

**For meeting on
20 October 2011**

Paper FC 13/2011

Family Council

Family Perspectives in the Policies of the Transport and Housing Bureau (in respect of Housing Policies under the Housing Authority)

Introduction

The concept of family values is deep-rooted among the public. It has been the Housing Authority (HA)'s objectives to implement initiatives and policies to foster harmonious family relationship of the households, promote neighbourliness and community development in public rental housing (PRH) estates. This paper briefs Members on how the family perspectives are taken into account in the course of policy formulation under the purview of the HA.

Public Rental Housing Policies

2. The family provides its members with support and assistance. Such notion has a significant impact on the patterns of individual's behaviour and on family and social relationship. To further align housing arrangements with the government's appeal for enhancing family cohesion, the HA has developed a series of policies and measures for both its sitting and prospective tenants with family being placed at heart of the housing service provision. These initiatives help promote a family-based support network and emphasize on the importance of closer and harmonious relationship among family members. Major housing policies with the family core values applied are introduced in the ensuing paragraphs.

Harmonious Families Policies

3. To foster harmonious homes and strengthen ties within families and across generations, the HA has implemented a four-pronged policy to

enhance the allocation and management of PRH, viz. Harmonious Families Priority Scheme, Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme, Harmonious Families Addition Scheme and Harmonious Families Amalgamation Scheme. All these initiatives aim at encouraging the younger generation and their elderly parents to move near each other or even live together for better care of the latter. As at end August 2011, some 19 000 households with elderly family member(s) had already benefited from these schemes.

Setting Up of the Housing Advisory and Service Team (HAST)

4. To encourage cross-sectional joint efforts in supporting families in their unfamiliar community networks, the HA approved, in a district-wise manner, the setting up of the HAST in Tin Shui Wai under a pilot scheme for two years, commenced in mid-April 2008. In view of its initial success, the service has been extended to all PRH estates in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tung Chung districts since 2010. Apart from visiting new tenants and helping them adapt to the new living environment, the HAST also assists Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) to carry out community building activities in partnership with Non-government Organisations (NGOs) to foster neighbourliness and sense of belonging within the community.

Enhanced Partnering Arrangements among Estate Management Advisory Committees and Non-Government Organisations

5. In promoting the family as a basis and community building to enhance the spirit of good neighbours and harmony within PRH estates, the HA has been taking a proactive approach to create an effective family support network through the organisation of various types of community activities. Since October 2009, we have facilitated EMACs to hold partnering functions with NGOs to promote community building, including family cohesion and the like, in PRH estates by setting aside some \$18 million EMAC fund per annum for these functions. This initiative has been effective in strengthening mutual care and family support network among estate tenants.

Concessionary Rent for Non-domestic Premises to NGOs

6. Another way to strengthen support to the family is through the letting of welfare premises to NGOs at concessionary rent. To provide better care for the disabled, elderly and ex-mental persons, etc., the HA works closely with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and/or other relevant government departments in deciding the allocation of welfare premises at PRH estates. SWD is from time to time invited to furnish any future needs of welfare premises in the community in the planning of new public housing developments and consulted on the use of vacant welfare premises and the possible alteration of surplus non-domestic spaces for welfare purposes in existing estates.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to note that the family perspectives have been taken into consideration in the formulation of PRH policies and management measures under the HA.

Transport and Housing Bureau
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