

Minutes of the 10th Meeting of the Eastern District Council

Date : 26 September 2017 (Tuesday)
Time : 2:30 pm
Venue : Eastern District Council Conference Room

| <u>Present</u> | <u>Time of Arrival</u> <u>(pm)</u> | <u>Time of Departure</u> <u>(pm)</u> |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Mr TING Kong-ho, Eddie | 3:35 | end of meeting |
| Mr WONG Chi-chung, Dominic | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr WONG Chun-sing, Patrick | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH | 2:30 | 4:30 |
| Mr KU Kwai-yiu | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr HO Ngai-kam, Stanley | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr LEE Chun-keung | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr LAM Sum-lim | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr LAM Kei-tung, George | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr SHIU Ka-fai | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr HUNG Lin-cham | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr CHUI Chi-kin | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr CHEUNG Kwok-cheong, Howard | 2:32 | end of meeting |
| Mr LEUNG Siu-sun, Patrick | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, David | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Ms LEUNG Wing-man, Bonnie | 2:40 | end of meeting |
| Mr HUI Lam-hing | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr HUI Ching-on | 2:30 | 3:00 |
| Mr KWOK Wai-keung, Aron, JP | 2:40 | 3:10 |
| Mr MAK Tak-ching | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr WONG Kin-pan, BBS, MH, JP (Chairman) | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr WONG Kin-hing | 3:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr YEUNG Sze-chun | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Dr CHIU Ka-yin, Andrew | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr CHIU Chi-keung, BBS (Vice-chairman) | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr LAU Hing-yeung | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Ms CHOY So-yuk, BBS, JP | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr CHENG Chi-sing | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr CHENG Tat-hung | 2:40 | 4:10 |
| Mr LAI Chi-keong, Joseph | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr NGAN Chun-lim, MH | 2:30 | end of meeting |
| Mr KUNG Pak-cheung, MH | 2:30 | end of meeting |

Absent with Apologies

Ms LI Chun-chau

Ms LAM Chui-lin, Alice, MH (absent with consent)
Mr LO Wing-kwan, Frankie, MH

In Regular Attendance (Government Representatives)

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Mr CHUI Cheuk-yin, Matthew | Acting District Officer (Eastern) Eastern District Office |
| Mr Rupert Timothy Alan DOVER | District Commander (Eastern District) Hong Kong Police Force |
| Ms POON Wai-kei | Assistant Police Community Relations Officer (Eastern District) Hong Kong Police Force |
| Mrs CHEUNG LO Pik-yuk, Helen | Chief Manager/Management (Hong Kong Island and Islands) Housing Department |
| Mr HO Kwan-hang, Albert | Chief Transport Officer/Hong Kong Transport Department |
| Mr WONG Wai-leung | Acting District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Eastern) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department |
| Ms TAM Shiu-mei | District Leisure Manager (Eastern) Leisure and Cultural Services Department |
| Mr LAU Wai-lun, Eddie | Senior Liaison Officer (1) Eastern District Office |
| Ms WONG Sze-man, Queenie | Senior Liaison Officer (2) Eastern District Office |
| Ms KONG Kei-kei, Hayley | Senior Executive Officer (District Management) Eastern District Office |

In Attendance by Invitation (Representatives from the Government and Organizations)

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Mr YING Yiu-hong, Stanley, JP | Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) Transport and Housing Bureau |
| Ms LO Wing-ye, Alice | Head (Central Support Unit) Housing Department |
| Miss CHAN Wai-lin, Rose | Senior Housing Manager/ Hong Kong Island and Islands Housing Department |

Secretary

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Miss WAH Pui-ye, Vivian | Senior Executive Officer (District Council) Eastern District Office |
|-------------------------|--|

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and government representatives to the meeting, particularly Mr Stanley YING, JP, Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB), Mrs Helen CHEUNG, Chief Manager/Management (Hong Kong Island and Islands), Ms Alice LO, Head of Central Support Unit and Miss Rose CHAN, Senior Housing Manager/Hong Kong Island and Islands of the Housing Department (HD). He also welcomed Mr WONG Wai-leung, Acting District Environmental Hygiene Superintendent (Eastern) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Ms TAM Shiu-mei, District Leisure Manager (Eastern) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

2. The Chairman reminded Councillors to declare interests where necessary in accordance with Section 48 of the Standing Orders of the EDC.

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the Ninth Eastern District Council Meeting

3. The minutes were confirmed without amendments.

II. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) to Meet Eastern District Council Members

4. Mr Stanley YING, JP, Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing), thanked Councillors for their ongoing support for public housing development in the district and their valuable advice on housing policy and development. He also briefed Councillors on the department's major work as follows:

(a) **Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) and Supply of Land for Housing Development**

In light of the housing supply-demand imbalance in Hong Kong, the Government in 2014 promulgated the LTHS with the adoption of supply-led and flexible principles. Long-term housing demand projection was updated annually to present a rolling ten-year housing supply target so as to capture social, economic and population changes over time. According to the latest LTHS projection updated in December 2016, the housing supply target from 2017-18 to 2026-27 was about 460 000 units with the public/private split maintained at 60:40, i.e. the public housing supply target was 280 000 units, comprising 200 000 public rental housing (PRH) units and 80 000 subsidised sale flats.

