

Thousands to get new estate homes

BY BARRY CHOI

The Housing Authority is planning to completely re-develop its older Mark I and II resettlement estates as part of the current 10-year public housing programme.

The entire re-development programme involves 12 estates comprising 240 blocks, accommodating some 84,000 families (about 500,000 people).

The number of people to be re-housed account for a third of the 1.5 million people to be given new homes under the 10-year housing programme.

The full re-development programme will possibly take 15 to 20 years to complete.

Yesterday, the Assistant Director (Re-development) of the Housing Department, Mr Bernard Williams, gave a special press briefing on the plan.

He said this will enable improvement of not only domestic accommodation, but also the re-grouping of various ancillary facilities so that overall estate environment can be improved.

"This will mean that, after re-development, an estate will be provided with sufficient schools, welfare premises, commercial complex, market, car parks, open space and other recreational play areas," he said.

Mr Williams was not able to estimate the cost for the whole programme as he pointed out that the financial situation varies from year to year.

But calculating on the basis of \$3,000 per person, the cost could well exceed \$1,500 million.

The re-development scheme first started in late 1972 at Shek Kip Mei. It has now entered its fourth phase. When this phase is completed in early 1976, about 28,000 people, representing nearly half of the original 60,000 people, will have been re-housed. Construction of new domestic blocks and a commercial complex is planned to start in 1976/77 in the area.

At Tai Hang Tung, the \$26 million Phase 1A building contract for three domestic blocks, a commercial complex and a car park was let yesterday.

The Director of Housing, Mr Donald Liao, signed the contract on behalf of the Housing Authority. The successful contractor was Tang Tak Son Construction Co Ltd.

This contract involves the building of three 12-storey blocks on the former Tai Hang Sai cottage area. Piling work has already been completed.

These three blocks will have about 900 flats to house 6,400 people. They will all be self-contained, each with its own private balcony, kitchen and toilet with shower.

Included in this phase are an estate garage, a two-storey shopping and market complex and a number of cooked food stalls similar to those at Oi Man Estate, to meet the needs of the estate and the district.

These blocks are expected to be ready for occupation by mid-1977. As tenants move into their new homes, the vacated Mark I blocks will then be pulled down to make way for the second phase of re-development. The whole project will involve demolition of the existing 14 Mark I blocks and the building of 11 blocks, each of 12 storeys, in their place.

Mr Williams said the central group of estates - Wong Tai Sin, Tung Tau, Wang Tau Hom and Lok Fu - will be tackled as

an entity and will be redeveloped in conjunction with the Mass Transit Railway.

This group accommodates over half of the 500,000 people in the entire re-development programme.

A feasibility study is being made, Mr Williams said, to build a new housing estate in Chuk Yuen area as a decantation estate for this scheme.

"We are asking the Town Planning Office to secure a site for us for the scheme," he added.

Re-development schemes for other estates, such as Jordan Valley, Kun Tong, Chaiwan, Tai Wor Hau and Li Cheng Uk, are at various stages of planning, he said.

In arranging re-housing for tenants, Mr Williams said new accommodation must usually be found in or near the estate being re-developed because tenants would prefer to stay in the district.

He singled out mutual understanding as the most important element for a smooth and speedy re-housing exercise.

"Support of the tenants is essential. In order to achieve this, an enquiry centre is set up, leaflets are issued and briefings conducted with the tenants and other interested organisations, including the press. The support of the public is of great help," he said.

Mr Williams said for domestic tenants, apart from self-contained facilities, a more generous space standard is given for all family members - not less than 35 sq ft per person. Most tenants of resettlement estates are housed on the standard of 24 sq ft or below, per person.

"The tenancy is awarded by a signed tenancy agreement, putting the landlord/tenant relationship on an equal

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footing. Needy tenants are given assistance by decorating their new flats and granting of a cash removal allowance," he said.

Because most of the shops in the new estate are larger than the existing ones, he said, arrangements have to be worked out for the re-provisioning of the shop tenants so that they can properly continue business.

"The existing arrangements which were implemented in the previous three phases of the Shek Kip Mei Scheme have been found satisfactory for the majority of shop tenants."

These contain a number of options for the shop tenants. They may:

- Apply for a new shop of the same size as their existing shop.

- Acquire or transfer the re-provisioning eligibility from or with other shop tenants in the same phase to increase their square footage to get a larger shop.

- Join in partnership with other shop tenants to get a larger shop, or sell the eligibility to any other person for re-provisioning.

- Apply for an ex-gratia cash allowance in lieu of re-provisioning. The rates are \$11,700 for a 240 sq ft shop and \$8,100 for a 120 sq ft shop.

- In addition, rent rebates of 50 per cent for the first year and 25 per cent for the second year are granted to new shop tenancies.

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