

**Report**

**The Study on The Future Directions of Providing Social  
Work Services within the New Urban Renewal Strategy to  
be Formulated**

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Background

1. During the review of the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) began in August 2008, one major issue discussed has been the role of the social service teams (SST) engaged by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) to help affected individuals in its urban redevelopment projects. The major concerns are related to the professional autonomy of the social workers and whether the SSTs should be engaged by the URA directly or whether the SSTs should be engaged by a third party such as a trust fund, the Social Welfare Department, Development Bureau, etc. This study is an extension of the research on the Achievements and Challenges of Urban Renewal in Hong Kong which was basically completed in March 2010. This study was commenced in mid-April and completed in July.
2. Conceptually, to assist individuals and families affected by urban renewal, social workers can provide different types of services to individuals and families affected by urban renewal, including:
  - Case work services – helping them to deal with various difficulties arisen, including housing, health, education, employment, personal social services, and social network.
  - Organizing work – helping them to get organized to deal with their common concerns and problems
  - Advocacy work – helping them to articulate their common concerns and needs to the public, the Government, and the relevant public bodies (e.g. the URA)
3. Apart from the SSTs engaged by the URA in redevelopment projects, there are many social workers in different capacities involved in the whole process of urban renewal, including social workers in various community centres located in the relevant target areas of urban renewal, such as those operated by the Caritas in several districts (Central and Western District, Tsuen Wan, etc.), the St. James Settlement in the Wanchai area, the Mong Kok Chan Hing Social Services Centre, etc. Furthermore, the URA also employed social workers to assist in community liaison work.
4. Similar to the engagement of SSTs, the URA has also engaged local organizations to help local residents to get organized, such as setting up of owners' corporations, to deal with issues of building rehabilitation.

5. The issues related to organizing and advocacy work are also overlap with the community building policy which is under the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and Home Affairs Department (HAD). Moreover, the building management policy is under the mandate of the HAB, and the HAD is also very much involved in many functions of urban renewal at the district level.
6. We also noted that the Housing Society is also providing support to residents in managing and maintaining their buildings such as the formation of owners' corporations.

### **Objective and scope of study**

7. In view of the possible overlap of services provided by various bodies, there is a need to conduct a systematic review of the related issues mentioned above, before we can draw conclusions on how to address the concerns of the social welfare sector raised during the URS review. This review will cover the following aspects:
  - The work done by SSTs engaged by the URA
  - The work done by the local organizations engaged by the URA in doing rehabilitation work in various districts
  - The work done by the Housing Society to help organizing OCs
  - The work done by the existing 13 NGO Community Centres with respects to urban renewal
  - The work done in by NLCDP/INP in the past in the old urban areas that may have relevance to urban renewal, in particularly, the views and position of the HAB on this issue.
  - The work done, experience, and subsequently changes in practice by the Buildings Department in related aspects
  - The work done by the Home Affairs Department with respect to its building management and work with OCs.
  - Work done by the social workers doing community liaison work in the URA
  - The views of staff of URA who work closely with the SSTs

### **Methodology**

8. This study consists primarily of a review of existing documentations and research studies complemented by interviews with informants (See Appendix I).

## Chapter 2 SSTs engaged by the URA

9. Social Service Team (SST) serving redevelopment projects began in the era of the Land Development Corporation (LDC). The first SST was set up in March 1993<sup>1</sup> under a service agreement between the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association and the LDC.
10. During the discussion on the formation of the URA, the need of setting up SST was raised again. Subsequently, the setting up of SST was specified in the URS (2001). Non-government organizations (NGOs) were engaged by the URA under a tender procedure with fixed tender amount.
11. Under Section 33 of the URS (2001), "the URA should set up an urban renewal social service team in each of the nine target areas to provide assistance and advice to residents affected by URA's redevelopment projects. Such a team should operate independently and should preferably be in place before the first redevelopment project has actually commenced in a target area".
12. There are four main elements in the section of the URS
  - Number of SSTs: A SST in each of the nine target areas
  - Independence: The team should operate independently
  - Scope of service: The SST is to provide assistance and advice to residents affected by URA redevelopment projects
  - Timing of forming of SST: The SST should preferably be in place before the first redevelopment project has commenced in a target area
13. A review on the work of the SSTs was conducted within URA between 2006-2008 focusing on the scope of work, manpower, and level of funding. Subsequent to the review, the scope of work was expanded to include more specifically the follow-up work to help relocated residents to adjust in their new environment and the level of funding was also increased.
14. In the current URS review, the foci of views expressed so far were primarily related to two aspects, namely, the "independence" and types of service to be provided by the SSTs.

### Number of SSTs

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<sup>1</sup> LDC Annual Report, 1992-93

15. At the time of study, the URA engaged three NGOs to provide SST services to seven of the nine target areas, except for Yau Tong and Tsuen Wan as there was no redevelopment project actively implemented. While this practice is not exactly consistent with the provision in the URS, i.e. a SST in each of the nine target areas, such practice depends on the commencement of projects under the URA in various target areas.

