

HA converts under-utilised facilities to provide over 200 public housing flats

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) has been exploring ways to utilise public housing resources with the aim of increasing housing supply. As a result of the phasing-out programme for the HS1 Design blocks of Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) in public rental housing (PRH) estates, ancillary facilities of these blocks become under-utilised in recent years. The HA has successfully converted these facilities into PRH, providing 215 flats so far.

HSC was introduced in the 1990s. The HS1 Design block was the earliest design, making use of internal partitioning of a normal PRH flat into two to four smaller units with shared toilet and kitchen facilities. Provision of 24-hour welfare worker services was also available in the housing blocks. As popularity of this type of HSC has remained low, the HA decided to gradually phase out the units. The HA has so far recovered 4 388 HS1 units and converted them into 1 615 PRH flats.

"As a result of the HS1 Phasing-out Programme and the cessation of welfare worker services, a number of ancillary facilities, such as warden offices, common/activity rooms, quarters for welfare workers and storerooms become under-utilised. We have taken the opportunity to re-examine the usage of these facilities and found them technically feasible for conversion to normal PRH flats," a spokesman for the HA said today (July 3).

Up to March, a total of 215 PRH flats have been yielded through conversion of the under-utilised facilities. The flats are scattered in 33 housing estates, including estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS). Among them, 37 flats were subsequently purchased by the sitting tenants under the TPS, generating sales revenue of about \$14 million to the HA.

"We will closely monitor the usage of the remaining ancillary facilities in HS1 Design blocks and continue to identify suitable facilities for conversion to PRH to maximise utilisation of housing resources," the spokesman said.

CoI into Construction Works at and

near Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project to submit its final report by November 29, 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project:

The Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project will submit a final report on its findings and recommendations to the Chief Executive on or before November 29, 2019, upon approval of an extension of time by the Chief Executive in Council yesterday (July 2).

On February 19, 2019, the Chief Executive in Council expanded the terms of reference of the Commission to also inquire into the problems concerning the construction works at the North Approach Tunnels, the South Approach Tunnels and the Hung Hom Stabling Sidings under the Shatin to Central Link Project, and extended the date of submission of the Commission's final report to August 30, 2019. Having regard to its latest work progress and work plan, the Commission has requested an extension of time to submit its final report to the Chief Executive by November 29, 2019.

The Commission plans to resume the substantive hearing in the second half of September 2019 and finish all expert evidence and, if necessary, further factual evidence, as well as all closing submissions by mid-October 2019.

Extension of time for Commission of Inquiry to submit final report

The Chief Executive in Council approved yesterday (July 2), at the request of the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Project, an extension of time for the Commission to submit its final report to the Chief Executive by November 29, 2019.

The Commission was appointed by the Chief Executive in Council on July 10, 2018, with Mr Michael Hartmann as Chairman and Commissioner, and Professor Peter Hansford as Commissioner, to inquire into the facts and

circumstances surrounding the steel reinforcement fixing works and any other works which raised concerns about public safety in respect of the diaphragm wall and platform slab construction works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the SCL Project implemented by the MTR Corporation Limited, and to make recommendations on suitable measures with a view to promoting public safety and assurance on quality of works.

Following an expansion of its terms of reference, as approved by the Chief Executive in Council on February 19, 2019, to inquire into irregularities concerning the construction works at the North Approach Tunnels, the South Approach Tunnels and the Hung Hom Stabling Sidings under the SCL Project, the Commission was required to submit its final report to the Chief Executive by August 30, 2019.

Having regard to its latest work progress and work plan, the Commission expects to complete its final report for submission to the Chief Executive by November 29, 2019 and has accordingly requested an extension of time for submitting the report.

On February 25, 2019, the Commission submitted an interim report to the Chief Executive on the matters covered by its original terms of reference. The Government published the interim report in redacted form on March 26, 2019, taking account of legal considerations to avoid any prejudice (actual or perceived) to any ongoing criminal investigations and any potential prosecutions of any criminal offences in the future (if so decided to be justified after the relevant investigations).

The expanded terms of reference of the Commission are at the Annex.

Red flags hoisted at Pui O Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 3) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Pui O Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

AFCD to highlight varieties at Local Organic Watermelon Festival

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (July 3) introduced three highlighted varieties of organic watermelons to be sold at the Local Organic Watermelon Festival.

The three highlighted varieties of organic watermelons, namely Hami Yellow Flesh, Super Sweet Black Angel 168 and Diana, were introduced from Japan, Australia and Taiwan respectively by the AFCD in recent years. Being able to adapt well to the local environment and summer climate, and promising good yields of quality fruit of suitable sizes for small to medium-sized families, these varieties have been well received by both farmers and consumers.

Hami Yellow Flesh, a newly introduced variety from Japan this year, is oblong in shape, and features green skin with stripes and yellowish orange flesh. Super Sweet Black Angel 168 is spherical with green striped skin, and its bright crimson-coloured flesh is very juicy. Diana is oblong in shape, and the intense red flesh encased under its bright yellow striped skin is remarkably sweet.

The AFCD has been promoting quality crop varieties in recent years and providing technical guidance to organic farmers on growing watermelon and other crops with a view to strengthening the sustainability of local agriculture. In order to help farmers expand their network of customers and share their harvests with Hong Kong people, the AFCD has been organising the Local Organic Watermelon Festival on an annual basis since 2007. As with last year, the AFCD has also invited all regular local organic farmers' markets to join the event. Local organic watermelon as well as other seasonal farm produce will be sold in each farmers' market starting from July. Members of the public are welcome to shop at these markets to support local farming.

The opening dates and times of the organic farmers' markets in July are listed below:

Farmers' market	Location	Date	Time
Tai Po Farmers' Market	12 Tai Wo Road, Tai Po	July 5 July 6 to 7 Every Sunday in July	Noon to 8pm 9am to 5pm 9am to 5pm
Central Farmers' Market	Central Pier No. 7	Every Sunday in July	11am to 5pm
Star Ferry Farmers' Market	Central Pier No. 7	Every Wednesday in July	Noon to 6pm

Mei Foo Farm Fest	Under Kwai Chung Road Flyover (Mei Foo Section)	Every Sunday in July	11am to 5pm
Sai Kung Organic Farmers' Market	Sai Kung Waterfront Promenade (near Sai Kung Waterfront Market)	Every Sunday in July	11am to 5pm

Furthermore, to enable the public to know more about local organic watermelons and stories of growing them, the AFCD produced a short video to introduce the species and characteristics of local organic watermelons and invited an organic farmer to share his experience. The video has been uploaded to the AFCD's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/afcdgovhk).

For details of the Local Organic Watermelon Festival and arrangements under inclement weather conditions, please visit the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk) or Facebook page.