THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY

Memorandum for the Rental Housing Committee
Notes of Meeting with Concern Groups

Attached for Members’ information are the notes of two sessions of pre-meeting held at the Oi Man Community Hall, Oi Man Estate on 15 December 1999 (Wednesday) between the Rental Housing Committee and the following concern groups present:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern Groups</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Fat Tseung Street THA Concern Group Against the September 23rd Policy</td>
<td>Rehousing arrangements for THA clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Concern Group of Lung Ping Residents on the September 23rd Policy</td>
<td>Policy on surrender of flats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

File No. : HA/PRP/3/17/2 II

Date : 7 January 2000
Notes of Meeting with the Concern Group of Lung Ping Residents on the September 23rd Policy held in Oi Man Community Hall, Oi Man Estate on 15 December 1999 at 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT
Members of Rental Housing Committee (RHC)

Mr NG Shui-lai, JP (Chairman)
Mr LUI Ping-keung

Representatives of Housing Department (HD)

Mr C L SUM Senior Housing Manager/Management Policy (Estate & Areas)
Mr C L MAK Senior Housing Manager/Temporary Housing Clearance
Mr S C LO Housing Manager/Temporary Housing Clearance (Acting)
Mr Justin TAM Assistant Committees’ Secretary 2 (Recording Officer)

Representatives of the Concern Group of Lung Ping Residents on the September 23rd Policy (the Concern Group)

Ms CHU Kam-lin Mr HUI Yeung-kit
Mr LO Hing-sing Mr CHEUNG Wai-kwun
Ms LEUNG Kwai-heung Mr WONG Leung-choi
Ms CHAN Ching-shui Ms WONG Siu-wan
Ms TAM Yuet-ying Ms YEUNG Ping-hoi
Ms WONG Wai-yung Ms CHOW Bik-heung
Mr LEE Kai-sing Ms TSANG Yuk-ping
Mr LUNG Man Ms LEE Wai-san
Ms NG Ngan Ms SIU Yi-kwan
Mr LEE Tim

Opening Address

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Concern Group to the meeting.

Views of the Concern Group

2. The Concern Group presented their views and queries.

(1) Pointing out the inconvenience posed by the current policy under which THA
clearees were rehoused to Interim Housing (IH) pending maturity of their Waiting List (WL) applications, the Concern Group put forth their opinions as follows:

(i) The HD should consider retaining the Lung Ping Road development until all residents in the development had been allocated PRH flats.

(ii) Given the remoteness of the existing IH developments, the HD should provide IH in urban areas. In this regard, the Concern Group further proposed conversion of one of the Mark III-VI blocks in Pak Tin Estate into an IH block for rehousing purposes.

(iii) The vacant PRH flats in urban areas should be refurbished and used for rehousing purposes.

(iv) As the plan to clear all THAs within next year had already had the temporary housing population frozen, the HD should consider arranging direct PRH rehousing for THA residents instead of temporary IH accommodation pending maturity of their WL applications.

(2) Pointing out that the new policy on residence qualification for PRH applicants which came into effect on 5 November was unfair to those residents who were under 18 when first arriving in Hong Kong but had grown over 18 by the time of the implementation of the policy, the Concern Group put forth their opinions as follows:

(i) The HA should consider redefining the residence qualification as the required residence commencing from the date at which the Mainland-born children entered Hong Kong using a one-way permit.

(ii) The HA should review the requirement under the new policy that half the family members (including the principal applicant) had to meet the 7-year residence rule at the time of flat allocation as the requirement was unfair to those families with an odd number of members.

(3) Pointing out that although most of the Lung Ping households affected by the September 23rd Policy were holding mature WL applications, they were not allocated PRH flats on account of their members failing the 7-year residence rule, the Concern Group put forth their opinions as follows:

(i) As most of the Lung Ping households affected by the September 23rd Policy were holding mature WL applications, and had lived in Hong Kong for over 5 years, the HD should consider relaxing the residence rule to one of 5 years.
(ii) The HD should consider allocating some of the flats in Hoi Fu Court to the residents or rehousing them to the flats there under the IH eligibility criteria so as to save them the trouble of frequent removals in a short span of time.

(iii) While the clearance of Lung Ping Road development was announced on 1.9.1998, the policy to subject all PRH applicants to an asset test and the 7-year residence rule was officially endorsed on 10.9.1998. As laws should not be made retrospective, the HD should adhere to its former policy and rehouse clearees to PRH units according to their choice of districts on maturity of their WL applications and their satisfying the general requirements for clearance rehousing. Their eligibility should not be affected by the requirement endorsed on 10.9.1998.