**Table 2.1 NGOs providing SSTs in the relevant target areas**

Target area	District	SST
Kwun Tong	Kwun Tong	Christian Family Services Centre
Ma Tau Kok	Kowloon City	Salvation Army
Sai Ying Pun	Central and Western	St James' Settlement
Sham Shui Po	Sham Shui Po	Salvation Army
Tai Kok Tsui	Yau, Tsim, Mong	Salvation Army
Tsuen Wan	Tsuen Wan	Nil
Wan Chai;	Wanchai	Methodist Centre for H16,H15 & WC001 (Last contract) Salvation Army for Blue House (Ongoing)
Yau Ma Tei;	Yau, Tsim, Mong	Salvation Army
Yau Tong.	Kwun Tong	Nil

### **Independence of SSTs**

16. While the URS has emphasized on the “independency” of these SSTs, the way to achieve such independency is not specified.
17. As mentioned, NGOs are engaged by the URA under a tender procedure. The office base of the SST is usually provided by the URA. Such SST offices can be housed under the same roof as the URA district offices which can also house the planning, community liaison and acquisition teams of the URA. While such arrangement can enhance the collaboration between the URA staff and the SST, it also reduces the sense of “independence” of the SST as perceived by those affected by the redevelopment projects.

18. Views expressed by social workers in various occasions during the community engagement processes of the URS review, in an earlier study carried out by the URA<sup>2</sup>, and during this study unanimously requested a mode of operation where not only the SSTs can operate independently, they can be seen as independent, particularly to those affected by urban redevelopment projects. The basic rationale behind this view is that the work of SSTs depends very much on the trust and rapport that they can build with the affected individuals, the “association” with URA will make it very difficult, and sometimes impossible, for the SSTs to deliver their services, particularly to those who felt being adversely affected or at grief by the actions of URA. Sometimes, these difficult cases are the most needy individuals and families. There were occasions in the past where a third-party NGO was brought in to help such difficult cases.
19. On the other hand, the expectations of those affected by the URA redevelopment projects towards the functions of the SSTs can be quite different from what the SSTs are meant to be and coupled with the perceived lack of independency have led to dissatisfaction towards the work of the SSTs. For instance, many owners who are not satisfied with the compensation of the URA would find the SST not very helpful in obtaining better terms.

### **Scope of service**

20. While the URS has emphasized on the provision of assistance and advice to residents affected by URA redevelopment projects, in the “Scope of Services”<sup>3</sup> for the URA engaged SSTs, part of the function is “to provide service in promoting owners’ and residents’ ability to help themselves and participate positively in the urban renewal process including redevelopment, preservation, rehabilitation, and revitalization (4Rs)”. However, in actual practice, most of the work done by the SSTs are related to “redevelopment”. We noted that SST service was also provided to residents of the preservation projects of the Blue House and the Mallory Street.
21. While the scope of service of SST includes “assist them to express their views and anxieties on issues of urban renewal, their concerns about the Authority’s work and policies”, however, management of URA at times expressed uncomfortable feelings towards the organizing work of dissents of urban redevelopment and the advocacy work of the SSTs. Both SST and URA staff did report that they experienced such tension.

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<sup>2</sup> Chui, Ernest (2009) *The Social Dimension of the Urban Renewal Authority’s Urban Renewal Projects*. Urban Renewal Authority.

<sup>3</sup> For details, please refer to Appendix II.

22. Thus, during the URA Review there was one suggestion to separate the functions of casework from advocacy and organizing work, i.e. having a SST to focus on advocacy and organizing work while URA could employ their own social workers to deal with the casework for the affected individuals and families. However, social workers in general and SSTs in particular, expressed strong objections to such a suggestion and considered it difficult for the URA social workers to develop rapport with the people affected by redevelopment.
23. There were suggestions made during the URS Review that social workers should be involved in organizing and promoting participation of local residents in the planning of the urban renewal programmes at district level. One specific suggestion was to set up a “Participatory Community Planning Centre”.

### **Timing of forming of SSTs**

24. One apparent advantage of having a SST set up in each target area before the first redevelopment project has commenced is to give ample time to the SST to build up working relationship and rapport with the community.
25. In actual practice, there is hardly any “first” redevelopment project as URA, when it was first set up, has picked up projects already started by the Land Development Corporation (LDC). If the intention of having a SST in a target area before the “first” redevelopment is to enable the relevant SSTs to establish working relationship and rapport with the residents even before the redevelopment starts, this objective has never been clearly spelt out. In the case of Shamshuipo, for example, there were a number of URA projects and though a SST was established in the district before some of the projects started, the SST was not supposed to know the exact timing of the implementation and in most cases the SST will only come into contact with the residents after the project announcement.
26. As noted earlier, the focus of the work of the existing SSTs is related to redevelopment instead of promoting participation in the 4Rs and subsequently the SSTs came to contact with the residents at the time of project implementation.
27. Thus, the timing of setting up SST depends very much on the scope of service. If the SSTs are to help the residents to participate in the 4Rs and the planning for urban



renewal projects, then such SSTs should have been formed in each district irrespective of timing of implementing individual redevelopment projects.

