

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

For discussion on
26 August 2013

Paper No.: DURF KC/07/2013

Report on Progress of Social Impact Assessment for Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City

Purpose

This paper serves to report to Members on the progress of the Stage 2 Social Impact Assessment (“SIA”) and the follow-up work by the Consultant.

Work Progress

2. The mitigation measures, as proposed by the Consultant in the Stage 1 SIA Report, are along three broad approaches, including: a) setting up a one-stop support and information services centre as a basis; b) promoting the existing policies and continuing to develop the existing supporting schemes; and c) establishing liaison with local organisations and institutions. Based on the above approaches, the work of the Consultant in the Stage 2 SIA includes exploring the awareness of stakeholders on the existing urban renewal services; briefing stakeholders and soliciting their views on the approaches of mitigation measures as proposed in the Stage 1 SIA; and giving due emphasis on the consultation with relevant government departments and organisations concerned with a view to refining the relevant mitigation measures.

3. For the sake of assessment, the Consultant conducted focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews between April and July 2013. In addition, the Consultant also attended the Stage 2 Public Engagement (“PE”) activities for the Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City in order to collect views from a wider sector of the community. The progress is as follows:

- a) **Focus group discussions:** The Consultant conducted a total of eight focus group discussions so as to understand the social impacts arising from the proposals of the urban renewal plan on the stakeholders and introduce the approaches of the mitigation measures. The targets comprise owners, tenants (including families with school children and

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youths), elders (including single elders), new arrivals, ethnic minorities and rooftop occupants in Kowloon City District. The number of participants is 62;

- b) **Face-to-face interviews:** The Consultant conducted seven face-to-face interviews with relevant government departments and organisations in order to understand their existing services provided to various groups. The targets include Kowloon City District Office, Social Welfare Department, Urban Renewal Resource Centre and Kwun Tong Resource Centre of Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”) etc.; and
- c) **PE activities:** The Consultant attended the Stage 2 PE activities for Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City in order to brief stakeholders on the findings of the Stage 1 SIA and listen to public views on the approaches for the mitigation measures. Besides, the Consultant distributed to the participants of four community workshops questionnaires on the approaches for the mitigation measures for the purpose of collecting their views.

Preliminary Findings and Follow-up Work

4. During the Stage 2 PE, the public generally supported to set up a one-stop support and information services centre (“one-stop services centre”). There were also suggestions to incorporate outreach elements in the one-stop services centre to provide supporting services for residents during the urban renewal process. As revealed from the 139 returned questionnaires distributed in the community workshops, most of the stakeholders responded favourably to the three approaches for the mitigation measures proposed by the Consultant. Among the respondents, 87% agreed/strongly agreed to setting up a one-stop services centre (agreed: 46%; strongly agreed: 41%), while 79.8% agreed/strongly agreed to promoting the existing policies and continuing to develop the existing supporting schemes (agreed: 42.4%; strongly agreed: 37.4%). In addition, 76.2% of the respondents also agreed/strongly agreed to establishing liaison with local organisations and institutions (agree: 38.1%; strongly agree: 38.1%).

5. Having preliminarily consolidated the views collected from the focus group discussions, face-to-face interviews and PE activities, the Consultant recommends to map out the proposed mitigation measures along the following approaches:

a) Setting up a one-stop services centre

Both the stakeholders and related organisations hoped that a one-stop services centre could be set up to provide assistance to residents in resolving problems encountered during the urban renewal process. Since the URA has provided services at Urban Renewal Resource Centre and the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association commissioned by the Development Bureau has also provided support to the owners affected by the compulsory sale, the Consultant will review the existing services, and study the comments received during the PE, such as the view that the District Council members can provide assistance or facilitate mutual aid among residents so as to deal with the problem of lacking in trust with the property acquisition agencies.

b) Promoting the existing policies and continuing to develop the existing supporting schemes

It was noted from focus group discussions and PE activities that residents in general were not acquainted with the redevelopment policies and supporting services. As such, the Consultant considers that it is necessary to promote the relevant policies and services to alleviate the concerns of residents. For example, the “Elderly Domestic Owner-Landlords Compassionate Allowance” launched by the URA can reduce the gap between the total amount of acquisition compensation payable to elderly owner-landlords and owner-occupiers. Apart from the publicity work launched by relevant government departments and organisations, the Consultant preliminarily proposes that the one-stop services centre can also help to provide the information and collaborate in promoting the services available.

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During the study period, apart from identifying potential difficulties encountered by different groups of stakeholders during the urban renewal process, the Consultant has also analysed the existing services provided to stakeholders by the Government and relevant organisations. The Consultant considers that some of the schemes under implementation are quite effective. For example, the “Pilot Mediation Scheme” and the “Pilot Scheme on Outreach Support Service for Elderly Owners” implemented by the Development Bureau for residents affected by compulsory sale does help in mitigating the impacts on residents resulting from redevelopment. It is noted that the above pilot schemes will be reviewed to ascertain their effectiveness and the way forward. Furthermore, some existing supporting schemes, such as the “Ambassador Scheme” - outreach services for ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland launched by Home Affairs Department, can be implemented in line with the urban renewal for the Kowloon City District, thereby mitigating the social impacts of urban renewal on the groups concerned.

c) Establishing liaison with local organisations and institutions

At present, various organisations and institutions in the district have been providing services to residents affected by urban renewal. The Consultant considers that it is necessary for the one-stop services centre to liaise with local organisations and institutions during service delivery, thereby referring some residents in need to the government departments and organisations concerned for the necessary support and services during different stages of the urban renewal process, in addition to providing residents with information on urban renewal. However, the Consultant also opines that the issue of resources and services overlapping should be taken into consideration.

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Advice Sought

6. Members are invited to note the progress of the Stage 2 SIA conducted by the Consultant and give advice and recommendations on the approaches for the proposed mitigation measures. Taking into consideration Members' advice and the findings of the Stage 2 SIA, the Consultant will formulate the proposed mitigation measures for Members' consideration.

SIA Consultant

Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City

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