

LCQ14: Maintenance and redevelopment of public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

Regarding the maintenance and redevelopment of the public rental housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government launched the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme (CSIP) in 2005 to assess the structural conditions of selected aged estates and the cost-effectiveness of their repair works in cycles of 15 years each, of the latest progress of the second cycle of CSIP which commenced in 2018;

(2) whether it has projected the number of units to be provided and the population to be accommodated in the estates under the second cycle of CSIP upon their redevelopment, and how such figures compare with the corresponding figures of the estates concerned at present;

(3) given that the HA will, based on the four basic principles under the "Refined Policy on Redevelopment of Aged Public Rental Housing Estates" (i.e. structural conditions of buildings, cost-effectiveness of repair works, availability of suitable rehousing resources in the vicinity of the estates to be redeveloped, and build-back potential upon redevelopment), consider whether or not to redevelop individual aged estates in accordance with the actual circumstances, and that the HA completed in 2013 a review of the redevelopment potential of 22 non-divested aged estates, of the details and latest progress of the various redevelopment projects, including the additional (i) number of units to be provided and (ii) population to be accommodated;

(4) whether the HA will incorporate "housing demand" and "social development needs" into the factors for consideration for the redevelopment of aged estates; and

(5) whether it will set up a dedicated department for implementing various redevelopment projects, which will be responsible for examining the priorities of various redevelopment projects, working out financial arrangements, supervising construction works, and coordinating rehousing arrangements, with a view to expediting the progress of redevelopment projects?

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Jeffrey Lam is as follows:

(1) to (3) The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has started to conduct the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme (CSIP) since 2005 to ascertain the structural safety of public rental housing (PRH) estates with building age approaching or exceeding 40 years and to assess the necessary repair programme needed for sustaining these buildings and their cost-effectiveness. The first cycle of CSIP covering 42 PRH estates was completed in 2018. The second cycle of CSIP covering 71 PRH estates is anticipated to be completed by 2032. Among them, the assessment of 8 PRH estates was completed and assessed to be structurally safe, the associated repair programmes are cost effective and the estates can be sustained for at least 15 years. Apart from Wah Fu Estate of which the redevelopment has been announced, the HA currently has no plan to redevelop other estates under the second cycle of CSIP. Hence, there is no information on the number of units to be provided or the number of residents which can be accommodated after redevelopment of these estates.

In deciding whether to redevelop a PRH estate, the HA has all along been considering the actual circumstances in a prudent manner in accordance with the four basic principles under the HA's "Refined Policy on Redevelopment of Aged PRH Estates", namely, structural conditions of buildings, cost-effectiveness of repair works, availability of suitable rehousing resources in the vicinity of the estates to be redeveloped, and build-back potential upon redevelopment. The list of 22 aged PRH estates mentioned in Part 3 of the question originated from a study conducted by the HA in 2013, and is not the list of PRH estates which the HA decides to redevelop.

Redevelopment of PRH estates may increase the supply of PRH in the long run, but the net gain in flat supply from redevelopment will take a long time to realise, and very often towards the latter if not the last phase of the redevelopment. In the short term, redevelopment will reduce the number of PRH units available for allocation because a large number of PRH units has to be used to rehouse the affected PRH residents, which could otherwise be allocated to families who have pressing housing needs. Such arrangement will not only result in an immediate reduction in PRH supply, but will also inevitably lengthen the average waiting time for households waiting for PRH allocation. Hence, redevelopment of PRH estates can only play a supplementary role in increasing PRH supply.

According to the above-mentioned policy and study, the HA is in the process of redeveloping Pak Tin Estate (older portion) and Mei Tung Estate (older portion). The redevelopment of Pak Tin Estate is scheduled for completion in 2027/28, and the number of PRH flats of the entire Pak Tin Estate will increase by about 2 900 flats after redevelopment. The redevelopment of Mei Tung Estate is scheduled for completion in 2027/28 and will provide an additional of about 2 135 public housing units. As for Wah Fu

Estate, there will be about 3 000 more flats upon completion of the entire redevelopment programme. In addition, the HA will demolish Shek Lei Interim Housing for public housing development with flat production of about 1 600 units. The HA will also redevelop its four factory estates for housing development, three of which can provide about 4 200 units upon completion of the redevelopment.

(4) Taken into account the pressing need for PRH, the HA's policy and principles on redevelopment of aged PRH estates are practical and proactive. In respect of 'housing need', one of the basic principles of redevelopment, namely 'build-back potential upon redevelopment', is to consider whether there will be a promising increase in flat production upon redevelopment of the aged estates so as to address the pressing housing needs. When planning for the redevelopment of aged PRH estates, the HA will consult relevant bureaux and departments to suitably provide facilities such as educational, social welfare, public transport and traffic facilities, to meet the needs of the development of society, provided that flat production and redevelopment programme will not be affected, and will not incur additional financial burden to the HA.

(5) The Housing Department (HD) is the department responsible for handling issues relating to the redevelopment of the HA's PRH estates. As the executive arm of the HA, the HD carries out studies, planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring work regarding redevelopment matters.