Besides, the Chief Executive had established the Task Force on Land Supply to review land supply options including land for residential housing to assist the Government in formulating the overall land supply strategy.

(b) **Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH)**

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) had launched the first GSH pilot project King Tai Court (with 857 flats) in San Po Kong in October 2016 to help Green Formers buy their own homes and vacate their PRH units for families awaiting PRH allocation. This "one-for-one" arrangement would not reduce the supply of

Action

PRH. The GSH was a response to the general direction of the LTHS of expanding the forms of subsidised home ownership to further reinforce the housing ladder. The HA would conduct a review on the effectiveness of the GSH Pilot Scheme and study whether to regularise the GSH.

(c) **Interim Scheme to Extend the Home Ownership Scheme Secondary Market to White Form Buyers (Interim Scheme)**

To address the home ownership aspirations of low- and middle-income households, the HA had launched the first and second rounds of the Interim Scheme in 2013 and 2015 respectively to allow White Form applicants to purchase subsidised sale flats without payment of premium in the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) secondary market. The two rounds of the Interim Scheme had ended in May 2017 and the HA would conduct a comprehensive review to study whether to regularise the Scheme.

(d) **Effective Use of PRH Resources**

To protect the precious public housing resources and ensure more effective use of the resources, the HA was committed to combating tenancy abuses. The HA examined from time to time ways to better utilise the existing PRH resources to ensure that such resources would be focused on those with more pressing housing needs and to facilitate the fair implementation of the relevant policies. In this regard, the HA's Subsidised Housing Committee had conducted a review on the relevant policies from late 2016 to early 2017, including endorsing the revised Well-off Tenants Policies (WTP) which would be implemented in the declaration cycle in October this year.

(e) **Redevelopment of Public Housing Estates**

The Government had established the Steering Committee on Long Term Housing Strategy and conducted a public consultation in 2012. The LTHS promulgated in December 2014 had considered the redevelopment of public housing estates and laid down the relevant framework. While redevelopment might increase PRH supply in the long term, it would in the short term reduce PRH stock available for allocation to people on the waiting list as units had to be reserved for households affected by redevelopment. The net gain in flat supply from redevelopment would take a long time to realise, and very often towards the latter, if not the last, phase of the redevelopment. Hence, redevelopment of old housing estates could at best serve as a supplementary source of PRH supply. Any massive redevelopment programme would only result in freezing a large number of PRH units that might otherwise be allocated to applicants with pressing needs, given the current high demand for PRH.

(f) **Private Market Management Measures**

As regards the private market, the Government had introduced a series of demand-side management measures to accord priority to the home ownership for self-use needs of Hong Kong permanent residents and stabilise the housing market.

(g) **Ancillary Facilities**

The HA adopted the principle of maximising site development potential to provide as many housing units in the shortest time as possible. Under feasible circumstances, the HA would do its best to satisfy the requirements of the

Action

Government, the relevant planning guidelines and the local demands to provide non-residential facilities in individual developments such as fresh markets, retail shops, ward offices, social welfare facilities, etc. Regarding the change or retrofitting of non-residential facilities, such as bus kiosks in existing PRH estates, the HA would strive to work in tandem with the Government and taking into account the actual situations in the estates. Consent from other owners and advice from Estate Management Advisory Committees would be sought if necessary.

5. 24 Councillors expressed their views with enquiries as summarised below:

- (a) Mr Joseph LAI expressed concern about the problem arising from the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS). Taking Fung Wah Estate as an example, he said that its owners' corporation (OC) had engaged a property management company to manage the estate. The HA, as one of the owners of the TPS estate, only appointed a HD representative to participate in the OC's work which often resulted in ineffective handling of issues such as leakage and maintenance of public space. The HA was the receiver of the rent of the PRH units while the management of the estate was under the purview of the property management company concerned. The blurred division of powers and responsibilities in handling maintenance work between the HA and the property management company had created many problems. He also called for the redevelopment of the aging Hing Wah (II) Estate as soon as possible given its asbestos problem and dilapidated conditions.
- (b) Mr HUI Lam-hing said that a young person, who applied for a PRH flat for some nine years without success, had reflected the long waiting time for allocation of a PRH flat. He hoped the HD would offer more assistance to young people. Besides, there had been cases where PRH applicants had to queue afresh upon addition of new family members. He hoped the HD would consider improving the system.
- (c) Mr Aron KWOK said that the revised WTP would come into effect this October. Nevertheless, without sufficient subsidised housing or other means to address the housing needs of those vacating their PRH units, he opined that the hasty implementation of the policy would not be prudent. He hoped the HD would implement support measures to facilitate the relevant households' surrender of their units. He also voiced concern about the pricing of subsidised housing as the price of HOS housing had gone beyond the affordability of buyers with soaring property prices. He hoped the HD could provide more housing ladder and ensure a reasonable pricing for subsidised housing that tied in with the affordability of buyers to help more people have their own homes.
- (d) Mr MAK Tak-ching enquired whether the housing policy of Hong Kong was still private-housing-led while public housing was only a transitional arrangement. Those who could not afford their own homes could only rent a place or even live in "capsule-like" accommodation. He opined that the commercialisation of land would worsen the gap between the rich and the poor as well as create social division. Besides, he expressed concern about the recent accident of a bus crashing onto a pavement and causing multiple