## **Other issues**

### Collaboration between SST with URA

28. There is considerable concern among URA staff towards the collaboration between the SSTs and the URA frontline staff. There is apparent variation in collaboration across different redevelopment projects. Such collaboration, apparently, depends on the relative emphasis that SST puts on casework or policy advocacy and on finding immediate solutions or changing policies. While URA frontline staff is more concerned with casework and finding immediate solutions, if SST puts more emphasis on policy advocacy and changing policies, there can be some tension.

### Training and perspectives of SST

29. SSTs are generally conceived as a kind of community work and there is tendency to recruit social workers who are more interested in community organization instead of casework. On the other hand, NGOs sometimes find it hard to recruit social workers for their SSTs owing to a generally less than positive impression among community workers towards the URA redevelopment projects.
30. Urban renewal policies are not generally covered in social workers training. According to URA staff, there are times that they find social workers in SST having “misunderstanding” in the relevant urban redevelopment policies, in particular, compensation policies. There are obviously differences between what such policies “are” and what such policies “should be” to social workers. Whether there are misunderstandings, confusions between “what is” and “what should be”, or simply matters of communication between URA staff and SST social workers, a systematic training or induction programme for social workers joining SSTs would definitely prepare them better for the job.

### The use of NGOs in providing SST services

31. One major advantage of using NGO SSTs is that the recommendations such as those related to Compassionate Re-housing from the social workers would be at an arm’s length from the URA and can avoid the possible allegation of conflict of interest.

Furthermore, NGOs providing multiple social services will serve as backup for the SSTs to meet the variety of social service needs of residents affected by redevelopment.

### Professional autonomy and independence

32. Professional autonomy has been a recent concern among social workers and hence “independence” of SSTs becomes naturally the focus of debate during the URS Review among social workers. While some social workers in SSTs felt that their professional autonomy may be threatened or compromised, the Code of Practice issued by the Social Worker Registration Board provides the basic framework for guiding social work professional practices, which on one hand binds the social workers in its professional practices and on the other hand provides the grounds on which the social workers can stand firm on their basic principles and values.

### **Concluding remarks**

33. The primary advantage of having NGO SSTs at arm’s length from the URA is very much related to the issue of “independence”. Such independence helps the building of rapport between the SSTs and the individuals affected by urban renewal and at the same time recommendations by SSTs, such as those for Compassionate Re-housing, would not involve a possible conflict of interest. Apparently, “independence” and “no conflict of interest” are not just issues of facts but issues that have to be “seen” as such.
34. To effectively help those affected by urban renewal, adequate training for SST social workers and better coordination between SST and URA frontline staff are crucial.

### Chapter 3 Work done by related community development services

#### The NGO Community Centres

35. Currently, there are thirteen community centres (CC) operated by NGOs. In each NGO community centre, there would be a community work team and a group work team, and now they are ordinarily merged as one team. Through the provision of a wide range of group and community work activities, they also contribute to strengthen civic awareness, promote mutual care and develop a sense of belonging to the community<sup>4</sup>. The thirteen community centres operated by NGOs are listed in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 NGO Communities in URA Target areas**

Centre	Operator	Relevant URA Target Areas
Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre – Community Centre	Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre	Nil
Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Kun Community Centre	Caritas	Sai Ying Pun (mainly in the Western District)
Caritas Community Centre – Caine Road	Caritas	Sai Ying Pun (mainly in Sheung Wan and Central District)
Caritas Community Centre – Aberdeen	Caritas	Nil
Caritas Community Centre – Ngau Tau Kok	Caritas	Kwun Tong (including Yau Tong)
Caritas Community Centre – Tsuen Wan	Caritas	Tsuen Wan
Caritas Community Centre – Kowloon	Caritas	Ma Tau Kok
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Lady MacLehose Centre	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	Tsuen Wan
HKLSS Martha Boss Community Centre Group and Community Work Unit	Hong Kong Lutheran Social Services	Nil
St. James' Settlement Wanchai Community Centre	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	Wanchai
Chan Hing Social Service Centre (Integrated Community Service Division)	Mongkok Kai Fong Association Limited	Tai Kok Tsui and Yau Ma Tei (Mongkok)
Yan Oi Tong Community Centre	Yan Oi Tong	Nil
Yuen Long Town Hall Community Centre	Yuen Long Town Hall	Nil

<sup>4</sup> Social Welfare Department - [http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site\\_pubsvc/page\\_comm/sub\\_commdevser/id\\_commcenter2/](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_comm/sub_commdevser/id_commcenter2/)