(4) The Concern Group opposed to the HD’s requirement for residents to surrender their temporary housing flats within one calendar month from the date of commencement of their new tenancies/licences, requesting that the removal period be extended to two months and that the HA review the adequacy of the one-month removal period.

(5) The Concern Group opposed to the HD’s policy under which those who failed to move out within one calendar month from the date of commencement of their new tenancies/licences were required to pay an occupation fee equivalent to triple rent/licence fee, saying that the policy was exerting great mental and financial pressure on low income residents.

(6) The Concern Group requested the HD to arrange priority allocation for those residents whose WL applications would soon be mature so as to save them the trouble of frequent removals within a short span of time.

(7) The Concerned Group suggested that the HA should review the September 23rd Policy of 1995.

(8) The Concern Group raised the following queries:

   (i) When would flats in Hoi Fu Court be allocated to the clearees?

   (ii) For THA residents allocated new flats, how would the HD determine the length of the rent free period for both their THA flats and their new flats? Would the method of calculation give rise to unfair treatment when residents received the keys to their new flats at different dates?

   (iii) Some residents with mature WL applications had to face deferred vetting owing to changes in family composition. Would the HD clarify under what circumstances it would defer the vetting of a WL
Response of RHC Members and HD Representatives

3. In response, Members and HD Representatives made the following points:

(1) Lung Ping Road Transit Centre provided makeshift accommodation for any stay of not more than 3 months for people made homeless by contingencies. Those confirmed to have satisfied the relevant eligibility criteria under the current policy would be rehoused to IH.

(2) When deliberating the overall housing strategy, the HA had considered the provision of IH in urban areas. However, the idea was eventually dropped after weighing the housing needs of various groups. Residents were advised to consider the offer of rehousing to Kwai Shing East Estate and Shek Lei Estate, Kwai Chung, where a limited number of IH flats were still available. They would have to be rehoused to Po Tin IH when these units were used up.

(Post meeting note: At present, old PRH blocks in urban areas are all under the umbrella of the Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme (CRP). After redevelopment, these blocks will mainly serve to rehouse PRH tenants displaced by redevelopment either locally or in the neighbouring districts. Hence, few urban PRH blocks can be made available for renovation into IH without affecting the scheduled redevelopment programme. To avoid delay in the progress of the CRP, old PRH blocks in urban areas will not be further assigned for renovation into IH.)

(3) To eliminate queue-jumping and to ensure a more equitable and reasonable allocation of public housing resources, the HA endorsed on 23.9.1995 a policy under which authorized residents who took up their THA flats after the aforesaid date would be required to apply through the WL if they wished to be rehoused to PRH. Hence, residents whose WL applications were yet to mature when their THAs became due for clearance would only be allocated IH units.

(4) On 10.9.1998, the HA endorsed the policy under which THA residents not eligible for direct offer of PRH would only be rehoused to IH unless they fulfilled all the relevant requirements, including the income and asset limits and the residence qualification, for allocation of PRH in a district of their choice. This policy brought the rehousing eligibility criteria for THA residents and people displaced by government clearance operations into line with those for PRH applicants on the WL.

(5) As a form of subsidised housing, PRH flat and temporary housing units should be allocated to families with genuine needs. Allowing one household to occupy two subsidised units at the same time violated the principle of rational...
allocation of public housing resources. In view of this, tenants/licensees were required to surrender their existing flats to the HD within one calendar month from the date of commencement of the new tenancy/licence. Should they have difficulty in surrendering their flats as scheduled, they would have to apply to the HD for an extended stay of no more than two months during which they would have to pay an occupation fee equivalent to triple rent/licence fee. Given the need to allow tenants/licensees reasonable time for removal on the one hand, and to curb and prevent abuses of public housing resources through an effective mechanism on the other, the existing policy was considered reasonable and equitable. Should the requirements concerned be waived for Lung Ping residents, it would be unfair for other people. However, the HA would review whether the allowance of one month for removal was adequate.

(6) Under the Anticipatory Rehousing Scheme, if the WL applications of the residents concerned were expected to be mature within the next 12 months as determined by the choice of districts and the time spent in waiting, the HD would advance their interview and vetting. This would save residents the trouble of clearance removal.

(7) In response to the queries of the Concern Group, HD representatives made the following points:

(i) Since the project of Hoi Fu Court had not been completed, the schedule for intake had yet to be confirmed. Once notification of intake was received, the Application Section of the HD would write to the clearees concerned, asking them to complete the necessary formalities.

(ii) The HD would make a written reply to explain the method for determining the length of the rent free period and whether such method would result in unfair treatment when residents received the keys to their new flats at different dates.

(iii) The HD would make a written reply to explain the circumstances under which the vetting of a PRH application would be deferred.

4. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm.

(Annex in Chinese only)