

CE visits Lok Sin Tong Primary School transitional housing project and police facilities (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (August 9) visited a transitional housing project operated by Lok Sin Tong in Kowloon City, and took the opportunity to visit Wong Tai Sin Police Station and the Wong Tai Sin Disciplined Services Quarters to meet police officers of the district and learn more about the damage to the facilities of the quarters by violent protesters earlier.

Accompanied by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, Mrs Lam was briefed on Lok Sin Tong's project to convert Lok Sin Tong Primary School after its closure at the end of this month into transitional housing. The school, together with the adjacent Lok Sin Tong headquarters and clinic, is a project under application for the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Social Welfare Department to be redeveloped into a building for provision of social services, including facilities for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. During the period for technical assessments before demolition, the vacant school can be used for transitional housing for about three years. With the support and technical advice of the Transport and Housing Bureau, Lok Sin Tong received funding support from the Community Care Fund approved by the Commission on Poverty to convert the school into about 50 units, each of which will be able to accommodate a grass-roots family of three or four. There will also be shared spaces for activities and provision of community-based support services. The project is expected to commence in October this year and be completed in the first half of next year.

They also received a briefing on Lok Sin Tong's other transitional housing projects. Lok Sin Tong has launched transitional housing projects since 2017. Three projects in Kowloon City and To Kwa Wan with a total of 75 units are in operation. In addition, projects in Ho Man Tin and To Kwa Wan are under planning and are expected to provide over 100 units.

"Housing is a livelihood issue that the grass roots are most concerned about. I proposed in my first two Policy Addresses a number of short, medium and long-term measures to increase public housing supply. Before new supply of public housing becomes available, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will make full use of existing land and housing resources and take up the role of a facilitator to assist non-government organisations to make available transitional housing in order to alleviate immediately the poor living conditions of grass-roots families. I am grateful to Lok Sin Tong for responding positively to this government initiative," Mrs Lam said.

Mid-last year, the Transport and Housing Bureau set up a task force to provide one-stop co-ordinated support to facilitate the implementation of transitional housing projects by the community, including offering advice on

relevant administrative or statutory procedures, and assisting organisations in applying for appropriate funding. As of July 2019, 11 major non-profit-making operations or social enterprises were providing some 610 transitional housing units. The task force is currently assisting in the planning of more than 10 projects, and eight of them which have been announced will provide about 880 units in total.

Mrs Lam and Mr Chan then took the opportunity to visit police officers at Wong Tai Sin Police Station. Accompanied by the Director of Architectural Services, Mrs Sylvia Lam, and the Government Property Administrator, Mr Vincent Liu, they inspected the damage to the Wong Tai Sin Disciplined Services Quarters adjacent to the police station by a mob earlier. Mrs Lam noted that units on or below the fifth floor of the two buildings of the quarters were severely damaged. Many windows of the flats facing the street were broken and items inside the flats including beds, wardrobes and floor tiles suffered various degrees of damage. The outer walls of the quarters were defaced with graffiti and the gate was vandalised, scaring residents including many children. While expressing her gratitude to police officers for their dedication to duty in defending Hong Kong's law and order through days and nights, Mrs Lam said she was outraged by the malicious attack by a mob on residences. She has asked the Government Property Agency and the Architectural Services Department to repair the damaged areas as soon as possible, and in particular to consider enhancing security at the quarters to restore calm to the daily lives of the police officers and their families.