36. Since 1985, the management of government-operated community centres was transferred from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to the City and New Territories Administration (the equivalence of the present day Home Affairs Department, HAD). While the community work unit was dissolved, the SWD continued with the operation of the group work units in 13 CCs and 6 Estate Community Centres. By 1994, each of these 19 group work units operated a Family Activity and Resource Centre (FARCs). In 2000-01, these units were transformed into Family Support and Resource Centres (FSRCs) with a view to take up the functions of a Family Support Unit and Family Resource Unit of the Integrated Family Services Centre (IFSC). By 2005, these FSRCs were formally merged into the SWD IFSCs.
37. Meanwhile, the CCs operated by NGO continued to provide group and community services such as building up networks with different stakeholders in the community or neighbourhood, like schools, agencies, social groups and residential groups, holding community activities, arousing residents' attention to their own community affairs, helping residents to solve community problems together, like improvement of environment and transportation services, and developing social network and mutual help among residents.

### NGO CCs and urban renewal

38. Since all NGO CCs operated in the old urban areas<sup>5</sup>, they would naturally serve as local platforms for organizing residents in the old urban area to participate in various public affairs. For instance, during the deliberation of the Urban Renewal Authority Bill in the Legislative Council, NGO CCs submitted their views individually, as a group via the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and through the concern groups of residents of various districts that they have helped to organize.
39. Accordingly, NGO CCs came to the scene of urban redevelopment projects either because of their previous community organizing work with the residents in the project area or at times invited by the residents who sought help from the CCs. Moreover, owing to their long term presence in the community, NGO CCs are in better position to establish trust with the affected residents, particularly, those who would like the social workers to help them to get organized to fight for their interests.

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<sup>5</sup> Both the Yuen Long Town Hall Community Centre and Yan Oi Tong Community Centre operated in the old parts of the town centres in Yuen Long and Tuen Mun respectively.

40. In many URA redevelopment projects, there were co-presence of both URA SSTs and NGO CCs. For example, in the H20 project (First/Second Street) Sai Ying Pun, they were the SST from St. James' Settlement and the CC from Caritas in Kennedy Town, and in the H15 project (Lee Tung Street), they were the SST from Methodist Centre and the CC of St. James' Settlement. According to the interviewees in this study, the collaboration between the SSTs and the CCs has been quite smooth. Social workers of SSTs and CCs, after continuous clarification and mutual agreements, have developed a kind of partnership in serving the residents<sup>6</sup>.
41. Apart from urban redevelopment, NGO CCs participated in various types of urban development and other urban renewal projects. For example, the St. James' Settlement participated actively in preservation projects and planning in urban renewal strategies in Wanchai and in Hong Kong; the Mong Kok Chan Hing Social Service Centre participated actively in rehabilitation programmes; the Caritas Kennedy Town CC participated actively in the planning work of the Kennedy Town harbor front; and the Caritas Kowloon CC established the "Old Kowloon Network" (九龍城舊區網絡) of residents from Kowloon City and To Kwa Wan and organized activities to engage residents to concern issues about heritage conservation and community rehabilitation.

#### Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDP) and urban renewal

42. NLCDPs were introduced in the 1970s and officially defined as a community development programme in 1977 "to serve the deprived and transient communities where the provision of welfare services and facilities was inadequate or non-existent". In early years, most of the NLCDPs served Temporary Housing Areas, cottage areas, squatter areas, and old public housing estates (Mark I to Mark VI). With a full strength of 54 NLCDPs in 1994-96, the number reduced as these neighbourhoods gradually disappeared. At present, there were only 18 NLCDPs serving squatter and cottage areas mostly in the rural areas.
43. While the funding of the NLCDPs came from the Home Affairs Bureau, the monitoring process is undertaken by the Social Welfare Department. A NLCDP committee was set up under the HAB to steer the development of NLCDPs. This NLCDP committee has not met in recent years.

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<sup>6</sup> Law, Pui-ling (2007). Writing on Urban Redevelopment: A Selection of Papers on Urban Redevelopment Services. Hong Kong: The Office of the Honourable Fernando Cheung, pp. 28-30.

