

LCQ18: Provision of community support services for residents of new public rental housing estates

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 23):

Question:

On Tat Estate and On Tai Estate, newly completed large-scale public rental housing (PRH) estates located in Kowloon East, provide a total of nearly 18 000 units. In 2016, the Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) and the Christian Family Service Centre (CFSC) each received funding from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (the Trust) for launching a three-year community support programme respectively. These programmes aim at providing residents of these two PRH estates with a number of support services to facilitate their adaptation to the new environment and integration into the community, such as assisting them in inspecting the flats allocated to them, moving into the new flats upon intake and applying for welfare services. It is learnt that these two programmes, albeit being popular among the residents, will come to an end concurrently next year as funding will be discontinued by that time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that several thousand families will soon move into On Tai Estate, whether the Government will support the continued operation of the aforesaid two programmes by lobbying the Trust to continue to allocate funding or through other policies, in order to benefit more families moving into these estates;

(2) whether it has plans to provide subsidies as well as the sites needed for the services for the two aforesaid non-profit-making organisations to enable them to scale up their community support programmes; if so, of the timetable and the responsible government departments, as well as whether it will consider providing subsidies for them on a regular basis;

(3) of the projected number of PRH estates to be completed within the coming decade, as well as the locations of and the number of families to be accommodated in such estates;

(4) given the successive completion and intake of the various new PRH estates, whether the Government has assessed the community support services needed by the families moving into these estates, and whether it will increase the funding for the relevant departments to provide such families with appropriate assistance; and

(5) whether it knows, apart from HKCS and CFSC, the other non-profit-making

social welfare organisations that are currently providing support services for residents of newly completed PRH estates; whether the Government has subsidised the operation of such organisations; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB), our consolidated reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1), (2), (4) and (5) The Government has always been concerned about the needs of residents of new public rental housing (PRH) estates. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) will provide suitable support services to assist residents in adapting to the new living environment at the early stage of resident intake of individual newly completed PRH developments. The District Social Welfare Offices of SWD assess on an ongoing basis the needs for welfare services at district level, having regard to the population growth and demographic changes in their respective districts. Through collaboration with the government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and stakeholders concerned, they will deploy community resources to plan for appropriate support services and identify, at an early stage, residents with service needs for referral to relevant services. Also, where there are newly completed PRH estates, the Integrated Family Service Centres and/or Integrated Services Centres operated by the SWD or subvented NGOs located within their relevant service boundaries will collaborate with other government departments/district organisations in providing services, including the neighbourhood network building projects funded by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) under the Labour and Welfare Bureau, or by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJCCT), to facilitate the new residents and families to integrate into the community as soon as possible.

Since 2015, the CIIF has approved many new community support network projects to assist the residents in new PRH estates in building mutual help networks. Up to March 2018, the CIIF has approved a total of 21 projects, operated by 19 NGOs in 15 new PRH estates, to support the residents and help them build mutual help networks. A total allocation of about \$48.71 million is involved. In order to launch CIIF-funded projects in new PRH estates in a more proactive and timely manner, the CIIF will study how to collaborate with the SWD, so that there will be suitable CIIF-funded projects in the new PRH estates concerned, providing services and assisting residents to adapt and get involved in the new community as soon as possible, during the resident intakes of these new estates.

Besides, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has been providing suitable non-domestic premises not yet in use, including Mutual Aid Committee (MAC) offices, to the NGOs concerned as temporary work bases in individual newly completed public housing developments at the initial stage of resident intakes, for the provision of outreaching support services to assist residents in adapting to the new living environment. To this end, the HA will enter into short-term temporary permits with NGOs nominated by the SWD. The fee for the premises is at the same level as the concessionary rent for the

HA's welfare facility premises.

In respect of On Tat Estate and On Tai Estate, with the coordination and recommendation of the Kwun Tong District Social Welfare Office of the SWD, the Hong Kong Christian Service and the Christian Family Service Centre have been approved grants from the HKJCCT for the implementation of two three-year projects, under which social workers have provided or referred the required welfare services through initial contact and assessment with the residents, to facilitate the new residents and families to integrate into the community as soon as possible. If there is continued district need, depending on the relevant demand, the Government will collaborate with the government departments and NGOs concerned etc. for deploying community resources, including CIIF etc., with a view to continuing the provision of suitable services. Besides, at present, the HA has provided premises to the Hong Kong Christian Service and the Christian Family Service Centre at the MAC offices on the ground floor of Chi Tai House and Kam Tai House in On Tai Estate respectively as temporary work bases for the provision of outreaching support services for the residents.

(3) THB points out that, according to the HA's Public Housing Construction Programme as at March 2018, details and locations of PRH projects to be completed by the HA in the coming five years in 2017-18 to 2021-22 are set out at Annex.

For public housing projects with completion in 2022-23 and onwards, most of them are still at the preliminary planning and design stage and are subject to influence by various factors such as rezoning, local consultation, infrastructure construction and site formation works, etc. Moreover, most of these projects require feasibility study or investigation, and some of the housing projects may involve land resumption, clearance or reprovisioning of existing facilities, and projects involving Government-funded works are required to seek the Legislative Council's funding approval. As these development projects are subject to changes, it is difficult to provide detailed information and programme at this stage. The HA will provide the relevant information regarding the rolling five-year construction programme when appropriate.