Action

casualties. He hoped the Permanent Secretary could help relay his concern about the remuneration of workers in bus companies and the transportation industry. He hoped a balance could be achieved between reasonable wages and working hours.

- (e) Dr Andrew CHIU said that his party had proposed construction of assembly houses by the Government, which involved shorter construction time and lower costs. This could help provide accommodation for those awaiting allocation of PRH units. He hoped the Government could proactively consider providing temporary assembly houses as transitional housing. He supplemented that from the experiences of the Netherlands and Britain, assembly houses could be operated by social enterprises or non-governmental organisations. He also mentioned that due to tightened mortgages, the 80% mortgage cap on properties priced below \$6 million rendered it difficult for young people to afford the down payments. He hoped the Government would consider introducing policies to help young people with their housing needs.
- (f) Mr LAU Hing-yeung said that with the aging PRH resident population, he hoped the Government would allocate designated resources for the retrofitting of escalators and barrier-free access within the estates under the purview of the HD, especially at those hillside housing estates. Furthermore, he expressed concern about the Link REIT's selling of shopping centres in PRH estates. Taking Hing Man Estate as an example, he opined that the Government had difficulty to interfere with the operation of the shopping centre after the property had been sold to a private owner. There were also recent news that the Link REIT was planning on a large-scale sale of its existing properties. He commented that the HA had its responsibility in this matter and enquired whether the HD would offer any assistance.
- (g) Mr LAM Sum-lim expressed concern about the long waiting time for PRH applicants upon addition of new members. He added that HD staff did not offer detailed explanation to the PRH applicants and hoped the HD could review the arrangement. Furthermore, the waiting time of young people for single-person PRH units was often more than ten years. He suggested that the Government could consider expanding the Youth Hostel Scheme to provide young people with their own living space and allow them to save up for their future development as well as to establish a ladder for upward housing mobility. He also proposed that the Government could introduce restrictions such as a cap on lease period to speed up the turnover of the hostels.
- (h) Mr SHIU Ka-fai said that the average waiting time for PRH applicants was 4.7 years. He opined that the HD needed a multi-pronged approach to tackle the problem. While the WTP could be controversial, he considered that there was a need for WTP as people living in subdivided units had more urgent housing needs than families with a monthly income of over \$130,000. He added that the GSH provided more affordable units and speeded up the turnover of PRH flats; the Interim Scheme, which allowed applicants to purchase flats in the HOS secondary market, could help PRH tenants buy their own homes and vacate their units for more needy households. As for large-scale redevelopment of old PRH estates, it might prolong the average waiting time of

Action

the PRH applicants and there was also the issue of provision of units for local housing of thousands of affected household. He suggested the Government could consider renovation arrangements such as enhancement of structural safety and so on.

- (i) Mr CHUI Chi-kin pointed out that the housing problem of Hong Kong had not improved for years. At present, the number of PRH applicants had reached 300 000 with an average waiting time of 4.7 years. On the other hand, private property prices were so high that few could afford them. The Government was lacking in transparency in its land supply and housing policies, say, prolonged time taken in studying brownfield development. He also pointed out that the WTP was confusing. Many residents had accumulated wealth that might exceed the asset limit. For example, the value of the taxi licences owned by some taxi drivers would have exceeded the asset limit. The policy would also force young people who lived with their parents to move out of the PRH units which was against the Government's policy of fostering transgenerational harmony. Regarding the Office of the Ombudsman (OFOMB)'s follow-up of the indefinite lease of a Councillor's ward office, the OFOMB had raised in July 2015 the issue of "inheritance of tenancy" to the HD. The HD, however, had not yet put forward specific suggestions despite that the relevant review had been underway for nearly two years. The OFOMB had described the HD as "making zero progress" and he hoped the Permanent Secretary could urge the HD to improve the mechanism as soon as possible.
- (j) Mr Howard CHEUNG expressed concern about the infrequent services of mini-buses serving Nam Fung Sun Chuen, resulting in insufficient services for the elders living there. Although he had followed up the issue with the Transport Department (TD), the TD responded that the mini-bus operator had failed to hire sufficient drivers which affected the service frequency. He hoped the HD could relay the problem to the TD for follow-up on improving the mini-bus service concerned so as to respond to the needs of the elders in the area.
- (k) Mr Patrick LEUNG enquired whether the Government would change the direction of housing policy and regard housing as a necessity for the public instead of a commodity. He also said the TPS had created much conflict. The Government, as the landlord, was not much involved. He considered that the Government should provide more PRH units for the needy and hoped the Government would consider redeveloping old PRH estates apart from finding more land for construction of new estates. After all, the maintenance costs for these old estates were high. Redevelopment could provide more housing units for those in need. He also enquired about the progress on following up the lead in drinking water incidents in PRH estates.
- (l) Mr David LEUNG declared interest as a HOS resident. Under the existing policy, a premium had to be paid upon sale of a HOS unit which implied that HA was the landlord. On the one hand, the HA recovered the premium. On the other hand, the expenditure of large-scale renovations or works was borne by the HOS owners. He hoped the HA would review its HOS policy and take