44. In the course of the discussion on the future development of NLCDPs, deploying NLCDPs to older urban areas had been on the agenda for many years. For instance, Cheng (1997)<sup>7</sup> recommended setting up a number of “Neighbourhood Resource Centres” in some Hong Kong old urban areas in need.
45. There were two pilot NLCDP projects commenced in Nam Cheong and Mong Kok South in January 1995 to test the suitability of NLCDP services in old urban areas for a trial period of three years, to be followed by a review. The Executive Council also decided in December 1995 that an independent review group should be set up to review the two pilot NLCDPs serving the old urban areas of Nam Cheong and Mong Kok<sup>8</sup>
46. The Report of the Review Group on Pilot NLCDPs in Old Urban Areas was submitted to the Secretary for Home Affairs on January 19, 1998. It recommended that NLCDP services were not suitable in old urban areas, but a form of Integrated Neighbourhood Projects (INPs) should be adopted to serve the targeted old urban areas according to a set of selection criteria. The ExCo also decided that the two pilot NLCDPs in Nam Cheong and Mong Kok South should cease to operate upon their completion, and that a system for NGOs to undertake modified INPs should be introduced in old urban areas to strengthen the outreaching efforts of appropriate local service units run by NGOs to exclusively serve those target groups<sup>9</sup>.
47. In 1999, some discontinued NLCDPs were relocated to serve old urban areas and were transformed to Integrated Neighbourhood Projects (INPs) to strengthen outreaching efforts for new arrivals, elderly and low income families. In the review of the INPs in 2002, the Administration decided to gradually phase out the INPs and some the INPs were transformed into Family Support Networking Teams, which were subsequently merged with other relevant service units mainly family service centres to form the IFSCs in NGOs in 2005.
48. One Care and Support Networking Team (CSNT) operated by the Society for Community Organisation (SoCO) was very similar to the NLCDP or INP. It served the neighbourhood in West Kowloon (primarily in Shamshuipo). While the major service targets of CSNT are on the ex-offenders, ex-mentally ill and street sleepers, the SoCO has been very active in issues related to urban renewal, particularly in Shamshuipo.

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<sup>7</sup> Cheng, Fung-ping (1997). Community Work in Old Urban Areas – Problem Identification and Application of Neighbourhood Resource Center Model. In *Community Development Resource Book 1995 and 1996*. Hong Kong: The Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

<sup>8</sup> LegCo Panel on Welfare Services, Meeting on 27 July 1998 – *Review on Pilot Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) in Old Urban Areas*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid..

## **Concluding remarks**

49. One central mission of the Home Affairs Bureau is to “fostering the spirit of community participation in public affairs”. CCs which were originally funded under the community building programme obviously serve to achieve such mission. Urban renewal is a subject of public affairs and affects the well being of people in the community. Promoting community participation in the planning and implementation of urban renewal projects naturally falls within the mandate of the CCs.
  
50. On one hand, during the discussion of the future directions of NLCDPs and INPs, after repeated pilot projects in the past two decades, the Government decided not to set up specific community development projects in the old urban areas. On the other hand, there is at least one CC covering the 9 existing old urban target areas of URA except for Shamshuipo, where the SoCO is also active in promoting community participation as part of its CSNT service.

## **Chapter 4 Related work in building management – Home Affairs Department, Buildings Department, HK Housing Society, and URA**

### **Introduction**

51. Building management involves organizing work. Residents and owners need to be organized before they would be able to deal with the management of the building collectively.
52. Building management is a policy under the mandate of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) as building management requires organizations of owners and community building is a policy within the HAB. On the other hand, rehabilitation of private buildings is part of the urban renewal strategy under the Development Bureau. The work of building management, thus, involves the work of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Buildings Department (BD), and the work of two other bodies, the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA).

### **The work of the HAB and HAD**

#### The Building Management Ordinance

53. The principle that property owners should bear the ultimate responsibility for the condition keeping of their buildings and the cost involved is widely agreed by the public<sup>10</sup>. It is expected that, through legislation, owners can manage their property and resolve their own building management problems effectively on a self-help basis, and a statutory framework for the formation and operation of owners' corporations (OCs) is therefore provided by the government to serve the purpose.
54. In 1970, the Government enacted the Multi-storey Buildings (Owners Incorporation) Ordinance (Cap. 344) to provide a legal framework for property owners to form owners' corporations (OCs) to manage their own buildings. The Ordinance was substantially revamped in 1993 and re-titled as the Building Management Ordinance (BMO) to facilitate the incorporation of owners of flats in buildings or groups of buildings, to provide owners with specific powers and responsibilities for the management of buildings or groups of buildings, in particular the common parts of their buildings. The

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<sup>10</sup> Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau (2005a), *Public consultation on mandatory building inspection*, Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau, Hong Kong.



BMO also extended the jurisdiction of the Lands Tribunal to adjudicate building management disputes.

55. Owing to the widely acknowledged difficulties of building management experienced by the members of OCs, the BMO has been further amended in 1998, 2000, and 2007.
56. For instance, in April 2005, the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) introduced the Building Management (Amendment) Bill 2005 (the Bill), with the draft Building Management (Third Party Risks Insurance) Regulation, into the Legislative Council. The Bill aimed to assist OCs in performing their duties and exercising their powers, to safeguard the interests of property owners, and to rationalize the appointment procedures of a management committee and its members. The Bill was approved by the Legislative Council on 25 April 2007 and commenced on 1 August 2007<sup>11</sup>.
57. While the SHA is the Authority of the BMO, the HAD being the executive arm of the HAB assists owners of private buildings to form OCs and assists them in dealing with building management matters and the operation of OCs by providing advisory and support services and organizing training programmes for members of OCs. For instance, from October to December 2009, HAD staff have paid 7,812 visits to OCs/Mutual Aid Committees/owners' committees and buildings without any form of management and organized 157 educational and publicity activities<sup>12</sup>.

