

THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Finance Committee

Leasing of Premises in Private Sector for Housing Information Centre

PURPOSE

To seek Members' approval to negotiate and conclude leasing private premises in Hong Kong East district for setting up of an Housing Information Centre (HIC) in 1999 as pledged in the 1998 Policy Address.

BACKGROUND

2. The HIC Scheme, first introduced in September 1992, provides comprehensive advisory services to the residents affected by private redevelopment and applicants applying for public rental housing and Home Ownership Scheme flats as well as joining the Home Purchase Loan Scheme. In view of the growing popularity of the services rendered by HICs, the Department has set up six HICs in the territory as shown at **Annex A**.

SERVICES PROVIDED

3. Details of the services currently provided by the HICs are listed at **Annex B**.

4. The enquiry service has been well received by the public. From April 1998 to January 1999, the average number of enquiries handled by each HIC was 3,380 per month, representing an increase of 5.6% over the previous year. To enhance services to the public, the Hung Hom and Sham Shui Po HICs have extended the working hours from 5:30p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Mondays while the Hong Kong West HIC on Wednesdays. In addition, the outreaching staff of HICs provide proactive service to encourage the lodgers of old tenements and

bedspace apartments to register on the Waiting List. For the past ten months, we have visited 2,300 households.

5. Oaths service relating to public housing matters provided at all HICs has also proved to be popular. A total of 3,519 oaths were administered in the past ten months.

6. As an on-going Management Enhancement Programme initiative, amendments of address, telephone number, change of choice of districts and replacement of lost registration card on the Waiting List can also be handled at HICs since May 1998.

PROPOSED EXPANSION

7. In line with the Government's pledge, we propose to set up an HIC in Hong Kong East district in 1999/2000. Suitable ground floor premises of around 50M² to 60M² internal floor area in private building will be identified for the purpose.

8. The new Hong Kong East HIC will be manned by three Housing Officers and one contract general clerk. It will be fitted out with an interview booth, an Elderly Information Desk and three computer terminals. The fitting out cost including furniture and equipment is estimated to be around \$1M.

9. To facilitate prompt action on leasing arrangement, we propose that authority be delegated to Business Director/Allocation and Marketing to approve the leasing and fitting out of the premises subject to the following conditions –

- (a) the monthly rental for the centre does not exceed \$85,000 for a term of minimum 3 years;
- (b) the deposit does not exceed three months' rental;
- (c) an agency fee does not exceed one month's rental; and
- (d) fitting out cost including furniture and equipment for one centre does not exceed \$1M.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

10. Based on the Staff Cost Ready Reckoner 1998/99, the staff cost for three Housing Officers and one contract general clerk will be around \$1.4M per year for the new HIC, whereas the monthly rental is estimated to be not exceeding \$85,000 with a deposit of not more than three months' rental and an agency fee of one months rental. Other monthly expenses are estimated to be \$1,500 for management fee, \$1,300 for electricity and \$80 for water. The cost of fitting-out and provision of furniture/equipment is in the order of about \$1M. Funds are available in the Approved Budget 1999/2000 for this purpose.

PRESUMPTION

11. It is not thought that Member will object to the proposal in paragraph 9 above. If no objection or request for discussion is received by the Committees' Secretary **by noon on 3 June 1999**, Members' approval will be presumed and appropriate action taken.

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c.c. Members of the Rental Housing Committee (For Information)

File Ref. : HD(H)APP/H 4/7/5/7

Date : 20 May 1999

Annex A

Housing Information Centres

	Location	Opening Dates
Wanchai	G/F 163D Hennsey Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.	1 March 1995
Yaumatei	G/F, 446 Nathan Road, Yaumatei, Kowloon.	3 August 1995
Tsuen Wan	Tsuen Wan District Office, 1/F, Tsuen Wan Station Multi-storey Car Park Building, 174-208 Castle Peak Road, Tsuen Wan, N.T.	1 April 1994
Hung Hom	G/F, 32 Tak Man Street, Hung Hom, Kowloon.	5 June 1996
Shamshuipo	Shop C, G/F, Man Hoi Mansion, 80-82 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Shamshuipo, Kowloon.	11 July 1997
Hong Kong West	G/F, 520 Queen' Error! Bookmark not defined. s Road West, Shek Tong Tsui, Hong Kong.	26 October 1998

Annex B

SERVICES PROVIDED BY HOUSING INFORMATION CENTRES

I. Enquiry Service

- (a) To answer enquiries concerning public housing eligibility and application procedures;
- (b) To advise Waiting List applicants of the position of their applications;
- (c) To assist those applicants who wish to change their choice of locality in order to shorten the waiting time, to complete the requisite procedures;
- (d) To refer hardship cases to the Social Welfare Department to assess eligibility for comprehensive social security assistance and/or compassionate rehousing;
- (e) To assist clearerees affected by private redevelopment in seeking advice through the free Legal advice Scheme and the Rent Officer Scheme; and
- (f) To distribute information booklets concerning application for public rental housing and to publicize the services provided by the Department.

II. Outreaching Service

- (a) To visit occupants affected by private redevelopment and lodgers in bedspace apartments to encourage and assist them to apply for public housing;
- (b) To advise the above mentioned residents/lodgers, who were already on the General Waiting List, of their state of play regarding their applications;
- (c) To organize visits to the Housing for Senior Citizens in public housing estates; and
- (d) To liaise with residents' **Error! Bookmark not defined.** group, pressure groups and other Government departments in the district.

III. Oath Service Relating to Application for Public Housing

IV. Amendment of Particulars and Replacement of Blue Cards