

By post and by fax at 3529 2837

8 November 2013

Clerk to Subcommittee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central Hong Kong

[Attn: Miss Mandy POON]

Dear Miss POON

**Legislative Council Panel on Housing – Subcommittee on the Long Term
Housing Strategy
Views on the Long Term Housing Strategy**

Thank you for inviting the Institution to put forth our views on the captioned subject.

In response to your invitation, we are pleased to provide herewith our views and suggestions on the subject for your consideration.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely



Ir Raymond CHAN Kin Sek
President
The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

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RC/WC

Enclosure

**Legislative Council
Panel on Housing (Subcommittee on the Long Term Housing Strategy)**

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers on
Long Term Housing Strategy**

In response to the invitation from the captioned Panel, the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) is pleased to provide our views on the subject for consideration.

2. The HKIE appreciates the Administration's endeavour in formulating the long term strategy for housing development in Hong Kong. We are of the view that housing is an important subject that touches on the basic need of all citizens, while it encompasses corresponding interaction with other important areas of Hong Kong society such as economy, land supply/use, town planning, environment and manpower etc. Hence, we opine that in developing the long term housing strategy, the Administration should also place no less effort in developing holistic sets of strategies on these various corresponding aspects. In forming any consultation channels on housing strategy, it is suggested to set a platform to coordinate all these related issues for stakeholders and opinion leaders with respective knowledge to deliberate, such that these policies can be coherent and complementary in implementation.

3. The HKIE does not object to the proposed "supply-led" strategy in a ratio of 60:40 (public vs private housing) and a yearly re-assessment of such strategy to ensure proactive flexibility towards the changing internal and external environments. We are, however, concerned on the capacity in achieving the objectives of the housing strategy. In particular, we opine that land supply and manpower would be the two main areas that need to be well handled.

4. We think that Hong Kong must strive to secure sufficient land for upholding the housing construction commitment in our future long term housing strategy. In the forefront, the Administration is to place more effort in reaching public consensus in our long term land supply, so that steady supply of sites could be available for constructing housing units as well as the pertinent facilities for the inhabitants. For the urban land, we suggest the Administration to speed up the pace of urban renewal and urban land use rezoning/review, and plan ahead for optimal supply of affordable housing units in such areas.

5. The HKIE is of particular concern on the availability of sufficient manpower in carrying out the housing construction projects. To ensure the safety and quality of the housing construction projects, and with the construction targets in mind, the HKIE urges the Administration to forecast the sufficiency of professionals, in particular engineers, as well as construction workforces, in carrying out these construction projects. The HKIE suggests the Administration to sustain its determination on investing in engineering education in tertiary institutions as well as to improve the remuneration and working condition of engineering and construction fields so as to ensure continual supply of work forces to the engineering and construction industries.

6. In regard to the public rental housing provision, the HKIE suggests that the Administration should adhere to the priority of alleviating the hardship of the citizens, and focus on short- and mid-term resources allocation to those most in need of safe and affordable housing. Hence, any major review in public rental housing allocation policy over the current Quota and Point System should be mindful in particular of the possible negative effect that may arise towards those most needy applicants. However, we strongly urge the Government to strengthen its monitoring measures to curb against abuse of public rental housing resources.

7. The HKIE is of the view that the issue of sub-divided units (SDUs) in Hong Kong should be addressed immediately. While it is worried that developing licensing or landlord system to regulate the SDUs may undesirably proliferate the SDUs and aggravate the current problem, the HKIE is also concerned on the possible risks of SDUs. We think that the relevant Government departments should strengthen the control and administration measures on SDUs in order to ensure and monitor the safety and sanitary conditions.

8. Meanwhile, the HKIE opines that the Administration should place equal care to the housing needs of the middle class and those who are unable to enjoy any public housing benefits and have genuine difficulty in affording the private flats. The Administration should continue to review and identify feasible measures to help these groups of citizens in solving their housing needs and, in the long run, facilitating home ownership if feasible. We believe that fulfilling the housing needs of the citizens is imperative to build their belongingness to Hong Kong, therefore the Administration should ensure that the long term housing strategy would have equal focus on the needs of all classes in society.

9. The HKIE suggests that the Administration, in considering the various types of strategies in addressing the housing issues as mentioned in the Consultation Document, should set a ranking system to show the pros and cons of each means so that the whole subject can be put in a clearer context, thus facilitating the general public in making informed comments and suggestions.