#### Building Management Resource Centres (BMRCs)

58. In 1997, a Working Group was set up to explore the establishment of the Building Management Resource Centres (BMRCs). The Working Group, comprised of the representatives from HAD, HAB, Fire Services Department, Buildings Department, Housing Department and various building management-related professional bodies, had unanimously supported the setting up of the BMRCs. Four professional bodies, namely The Law Society of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Society of Accountants, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors and Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies, agreed to provide free professional advice at the Centres to owners and OCs of private buildings<sup>13</sup>. The first BMRC was set up in April 1998.<sup>14</sup> By May 2001, 3

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<sup>11</sup> HAD. *Support to the Owners and Owners' Corporations*. [http://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/policy/1\\_4.htm](http://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/policy/1_4.htm) (accessed, 5 May 2010).

<sup>12</sup> HAD. *Progress Indicators for 2009*. [http://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/policy/1\\_4.htm](http://www.buildingmgt.gov.hk/en/policy/1_4.htm) (accessed, 13 Apr 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> HKSAR. Panel on Home Affairs, Provisional Legislative Council meeting on 23 March 1998 on Building Management and Fire Prevention.

BMRCs are in operation with one in HK Island, one in Kowloon, and one in New Territories (Tsuen Wan).

### District Building Management Liaison Teams

59. Following the enactment of the Building Management (Amendment) Bill 2000 and the strengthening measures<sup>15</sup>, HAD has been allocated additional resources in the 2001-02 financial year for additional manpower to provide more comprehensive and professional service to owners and OCs<sup>16</sup> in order to raise the building management service standards.
60. With the additional resource, a new division, Building Management Division, with 12 posts responsible for the provision of legal, technical and other expert support was established in June 2001 in the HAD Headquarters to help to coordinate the building management matters. About 78 posts were created in the District Offices to form the District Building Management Liaison Teams (DBMLTs) in the 18 districts, replacing the existing Building Management Coordination Teams (BMCT)<sup>17</sup>.
61. The DBMLTs, comprised of full-time properly trained Liaison Officers, are set up in the 18 District Offices to:
- visit owners of private buildings in the district to promote the good practices of building management;
  - advise owners on the procedures of the formation of OC;
  - issue an exemption certificate to the convenor of an owners' meeting for obtaining a free copy of record of owners of the building from the Land Registry for the purpose of convening a meeting to form an OC<sup>18</sup>;
  - attend owners' meetings and give advice to owners as and when necessary;
  - process applications made to the SHA for an order to convene a meeting of owners under section 3A of the BMO;
  - organize training courses, seminars, talks and workshops on building management for members of the management committee;

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<sup>15</sup> HKSAR. (2000). *Press release: Building Management (Amendment) Ordinance 2000 takes effect.*  
<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200008/01/0801169.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> HKSAR. (March 21, 2001 ) *Press Release - SHA's speech at LegCo special Finance Committee meeting.*  
<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200103/21/0321224.htm>. (accessed, 13 Apr 2010).

<sup>17</sup> The BMCTs comprised of officers seconded from the Housing Department to the HAD, are the executive arms of the Building Management Co-ordination Committees. The BMCTs worked with owners of the identified buildings to tackle building management problems and to monitor progress of subsequent improvements made to these buildings. (<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200101/17/0117172.htm>)

<sup>18</sup> Each building will only be issued with the exemption certificate once. Subsequent search of record of owners for whatever reason shall be conducted at owners' own cost.

- organize educational and publicity activities, e.g. arranging roving exhibitions on building management and producing a series of publicity materials on building management, maintenance and insurance to promote proper and effective building management;
  - handle enquiries and complaints relating to building management;
  - assist law enforcement departments in enforcing building maintenance and fire safety improvement; and
  - help resolve disputes between owners, OCs and management companies, and arrange the provision of voluntary professional mediation service, if there is a need.
62. To enable the community to obtain quick and accurate information on building management, the HAD also set up a dedicated homepage with updated information on building management and bulletin board service for reference and use by the public in the same year 2001. In March 2002, the HAD also set up a central database on all private buildings to provide the public with basic information on buildings in all districts.