Action

up part of the responsibilities in the HOS lease terms in future.

- (m) Ms Bonnie LEUNG supported the implementation of WTP to ensure the best use of PRH resources. She said that irrespective of the implementation of WTP or tackling of illegal subdivided units, the extent and timing of the relevant policies to be implemented had to tie in with the supply of subsidised housing. With the high private property prices, if the WTP was implemented without the accompanying supply of subsidised housing, the PRH “well-off tenants” could hardly afford the house price and the social conflict would be aggravated. She also enquired whether there had been any discussion of brownfield development between the THB and the Development Bureau and the current progress. Separately, the earlier bus accident had resulted in public concern on the problem of insufficient rest time for professional drivers. The mini-bus operator serving Kornhill also faced a problem of insufficient drivers. He hoped the Permanent Secretary could relay to the TD to review and improve the relevant situation as soon as possible.
- (n) Ms CHOY So-yuk suggested that the Government could consider adopting a multi-pronged approach to increase land supply. She suggested increasing land supply by resumption of private land within country parks and an increase of plot ratios to release more land. The Government could consider increasing the plot ratios of land in the New Territories such as raising the plot ratios of some areas from 0.4 to 0.8 or 1. The Government could also introduce assembly houses or container houses such as constructing transitional housing on unused land in the New Territories owned by private developers. She also suggested expediting the relevant legislation process to ease the housing problem.
- (o) Mr Stanley HO opined that the PRH resources should be used effectively. He cited a case where an elder voluntarily handed over the PRH flat for exchange of a smaller unit after the elder’s children bought their homes. He suggested that the department could consider offering incentives for those vacating larger units for allocation to other needy families such as provision of a newly-furnished small unit in the same area. He also voiced concern about transportation issues. The TD and bus operators had often failed to follow up on problems properly. For instance, he had urged for an increase in the service frequency of Route No.118P for years but in spite of the profits, the bus operator did not make any improvement. He hoped that the above views could be relayed to the TD.
- (p) Mr KU Kwai-yiu said that a 90-odd-year-old elder in his constituency had yet to be allocated a PRH unit after applying for four-odd years. Despite the tight supply, he hoped the HD could consider the circumstances of the elder’s case and make allocation arrangement as soon as possible. He pointed out that under the TPS, the HA had handed over the maintenance work to the OCs which created many problems. He hoped the HD could increase the power of the HA in the OCs. He also called for a halt of the sale of PRH flats before formulation of appropriate long-term policies. He was also concerned about the quality of the maintenance contractors engaged by the HD. Some of the works were unsatisfactory and he hoped the HD could step up monitoring.

Action

- (q) Mr WONG Kwok-hing welcomed the review and formulation of long-term housing strategy by the last-term Government. He also welcomed the HD's decision to convert the last industrial building in Chai Wan for residential use. He was also pleased that the Government's approach in proactively resolving the housing problem at the policy level. He suggested that a consolidated review of the WTP and the TPS be conducted. He opined that the WTP and the TPS caused a problem of more ageing PRH tenants. With the payment of double rent, young and productive members might leave the PRH. Meanwhile, the "well-off tenants" might not afford to rent or buy private properties. As for the waiting time for PRH applicants, he opined that the proposal of using container houses as transitional arrangement was of limited use. He hoped the Government would consider measures such as rent control for subdivided units and provision of rent assistance at the same time.
- (r) Mr Patrick WONG said that according to the latest figures released in August, there had been 277 800 PRH applications as at end of June and the average waiting time was 4.7 years, which was a historical high. It reflected that the high property prices of the private sector had in turn created keen demands for PRH units, a situation which the Secretary for Transport and Housing also deemed to be unsatisfactory. Although land supply had been increased by the last-term Government, construction of residential housing took four to five years to complete. With such units yet to be completed, the housing supply could not meet the demand. He opined that the same reasons could also continue to apply for the current term Government. He opined that if the target of providing the first flat offer to eligible PRH applications within three years could not be realised, the Government should inform the public truthfully.
- (s) Mr Dominic WONG said that there was a consensus on the need to address the housing problem. According to his understanding, some of the PRH units were currently reserved for contingency use. He suggested that consideration could be given to implementing other arrangement such as the establishment of a fund for renting hotel or other accommodations so that these PRH units could be released for allocation and helped reduce the waiting time for the PRH applications. Furthermore, he hoped the Government would establish a big data analytics platform to facilitate the public's access to the overall situation in land supply and the development constraints, etc. This would be useful for long-term development of housing policies.
- (t) Mr CHENG Tat-hung said that in past five years, apart from infill development, the Government lacked long-term planning to solve the housing problem. The "Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People" policy did not make those flats affordable to the general society. He enquired whether there would be other measures such as rent control or vacant property tax to suppress the high property prices and boost the housing supply. He said that young people still could not afford their own homes if the Government could not solve the problem of high property prices. As regards the lead in drinking water incidents in PRH estates, he pointed out that the penalty mechanism for the contractors was inadequate as they were allowed to bid tenders again.

