

HK STANDARD DO NOT PS

Green Paper on housing subsidies: two views 71% back the idea: survey

A POLL conducted by an independent research company, which was commissioned by the Housing Authority, showed that 71 percent of the public supported the principle of the Green Paper on public housing subsidies.

But only two percent of the 1,509 interviewees considered the suggestions of the paper wholly acceptable.

The survey, conducted from August 21 to September 12, randomly selected samples from various types of housing. Among them, 360 are public housing tenants, 868 live in private housing, and the remaining 281 live in home ownership units and temporary housing areas.

Announcing the results yesterday at a press conference, the managing director of the Survey Research Hongkong Limited, Mr

Tang Kwai-nang, said samples had been chosen in proportion to the population distribution of Hongkong.

"It reflects a miniature of Hongkong society," said Mr Tang. The results showed that 81 percent of the residents in private housing gave most support to the principle of reducing subsidy to public housing tenants who have improved their financial situation.

This was followed by 72 percent of residents in private temporary housing, such as squatter areas. Seventy-eight percent of interviewees in home ownership courts, temporary housing and cottage areas also agreed the principle.

But only 55 percent of public housing tenants agreed on principle.

The survey also revealed that 60 percent of the public agreed to the "no eviction" approach advocated by the Housing Authority.

by
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"Reduction of housing subsidy for public housing tenants who have improved their financial situation received far more public support than eviction," said Mr Tang.

On the suggestions in the Green Paper, 78 percent strongly agreed or agreed to the proposal of asking public housing tenants to pay a higher rent if their income exceed the subsidy income limit.

But only 43 percent of the interviewees agreed that such tenants should pay twice the net rent as suggested.

Most of those against the suggestion believed that one-and-a-half times was more reasonable.

"In response to the suggestion, 40 percent of the public said they would pay as demanded, followed

by 23 percent of them saying they would buy home ownership flats," said Mr Tang.

The survey also revealed that 55 percent of the public thought that it was right for the subsidy income limit to be fixed at one-and-a-half times the Waiting List Income Limit.

"Forty-one percent of the interviewees said it was too harsh. And among them, 17 suggested an average of 1.8 to 1.9 times, 12 percent suggested 1.6 to 1.7 times and 11 percent suggested 2 to 2.1 times," said Mr Tang.

The survey showed that 71 percent of the interviewees considered the option of including all income from employment and investments, but leaving out the value of assets more appropriate.

On the suggestion of counting income from earners of the household, 73 percent of the interviewees agreed it was more

appropriate to count 60 percent of the other earners' incomes.

Speaking at the press conference, the Deputy Director (Administration) of Housing Department, Miss Elaine Chung, said all the opinions gathered would be submitted to the Housing Authority.

She stressed that the survey conducted by SRH would not carry more weight when the Authority decided the degree of acceptance of the public on the Green Paper.

She said the government had so far received three scientific surveys. These include the SRH survey, the one conducted by two academics - Dr Joseph Cheng and Miss Leung Wai-tung, and the survey conducted by the Hong Kong Polytechnic Student Unions.

Commenting on the results of these surveys, Miss Chung said: "The results are quite consistent, with no substantial difference."