### **Related Work of the Buildings Department**

63. Under the BMO, the BD has the role to keep buildings in Hong Kong good repair and safe condition rests with the building owners or OCs. BD has to co-ordinate joint enforcement action with the other government departments to ensure that the building owners or OCs proceed with the required works within a reasonable period of time. BD will also meet and engage building owners or OCs of target buildings through the relevant District Office to explain to them in details the requisite maintenance and repair works and the technical issues involved.
64. On 1 August 2000, the BMO was amended to require the OCs to manage and maintain their buildings in accordance with the “Code of Practice on Building Management and Maintenance” issued under the Ordinance by HAB. In November 2000, BD in association with the other government departments<sup>19</sup> launched the Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme (CMBS) in various districts throughout Hong Kong to assist building owners and owners' corporations (OCs) in pursuing a comprehensive building management and maintenance programme. Under CMBS, a designated BD officer would be assigned to act as the Building Coordinator for each of the target

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<sup>19</sup> The six other government departments, including Home Affairs Department (HAD), Fire Services Department, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Water Supplies Department and Environmental Protection Department.

buildings and responsible to arrange meeting, through relevant District Office, to meet with the building owners or OC to give them advice on building maintenance matters<sup>20</sup>.

65. However, the establishment of the CMBS was found to be insufficient to serve the purpose. BD also found that the owners of many of the buildings, particularly the older buildings, have strong resistance to follow the building orders, such as removing the illegal structures from their buildings, due to reasons like financial problems, have insufficient knowledge on building maintenance and many other problems<sup>21</sup>.

#### In-house Social Services Teams (SST)

66. In 2002, BD established 3 in-house Social Services Teams (SSTs) to cater for the increasing expectation of the community and the implementation of various large-scale operations to enforce building safety, health and environmental standards, to take care of the financial, psychological and social needs of complainants and owners/occupants affected by the Department's enforcement actions; and also to enhance mutual understanding and streamline the communication between occupants and BD<sup>22</sup>.

Table 4.1 Buildings Department In-house Social Services Team Service Development

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
March 2002	Formed 3 in-house SSTs with 9 staff <sup>23</sup>
2004 -2005	BD send out 2,800 building orders that year and referred around 600 cases to social workers' support Spent around 3 millions to extend contracts with all 3 SSTs (3-4 staff each)
2002 – 2005	3 BD SSTs handled 1,600 cases within 3 years
2006 – 2007	Budget 3.4 millions
2002-2007	3 BD SSTs handled 2,700 case
2007 – 2008	Increased from 3 to 5 SSTs Manpower increased from 12 to 15 social workers Increased budget to 4.5 million
2008	Increased the number of SST from 5 to 8 teams

<sup>20</sup> Buildings Department. (24 Apr 2009) *Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme*. [http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index\\_faqB.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index_faqB.html) (Accessed, 19 Apr 2010)

<sup>21</sup> The Sun (太陽報) (15 Feb 2005) 社工說服拆僭建物

<sup>22</sup> Buildings Department. (16 Nov 2009) *In-house Social Services Teams*. [http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index\\_exist7.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index_exist7.html) (Accessed, 19 Apr 2010)

<sup>23</sup> Some of these NGOs like CFSC also provide community support services that concern with urban renewal under different schemes and in other districts and that would be described in more detail in another section on community service.

	Contract duration extended from 1 to 2 years <sup>24</sup>
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Source: *The Sun* 15 Feb 2005 and 24 Feb 2007 and [www.hkcss.org.hk](http://www.hkcss.org.hk).

67. As shown in the table above, the number of SSTs has been gradually increased from 3 to 8 since 2002.<sup>25</sup> At the time of study, there were 7 SSTs in operation.
68. The services provided by the in-house SSTs mainly are as below<sup>26</sup>.
- to handle and follow up cases involving social issues by liaising with and referring to other departments such as Social Welfare Department, Housing Department and Education Bureau;
  - to accompany BD staff to conduct site visits for difficult cases that require special negotiation or counselling services;
  - to outreach, on a need basis, to owners/occupants encountering financial, psychological and social difficulties;
  - to participate in BD's meetings with owners' organizations and other government departments for the purpose of addressing social issues arising from BD's operations; and
  - to provide consultation and training to BD staff on handling cases involving emotional owners/occupants.
69. The services approaches of these in-house SSTs include outreaching, case work (including service referral), liaison with community resources, organizing residents, community education and community building services to engage building owners and OCs in the district and enable them to organise and solve their problems concerned with building rehabilitation and other associated problems.
70. While these SSTs are "in-housed" establishment, the work is contracted out to four different NGOs. Though the SSTs worked in the office provided by the BD and actually worked very closely together with Building Officers of BD, "independence" is apparently not an issue for these SSTs, as there is apparently no advocacy work ever demanded by the residents.

### **Related Work done by the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS)**

<sup>24</sup> HKCSS (Apr 2008) 駐屋宇署支援服務隊-家庭及社區服務通訊

<http://www.hkcss.org.hk/fs/newsletter/service.asp?issueid=200804#523> (Accessed, 22 April 2010)

<sup>25</sup> Buildings Department. (16 Nov 2009) *In-house Social Services Teams*.

[http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index\\_exist7.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index_exist7.html) (Accessed, 19 Apr 2010)

<sup>26</sup> Buildings Department. (16 Nov 2009) *In-house Social Services Teams*.

