

LCQ18: Schools affected by redevelopment of housing estates in which they are located

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, in the Legislative Council today (February 28):

Question:

In December 2023, the Hong Kong Housing Authority announced the initiation of a feasibility study for the redevelopment of Choi Hung Estate. It has been learnt that two secondary schools and one primary school within the Estate, which are currently over 60 years old, will be affected by the redevelopment project. Following the precedent of the redevelopment of Pak Tin Estate, the Education Bureau will not directly allocate school premises to the affected schools for reprovisioning use in the light of estate redevelopment, but will require these schools to participate in the allocation of school premises on a competitive basis among school sponsoring bodies. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the authorities indicated at the June 2022 meeting of the Panel on Education of this Council their intention to submit to the Public Works Subcommittee of this Council a project proposal at an estimated cost of approximately \$429.8 million for the construction of a new school premises at an alternative site within the Choi Hung Estate for The Church of Christ in China Kei Wa Primary School (KWPS) in the Estate, whether the project and the decision to allocate the new school premises to KWPS will be changed with the initiation of the feasibility study for the redevelopment of Choi Hung Estate; if so, of the details;

(2) whether the authorities have plans to reprovision the aforesaid three schools affected by the redevelopment of Choi Hung Estate through direct allocation of school premises; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the authorities will consider reviewing the existing school allocation mechanism so that priority allocation of school premises for reprovisioning will be arranged for schools affected by the redevelopment of housing estates in which they are located?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) announced on December 21, 2023 that a redevelopment study for Choi Hung Estate would be initiated to further explore the potential of making good use of its build-back potential, and an

implementation plan would be worked out for the purpose. The HA will maintain communication with the bureaux/departments concerned, including the Education Bureau (EDB), on various arrangements. Upon completion of the study, the HA will announce the relevant arrangements accordingly. The entire redevelopment project is expected to take at least 15 years to complete.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Chu Kwok-keung is as follows:

At present, there are one public sector primary school and two public sector secondary schools within the Choi Hung Estate. Regarding the primary school, the Government announced in 2020 that The Church of Christ in China Kei Wa Primary School (Kei Wa) located in the estate would be reprovisioned to a reserved school site therein. The proposal was supported by the Legislative Council Panel on Education (the Panel) in 2022. As recommended by the Panel, the EDB also maintained communication with the relevant departments to confirm whether there would be any redevelopment plans for the estate before implementing the project. In the light of the HA's study, and taking into account the principle of vicinity generally adopted in primary school admission, the EDB is reviewing the reprovisioning plan for Kei Wa.

As for the secondary schools, the EDB is closely monitoring the supply of and demand for secondary school places in the district and Hong Kong as a whole, and maintaining communication with school sponsoring bodies (SSBs) and schools to explore the most appropriate arrangements. The Government generally does not, owing to the redevelopment of public housing estates (PHEs), reprovision schools through direct allocation of school premises. Should there be School Allocation Exercises (SAEs) in future, interested schools (including those seeking reprovisioning due to redevelopment of PHEs) are required to apply through an open and fair SAE and compete with all eligible SSBs in Hong Kong. When assessing the applications, the Government would pay heed to the views of the School Allocation Committee with a view to selecting the best and most suitable SSB, with quality of education as its prime consideration. Other factors to be taken into account include the school proposals submitted by the SSBs, the operation record of the SSBs and the physical condition of the existing school premises, etc.

With changing population structure in Hong Kong, we encourage and support SSBs to make long-term planning and actively respond to community needs for different services in the interest of the society at large and with regard to the circumstances of the district and the schools. The EDB would continue to meet with relevant SSBs to explore feasible options having regard to the actual circumstances.