

## **Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units**

### **Public Forum Report Summary**

1. The Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units (the Task Force) held an online and a physical public forum on 3 October and 1 November 2020 respectively.
2. Due to the pandemic, the public forum on 3 October 2020 was held at online basis. During the three-hour forum, the Task Force received a total of 24 incoming calls.
3. On 1 November 2020, the physical public forum was held at the Mong Kok Community Hall. A total of 135 persons have registered for attending the forum, however, due to anti-epidemic measures with restricted seating capacity, only 110 registrations were accepted and 92 persons attended the forum on the day. There were 65 question cards received from the participants at the forum, of which 42 cards were drawn and presented by the participants in person during the forum. The views as set out in the remaining undrawn cards had been consolidated for reference of the Task Force. In addition, the Task Force received six petitions from 13 concerned groups (including joint petitions).
4. Both public forums were live-streamed at THBHK, the Facebook page of Transport and Housing Bureau. There were 133 and 67 comments received during the Facebook Live, and the number of views were over 2,700 and 2,400 times respectively (as at 16 November 2020).
5. Members of the public may also share their views with the Task Force through hotline, Whatsapp, WeChat, text messages or email. So far, a total of 19 messages were received up to 16 November 2020.
6. The views collected from the two public forums were summarized below :
  - i) **Scope of tenancy control for subdivided units** : There were views that the tenancy control for subdivided units (SDU) should include all types of inadequate housing, such as rooftop structures, cubicle apartments and SDU in industrial buildings.

- ii) **Standardized tenancy agreement** : There were views that the Government should formulate a standard tenancy agreement, regulating the landlord and tenant to sign the agreement and pay for the relevant stamp duty. The tenancy agreement should set out the landlord's repair/maintenance responsibilities, the charging basis for electricity and water fees, a reasonable removal/eviction notification period and the provision of security of tenure for tenants.
- iii) **Rental control** : There were views that as the relationship between landlord and tenant was unequal, the bargaining power of tenants was low. The Government was suggested to restrict the initial rent and the rate of rent increase. It was also suggested to provide rental subsidy for SDU tenants and establish a transparent rental platform for information sharing.
- iv) **Overcharge of water and electricity fees** : There were views that the Government should enhance the regulatory work on the overcharging problem of water and electricity bills.
- v) **Rights and responsibilities on repair/maintenance** : There were views that the landlords should be responsible for the repair/maintenance and the removal of any unauthorized building works of the units.
- vi) **Public health** : There were views that the living conditions of SDU were very poor, where the sound insulation was low, and with no provision of separate toilets and kitchens. There were frequent hygienic issues like rodent infestation and water seepage, which were affecting tenants' physical and mental health.
- vii) **The structure and safety of SDU** : There were views that the Government should arrange professional to inspect the units to ensure the living quality and safety of the tenants, as well as to minimize the risk of electrical leakage and fire.
- viii) **Removal and rehousing arrangement** : There were views that tenants who are required to move out due to redevelopment or property acquisition should be compensated and rehoused.

- ix) **Regulatory mechanism** : There were views that the Government should establish a statutory body or a high transparency regulatory organization to regulate the rent level in the market and handle any violations. It should also impose the property vacancy tax and increase the stamp duty to offset the impact of tenancy control to the market.
  
- x) **Other matters** : There were views that the lack of tenants' representative in the Task Force was unfair and members with potential conflict of interest should abstain at voting stage. For those SDU tenants living in the industrial buildings, many of them were unable to provide address proof and hence they could not secure any social assistance. It was recommended that the Task Force should attend District Councils' meetings and hold additional public forums for exchange of views. In addition, it was suggested that landlords' interest should be put into consideration at the same time.