

Stakeholder consultation on proposed regulatory regime for Basic Housing Units concludes (with photos)

The stakeholder consultation on the proposed regulatory regime for Basic Housing Units (BHUs) launched by the Housing Bureau (HB) on December 2, 2024 concluded today (February 10).

Since the establishment of the Task Force on Tackling the Issue of Subdivided Units (SDUs) (the Task Force) in October 2023 until the end of the stakeholder consultation period, under the lead of the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, as the Head and the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, as the Deputy Head, the Government organised and joined nearly 40 engagement sessions, meeting nearly 700 participants and gathering views from political parties, academics, professional bodies, non-governmental organisations, estate agents, renovation services industry and contractors associations as well as concern groups on tackling the SDU issue and the BHU regulatory regime. At the same time, as at 6pm today, we received nearly 2 200 submissions of views (including around 1 600 submissions using six different templates with largely similar contents) mainly through email and post, etc.

The HB will work at full steam to consolidate the views received on the BHU regulatory regime and report to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Housing on the summary of views and seek the Panel's views on the latest proposal on the regulatory regime as soon as possible. Subsequently, the HB will introduce the relevant Bill into the LegCo and strive for its passage within this year. Upon completion of the legislative process, registration for pre-existing SDUs under rental will commence, with applications for recognition as BHUs to be accepted concurrently. A grace period will be granted to landlords of SDUs that have been successfully registered to provide reasonable time for them to discuss tenancy agreements with their tenants and to convert their SDUs to up-to-standard BHUs.

With regard to the new market supply of BHUs as well as the supply of public rental housing, Light Public Housing (LPH), Transitional Housing (TH), etc, the Government will adopt a pragmatic approach and adhere to the people-oriented principle when taking enforcement actions against illegal renting of substandard SDUs in an orderly manner upon completion of registration period to gradually eradicate substandard SDUs. To ensure that SDU households affected by the enforcement actions will not be displaced, the Government will provide assistance on a need basis in identifying other rental accommodation in the private market for relocation, as well as flexibly deploy other housing resources (such as interim housing, LPH, TH, transit centres, etc) to provide temporary shelter for the households in need.

A spokesman for the HB said, "The Government would like to express

gratitude to stakeholders for their active expression of views on the BHU regulatory regime, and is glad that different sectors of the society generally support the proposed framework of the BHU regulatory regime while giving suggestions on the implementation and execution details. Opinions from stakeholders are crucial to the policy formulation and legislative process. The Government will carefully consider and study the views collected when formulating the latest proposal of the BHU regulatory regime, and is determined to strive for completing the relevant legislative work this year as planned, with a view to gradually improving the living conditions of SDU tenants and thus tackling the 'long-standing, big and difficult' issue of substandard SDUs."

The current-term Government faces up to the issue of SDUs and acknowledges its complexity and urgency, while understanding that this long-standing issue must be handled with prudence. The Government is determined to work out solutions to eradicate substandard SDUs at their roots and has been widely listening to views from different stakeholders. The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address to put in place through legislation, a system on the renting of SDUs in residential buildings under which only up-to-standard SDUs could be recognised as BHUs (the BHU regulatory regime). After legislation, SDUs in residential buildings must comply with a set of minimum standards (including requirements in respect of floor area, headroom, structural and fire safety, ventilation, lighting, hygiene, water and electricity meters, etc.) before being recognised as BHUs and allowed to be rented out, so as to ensure the provision of reasonable and safe living conditions.