Action

- (u) Mr KUNG Pak-cheung opined that the Government should carefully study any proposed introduction of assembly houses. Owing to the lukewarm demand, only 70% of the units of the former Chai Wan Factory Estate, which had been converted into a PRH estate, were allocated to PRH applicants and the remaining units were allocated to civil servants. The environmental constraints and weather, etc of Hong Kong was not the same as other countries. For example, the assembly houses needed ample air-conditioning under Hong Kong's hot weather and the expected high air-conditioning expenses might dampen the demand for the assembly houses. As regards the retrofitting of lifts and escalators in old PRH estates, he said that escalators might not be suitable for the elderly. He hoped the HD could consider the retrofitting of lifts as far as possible.
- (v) Mr YEUNG Sze-chun welcomed that the Government was concerned about the housing problem of young people. Their incomes exceeded the cap for applying PRH but were not sufficient to afford private properties. The "Starter Homes" scheme, which was under consideration by the Government, could help young people purchase their own homes, and he considered that transfer restrictions could be imposed. He also enquired the relevant bureau's way forward in tackling the brownfield issue which had been under discussion for a long time, considering the complex issues involved and the traditional rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants as prescribed in the Basic Law. He supported the vacant property tax which could increase housing supply and provide resources to help solve the housing problem. He opined that housing and transportation were both important social issues. If free market mechanism could not provide an effective solution, the bureau should have a responsibility to interfere as appropriate.
- (w) The Vice-chairman supported the Government's proposal to help first-timers purchase their own homes with suitable restrictions such as selling back to the Government only. Taking the GSH as an example, he said that if such units could be transferred freely in the market, it would only fuel property speculation. Hence, restrictions under the new scheme were necessary to curb the escalation of the property prices. He also hoped that the bureau could review the policy on dog keeping in PRH estates. Many PRH households kept dogs in their units and caused nuisances and complaints from their neighbours. He opined that the Government should review the restrictions on keeping dogs in PRH estates.
- (x) The Chairman said that to solve the housing problem, the Government should address the fundamentals of increasing land supply with implementation of appropriate Government policies. While the Government might have been restricted by existing land lease terms with regard to the land use, a proactive government should face and handle the issue squarely. Otherwise, the long waiting time for the PRH applicants could not be reduced. Furthermore, the old PRH sites at A Kung Ngam in Eastern District had become a new source of housing supply after redevelopment. He suggested that the Government could conduct a comprehensive review on redevelopment of old PRH estates.

Action

6. Mr Stanley YING, JP, Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) thanked Councillors for their concern on housing issues and their valuable views. He responded to the enquiries of Councillors as follows:

- (a) There had been discussions on whether to re-launch TPS during the LTHS public consultation. The co-existence of flat owners and PRH tenants in TPS estates had created much problem in estate management since the launch of TPS and it was considered not advisable to re-launch the TPS. Similar to the HOS, the owners of the TPS units had to undertake the management and maintenance works according to the requirements of relevant laws. The HA would only continue the sale of the unsold PRH units in the existing 39 TPS estates.
- (b) Apart from increasing PRH supply, the LTHS also pointed out a need for rational use of PRH resources. To facilitate the better use of PRH resources, the HA had put in place incentives in its under-occupation household policy such as the provision of Domestic Removal Allowance for those opted for relocation to smaller units.
- (c) As regards the waiting time for PRH applicants, the HA's target was to provide the first flat offer to general applicants (i.e. family and elderly one-person applicants) at around three years on average. The average waiting time target was not applicable to non-elderly one-person applicants under the Quota and Points System. The current figure at 4.7 years was an average waiting time, with some applicants having waited for less than 4.7 years before being allocated the first PRH flats and some having waited for longer than 4.7 years. The waiting time could vary having regard to the circumstances. For example, it might take longer waiting time for cases where the applicants' number of family members exceeded the allocation standard of newly-built PRH units or the applicants chose for a flat located at urban or extended urban areas.
- (d) On the concern about single-block PRH buildings, the HA would assess each development's impacts on traffic, environment, air ventilation, etc so as to provide public housing in a prudent, holistic and cost-effective manner in response to the housing needs of PRH applicants.
- (e) Regarding some Councillors' concern about the application for addition of family members, it did not involve queuing afresh, though the waiting time might be affected by the supply of available units meeting the applicants' family size following a change in the number of family members and the applicants' choice of location, etc. As regards the specific case of the elder as mentioned by a Councillor, the department would separately follow up the case.
- (f) Regarding the details of the revised WTP, the HD has been committed to enhancing the transparency. Apart from providing information on the department's website, the HD also hoped to organise roving staff talks in PRH estates so that the residents could have a better understanding of the relevant arrangement. Those who received the Notices-To-Quit under the revised

