

WOMEN' S COMMISSION
Urban Renewal Strategy

INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out the key points of the urban renewal strategy to facilitate the exchange of views with Members of the Women' s Commission at the meeting to be held on 13 November 2001.

BACKGROUND

2. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) was established on 1 May 2001 to carry out urban renewal. In accordance with section 20 of the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (Cap. 563), the draft urban renewal strategy was published for public comment between 1 August 2001 and 30 September 2001. The urban renewal strategy will provide policy guidelines to the URA for the implementation of a 20-year urban renewal programme consisting of 200 new projects and 25 uncompleted projects of the Land Development Corporation (LDC).

KEY POINTS OF THE URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGY

3. Under Government' s strategy, urban renewal is not a “slash and burn” process. Urban renewal is the rejuvenation, replanning and restructuring of older urban areas by way of redevelopment, rehabilitation and heritage preservation.

4. The purpose of urban renewal is to improve the quality of life of residents in older urban areas. The strategy is based on the principle that “people come first”. In line with this approach, the Government will ensure that –

- (a) owners whose properties are acquired/resumed for the implementation of redevelopment projects are offered fair and reasonable compensation;
- (b) tenants affected by redevelopment projects are provided with proper rehousing;
- (c) the community at large will benefit from urban renewal; and
- (d) residents affected by redevelopment projects will be given an opportunity to express their views on the projects.

A PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH TO URBAN RENEWAL

5. According to the experience of the former LDC, about 20% of the heads of household in the urban renewal project areas are female. Among them, over 30% are female elderly over the age of 60 and about 15% are single parents. These are two vulnerable groups who would require particular assistance during the urban renewal process. Some of the measures proposed by the urban renewal strategy would help address their needs.

6. As part of the project approval process, a social impact assessment (SIA) would be carried out to assess the social impact of proposed projects, the needs of the affected residents and mitigation measures required. Amongst other things, the SIA would collect information on the special needs of the elderly and the single-parent families, particularly those with small children. Where circumstances permit, the URA would provide purpose-built housing or make rehousing arrangement on compassionate grounds for those with special needs.

7. Urban renewal social service teams would also be set up in the urban renewal target areas. Social workers of these teams would provide assistance and advice to the groups with special needs affected by URA redevelopment projects, particularly on issues such as compensation and rehousing arrangements, employment after relocation and education of their children after moving out. The aim is to help the affected residents to adapt to their new environment.

CONCLUSION

8. Following the public consultation exercise, the [urban renewal strategy](#) has been finalised and published on the basis of the comments received. Under section 21 of the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance, the URA is required to follow any guidelines set out in the urban renewal strategy when it prepares its five-year corporate plan.

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