% for eligible tenants depending on their household income levels. We publicised this scheme throughout the year through broadcasts on the Housing Channel and on the radio, information disseminated on the Housing Authority / Housing Department Website, and in posters, leaflets and *Estate Newsletters*. Non-governmental organisations, local District Councils and Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) were also approached and encouraged to refer tenants in need to estate offices for assistance.



■ We encourage young people to live close to their elderly dependents through a series of harmonious schemes.

Bringing families closer

The HA operates a series of schemes that foster the development of close family support networks. These schemes include the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme, Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme, Harmonious Families Addition Scheme and Harmonious Families Amalgamation Scheme. They encourage young people to live with or near their elderly parents / elderly dependent relatives with the aim to establish a family-based support network in PRH. These schemes benefited a total of about 4 400 households in 2014/15, with around 1 480 PRH applicants benefiting from the Priority Scheme, 230 PRH households from the Transfer Scheme, 2 610 PRH families from the Addition Scheme, and 70 PRH families from the Amalgamation Scheme.

Flat transfers for better living

Other transfer schemes are also available to address the changing circumstances of existing PRH tenants. Under the current arrangement, PRH households living in units with less than 5.5 square metres of Internal Floor Area (IFA) per person can apply for the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Transfer Scheme for transfer to larger accommodation. An exercise under this scheme was conducted in November 2014. Our Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme enables PRH households living in PRH units with an IFA of less than 7 square metres per person to apply for transfer to a larger flat. One exercise was carried out under this scheme in 2014/15. The two transfer schemes, together with households moved for reason of overcrowding, had rehoused a total of 1 303 households in 2014/15.



Advertising on buses is one of the many ways in which the message of safeguarding PRH resources is promoted.

Protecting precious PRH resources

During the year we extended the deployment of the Special Team established in 2013 for another two years for stepping up the effort in combating tenancy abuse. In 2014/15, the team paid special attention to occupancy-related cases and investigated a number of abuses that included sub-letting, non-occupation, unauthorised occupation and the use of premises for illegal activities.

We continued our programme educating tenants about the importance of safeguarding our PRH resources, and conducted a series of publicity programmes via channels that included newspaper and public transport advertising, advertorials on the Internet, and audio and video programmes broadcast on radio channels, buses, the MTR and on TV. To enlist tenants' support, we also made outreach visits to EMAC meetings across Hong Kong, displayed posters and banners at PRH estates, and distributed a Tenancy Abuse Report Aerogramme to PRH households twice a year.

Rehousing those in need

During the year, the HA continued to offer rehousing assistance to individuals and families affected by clearances of squatter housing by the Lands Department and clearances of illegal rooftop structures by the Buildings Department. About 80 affected households were rehoused in 2014/15.

Subsidised Home Ownership

Subsidised home ownership is an essential rung in the housing ladder, often serving as the first step towards home ownership for low- to middle-income families. It also provides PRH tenants whose financial conditions have improved with the opportunity to embark on home ownership, freeing up their PRH units for other applicants.

The first batch of 2 160 new HOS flats is expected to be completed in 2016/17, and pre-sale was launched in December 2014. Also in mid-2014, the HA launched the sale of 85 HOS flats in Tin Lee Court, which was converted from a PRH block in Lung Tin Estate at Tai O, Lantau Island. All flats were sold by September. We expect to put up approximately 2 700 and 2 000 HOS flats for pre-sale in early 2016 and 2016/17 respectively.

In 2013, an interim scheme was introduced to allow 5 000 eligible White Form applicants to purchase flats without premium paid in the HOS Secondary Market. The first round of this scheme was completed in April 2015, with over 2 400 White Form applicants achieving home ownership through the scheme. The HA has decided to implement one more round of the interim scheme in the second half of 2015 with a quota of 2 500, after which a comprehensive review of the scheme will be conducted.

Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme

In his 2015 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed to the HA that suitable flats should be identified among PRH developments under construction for sale to Green Form applicants (mainly sitting PRH tenants and PRH applicants who have passed the detailed eligibility vetting and are due for flat allocation in about a year's time) in the form of a pilot scheme, with prices set at a level lower than those of HOS flats. This proposal is in line with the LTHS's general direction of expanding the forms of subsidised home ownership. Apart from helping Green Form applicants achieve home ownership, the scheme will release PRH units for families awaiting PRH allocation. The implementation details for the scheme were in the process of being formulated as at end March 2015.



■ An HOS sale exhibition on Tin Lee Court held at the HA Customer Service Centre.