Action

WTP could choose to purchase HOS flats by Green Form where a certain proportion of flats would be reserved for Green Formers during the sale. On the other hand, if HA decided to regularise the GSH, PRH tenants eligible for using Green Form could purchase the GSH units.

- (g) Under the framework laid down in the LTHS, given the current keen demand for public housing, large-scale redevelopment of old PRH estates would only result in freezing a large amount of PRH units that might otherwise be allocated to needy households and was not advisable. Hence, there was no plan nor a timetable for large-scale redevelopment at present.
- (h) The HOS flats constructed by the HA adopted a “no-frills” design with lower market value than private properties. Further to this lower market value, discounts would be provided by the HA to meet the affordability of the White or Green Formers. The prices of HOS flats were not just pegged to market value alone. On the other hand, second-hand HOS flats could be sold in the market subject to the owners’ payment of a premium in return of the subsidy provided by the Government upon purchase of these flats. The ownership of the flats vested with the owners prior to and upon payment of the premium.
- (i) To address the overheated property market in recent years, the Government had introduced several rounds of demand-side management measures, including various stamp duties to tackle short-term speculative activities as well as curbing external demands and reducing investment demands. The Government had also taken measures to prevent local investors from avoiding payment of the new residential stamp duty through acquiring multiple residential properties under a single instrument. As the vacancy rate of residential properties in Hong Kong was less than 5%, the suggestion on introducing vacant property tax may not be an effective measure for increasing the housing supply.
- (j) Both the LTHS and the HA appreciated the housing aspirations of young people. Nevertheless, there were other groups in the society with pressing housing needs. The policy of the HA all along was to give priority to elderly and family applicants. Regarding the Youth Hostel Scheme under the Home Affairs Bureau, there were several projects currently underway. The Government would listen to different opinions in the community with an open mind on assembly houses and the Community Housing Movement launched by the Council of Social Service, etc.
- (k) On the allocation of premises for use as ward offices, the HD had reviewed the relevant arrangement following the Ombudsman’s suggestion on improving the mechanism. Subsequent consultation was then made with relevant departments such as the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the Legislative and District Councillors. The HD would announce the arrangement upon completion of the review.
- (l) To facilitate access for the elderly and disabled, the HA had been implementing plans to install barrier-free facilities such as installing lifts for old six-storey PRH blocks without lifts, and replacing old lifts or installing escalators at

Action

appropriate estate locations.

- (m) Regarding the asbestos problem of Hing Wah (II) Estate, the HD had conducted comprehensive inspections at several old PRH estates with similar issue last year. The HD had also reviewed the relevant monitoring and management system in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Department and the Labour Department to ensure the asbestos would not cause any impact to the residents.
- (n) After the incident of excess lead found in drinking water in 2015, the Water Supplies Department had implemented various new measures including strengthening the regulatory control of plumbing materials to check the internal plumbing system of the buildings to safeguard drinking water quality. On the other hand, the contractors under the HA would continue to replace the substandard water pipes at the eleven PRH estates affected by the incidents. All the replacement works at the public space in the affected PRH estates had been completed in the second quarter of this year. The replacement works within PRH flats had also commenced from April this year and about 20% of which had been completed. The HD would continue to supervise the quality and progress of the replacement works and closely liaise with the Water Authority and contractors to minimise the inconvenience caused to the residents, and ensure the speedy completion of the works.
- (o) Interim housing (IHs) was for contingency use. Currently, IHs under HA were located at Po Tin and Shek Lei respectively. The HA had also converted some of the IH units in Po Tin into PRH units to meet the keen demand for public housing.
- (p) Wah Ha Estate was converted from Chai Wan Factory Estate and had been rated as a Grade 2 historic building by the Antiquities and Monuments Office. In light of the above, there were certain restrictions on the renovation works that could be carried out at the units and some PRH applicants did not accept the allocation as a result. At present, 98% of its units were occupied and all of the five shops were rented out.
- (q) Regarding the policy of dog keeping in PRH estates, some called for a relaxation and some opined that allowing keeping of dogs in PRH units would create various problems. To maintain a balance under the existing policy, tenants were only allowed to keep dogs under specific circumstances.
- (r) The crux of insufficient housing supply lies with the inadequate supply of land. The Government had established the Task Force on Land Supply with a focus on studying and exploring the sources of land supply including brownfield sites, country parks, etc. and to come up with a framework recommending enhancement to the overall land supply strategy.
- (s) The HD would relay the issues and views related to transport matter to the relevant department for follow-up.

7. The Chairman thanked Mr Stanley YING, JP, Permanent Secretary for Transport and

Action

Housing (Housing) and his colleagues for attending the meeting. He also invited them to note Councillors' views.

(Post-meeting note: After the meeting, the HD had relayed the issues and views related to transport matter to the TD for follow-up.)

III. Information Items

Chairman's Report on the Discussion Items of the Regular Meeting

8. The Chairman reported that the discussion items of the regular meeting held in July 2017 had been set out in the report of Chairman/Vice-chairman for Councillors' reference. Among others, the number of elected seats for the sixth-term District Councils was presented at the meeting, and there would be no change to the number of elected seats for the EDC. Besides, effective from the 2017/18 school year, the Education Bureau (EDB) and the HAB jointly implemented the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme). Participating public sector schools would open up their facilities, such as school halls, for approved sports associations to hold sports activities on consecutive weekends or school holidays during the designated period.

9. Three Councillors expressed their views with enquiries as summarised below:

- (a) Mr Eddie TING enquired about the schedule and details of the Scheme.
- (b) Dr Andrew CHIU enquired the party to be held responsible for procuring insurance to cover liabilities arising from accidents at the participating school venues. He hoped the bureaux would consider appropriate administrative arrangements.
- (c) Mr CHUI Chi-kin welcomed the Scheme and enquired whether the schools concerned would receive subsidies. He also requested the list of participating schools.

10. The Chairman responded that 13 schools of Eastern District had expressed the intention to participate in the Scheme to date. Applications from interested sports associations and local sports clubs had to be confirmed and approved by the HAB. For specific details of the Scheme, Councillors could refer to the announcement promulgated by relevant bureaux.

11. The regular meeting of October 2017 was scheduled on 19 October. Councillors could send their enquiries or views to the Chairman or the Vice-chairman for relaying at the regular meeting to be held in October 2017.

IV. Financial Position of Eastern District Council Funds

(EDC Paper No. 45/17)

12. The Secretary briefed the meeting on Paper No. 45/17.

13. Dr Andrew CHIU enquired about the over-commitment of funds under the Community Involvement Programme. The Secretary replied that since the actual spending

Action

of some projects could be lower than the approved amount, to make better use of resources, the budget would allow over-commitment of funds with the total approved funding exceeding the allocation in a particular financial year.

14. Councillors noted the financial position of the above funds.

V. Report on the Tenth Meeting of District Facilities Management Committee (EDC Paper No. 46/17)

15. Councillors noted the above report and endorsed the funding applications under items IV and X in the paper.

VI. Report on the Ninth Meeting of Culture, Leisure, Community Building and Services Committee (EDC Paper No. 47/17)

16. Councillors noted the above report.

VII. Report on the Ninth Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee (EDC Paper No. 48/17)

17. Councillors noted the above report.

VIII. Report on the Tenth Meeting of Food, Environment and Hygiene Committee (EDC Paper No. 49/17)

18. Councillors noted the above report.

IX. Report on the Ninth Meeting of Planning, Works and Housing Committee (EDC Paper No. 50/17)

19. Councillors noted the above report.

X. Report on the Ninth Meeting of Vetting Committee (EDC Paper No. 51/17)

20. Councillors noted the above report.

XI. Report on the Ninth Meeting of Task Group on Festival Celebrations (EDC Paper No. 52/17)

21. Councillors noted the above report.

XII. Report on the Seventh Meeting of Task Group on Publicity about the Work of Eastern District Council
(EDC Paper No. 53/17)

22. Councillors noted the above report.

XIII. Report on the 222nd Meeting of the Eastern District Management Committee
(EDC Paper No. 54/17)

23. Councillors noted the above report and endorsed the details and timetable of the inter-departmental clearance operation set out at the Annex of the paper to remove the illegal structures erected by street sleepers on the footbridge at Tong Shui Road, North Point. Councillors also noted that an inter-departmental clearance operation would be conducted by the relevant departments in the second half of November 2017 if the above illegal structures were not removed before expiry of the notice period. To balance the views and interests of the community and the welfare needs of the street sleepers, the relevant departments would not, at this stage, remove the relevant structures by force if there were uncooperative street sleepers who refused to leave the structures after repeated advice to avoid unnecessary conflicts and to cause disturbances of the peace in the community. The relevant departments would arrange for corresponding follow-up subject to the outcome of the inter-departmental operation.

(Post-meeting note: After discussion with the relevant departments, the Lands Department had posted notices pursuant to the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 28) on 23 October 2017, requiring the occupiers on the footbridge at Tong Shui Road, North Point to cease the occupation of the government site before 23 November.)

XIV. Any Other Business

(A) Report on Telephone Deception Cases in Eastern District

24. The Chairman said that in light of the rise of telephone deception cases with varied modus operandi in recent years, he had invited the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to report on the number and trend of telephone deception cases, especially the number of deception cases in Eastern District. Mr Rupert DOVER, District Commander (Eastern District) of the HKPF, reported on the number of deception cases in Eastern District and the relevant work of the HKPF. Among others, the HKPF had established the Anti-deception Coordination Centre and set up a 24-hour hotline as well as held anti-scam seminars for students of tertiary institutions, with specific focus on students from outside Hong Kong.

25. Dr Andrew CHIU thanked the District Commander (Eastern District) and police officers for stepping up anti-telephone deception publicity and education efforts in the district to raise the alertness of the public to the relevant scams.

26. The Chairman thanked Mr Rupert DOVER, District Commander (Eastern District) of the HKPF for his report.

Action

(B) Follow-up Items of Meeting between Legislative Councillors and Eastern District Councillors on 14 July 2017

27. The Chairman said that a meeting had been held between Legislative Councillors and Eastern District Councillors on 14 July 2017. The parties had discussed the “retrofitting of barrier-free access facilities” at the meeting. The Legislative Council Secretariat had on 4 August invited the EDC to offer views on the locations of retrofitting barrier-free access facilities and rank their priorities.

28. The Chairman asked Councillors to submit the suggested locations for the retrofitting of barrier-free access facilities to the Secretariat after the meeting. The matter would be followed up at the Traffic and Transport Committee meeting to be held on 21 November.

(C) Guidelines on Declaration of Interests

29. The Chairman said that in Chapter 4 “Provision of district council funds for community involvement projects” of the Director of Audit’s Report No. 68, it was suggested that the HAD should provide guidelines with principles of what constituted “other declarable interests” to District Councillors or committee members as appropriate to facilitate the reporting of “other declarable interests”. The HAD had formulated such guidelines after consultation with the Independent Commission Against Corruption, and suggested the good practice on declaring interests in relation to vetting of applications for reference of the DCs. The relevant guidelines and good practice were at Tabled Documents (1) and (2) respectively.

30. The Chairman said that with regard to the guidelines and arrangements for declaration of interests issued by the HAD, the relevant amendments to the EDC Standing Orders and the arrangement on declaration of interests would be considered during the annual review of the Guidelines on the Eastern District Community Involvement Project Subsidy Scheme in early 2018 in line with the existing practice. Before the outcome of the review, the EDC would continue to follow the existing three-tier declaration of interests in approving funding for community involvement projects. After the review, the Secretariat would invite Councillors and Committee Members to update their declarations in “Type 8 - Other Declarable Interests” in the Registration Form on Personal Interests in accordance with the revised Guidelines.

(D) Duty Visit related to DC Work

31. The Chairman said that the working group on duty visit had discussed the duty visit arrangements of the EDC on 29 August 2017. Preliminary suggestions on the visits included Qingdao, or Qingdao and Dalian. The duty visit was expected to take place in the first half or August of 2018. According to preliminary estimates, the expenses of visiting two locations might exceed the \$10,000 provision for each Councillor by the HAD. He invited Councillors’ views on whether to visit Qingdao, or two locations.

32. Three Councillors expressed their views with enquiries as summarised below:

- (a) Mr NGAN Chun-lim said that if the duty visit covered both Dalian and Qingdao, there might be difficulties on transportation and visits arrangements since the two cities were located far apart with few scheduled flights. He opined that consideration might be given to visiting Qingdao and its

Action

peripheries.

- (b) Mr KU Kwai-yiu said that the main objective of the duty visit should target at experience exchange and conduct of site visits. He suggested to visit the green or community facilities.
- (c) Dr Andrew CHIU enquired whether the guidelines had specified that the individual cap at \$10,000 should not be exceeded and the arrangement in case the budget exceeded the cap.

33. The Chairman responded that some preliminary city administration areas to be studied might include flood prevention measures of coastal cities and visits to local facilities. The Secretary added that it was stated in the guidelines that the expenses incurred in duty visits were capped at \$10,000 for each District Councillor. The HAD could be consulted on specific matter not set out in the Guidelines as and when necessary. The Chairman concluded that the working group on duty visit would further discuss on details of the visit, having regard to factors such as budget. The draft programme would later be submitted for EDC's consideration. He welcomed Councillors to reflect their views to the working group members.

XV. Date of the Next Meeting

34. The meeting ended at 5:00 pm. The 11th EDC meeting would be held at 2:30 pm on 28 November 2017 (Tuesday).

Eastern District Council Secretariat
November 2017