[http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index\\_exist7.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/english/services/index_exist7.html) (Accessed, 19 Apr 2010)

71. The Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) is the second largest public housing provider in Hong Kong, after the Hong Kong Housing Authority. HKHS, founded in 1948 and incorporated by ordinance in 1951, is a non-governmental, not-for-profit and independent housing organization.
72. HKHS also assists the Government to promote building management and maintenance with their resources and expertise by providing one-stop services to the owners of private buildings. In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Housing, Planning & Lands Bureau for the HKHS to launch the Building Management and Maintenance Scheme (BMMS)<sup>27</sup> with \$3 billion for 10 years. The BMMS promotes building management mainly through 1) Education and Publicity, 2) Guidance and Advice, 3) Incentives and Assistance, and 4) Loan Scheme. Later in 2009, a Memoranda of Understanding was signed with the Development Bureau and URA to jointly launch the "Operation Building Bright" campaign. The weight on the promotion of building management of private buildings increases accompanied with the changing role of HKHS.
73. Since then, HKHS has made more effort on public education and information support service on building management. HKHS has regularly organized promotional and educational activities, including seminars, workshops, property management courses, carnivals and distributes pamphlets to promote proper management and maintenance to enhance the awareness and understanding of building management of the owners, OCs and property management companies.
74. HKHS also has published user guides, pamphlets and videos on building management matters. These reference materials are available for public reference at the Property Management Advisory Centres<sup>28</sup> (PMAC) free of charge.

Figure 4.1 Building management guides jointly published by the HKHS and the ICAC

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<sup>27</sup> HKHS. *Building Management and Maintenance Scheme* (accessed 14 April 2010)  
[http://www.hkhs.com/eng/business/pm\\_bmm.asp](http://www.hkhs.com/eng/business/pm_bmm.asp)

<sup>28</sup> HKHS. *Property Management Advisory Centre*. (Accessed, 14 Apr 2010)  
[http://www.hkhs.com/eng/business/pm\\_advisory.asp](http://www.hkhs.com/eng/business/pm_advisory.asp)



75. The public can also obtain free guidance and advice on building management and maintenance from qualified and professional property management and maintenance staff stationed at the PMACs operated by the HKHS at various districts. The PMACs are set up to provide property management advisory services to building owners, residents, Owners' Incorporations (OI) and Mutual Aid Committees (MAC) in different districts in Hong Kong to help them to solve problems in building management, repair and maintenance. The first PMAC was opened in Sham Shui Po in 2004. Currently, there were a total of 11 PMACs.
76. PMACs also act as the partner to participate in the "Coordinated Maintenance of Buildings Scheme" of the BD to provide guidance for the owners or OCs to carry out maintenance and repair works required for the sake of establishing long-term building management practices.
77. The scope of services of the PMAC includes:
- Give advice on general building management and maintenance matters;
  - provide appointment service for people to seek free advice from professional bodies;
  - provide guidance and assistance to owners in forming Owners' Incorporation;
  - assist in surveying building conditions and identify necessary improvement works;
  - assist owners in appointing property management companies and project consultants to coordinate matters relating to building management and maintenance;
  - assist owners in solving technical problems in the procurement and tendering of repair and maintenance works;
  - organize functions such as seminars and workshops to enhance owners' knowledge in building management and maintenance; and
  - provide relevant information on building management for reference by the public.

78. In 2008, the HKHS engaged a NGO to provide a one-stop service within one of the PMACs to help individual elderly to better maintain and improve their living environment.

**Related Work Done by the Other Components of URA**

79. URA has been providing three forms of assistance to encourage better care of domestic premises in multiple ownership by the owners since 2003. They are namely the Building Rehabilitation Loan Scheme (BRLS), Building Rehabilitation Materials Incentive Scheme (BRMIS) and the Hardship Grant Scheme. Under the BRMIS scheme, URA invites OCs of domestic or composite buildings in multiple ownership and subject to statutory repair orders to participate in this Scheme and will advise on building rehabilitation works, implementation programs, building inspection, tendering and supervision, and supply of renovation materials. The objectives of the scheme are to encourage the owners of multi-owned and close to or over 20 years old buildings and with established OCs to carry out preventive building maintenance and promoting sustained maintenance and management after rehabilitation.

80. Though there is no established workflow between URA and BD on building management works, some owners may approach URA for professional advice and materials/loan/grant support through URA’s support schemes after receiving building orders from BD.

81. In April 2004, URA started to use a more active approach to reach the building owners. URA finds partnering local organizations to approach owners in older buildings, with building age over 20 years, to promote building rehabilitation and to support building owners to follow up their repair works.

82. In response to the keen demand on building rehabilitation and the commencement of other rehabilitation programmes like the Operation Building Bright, this local organization partnering programme has been expanding to more districts in the last several years.

**Table 4.2 Development of local organization partnership programme**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Area covered (Service development)</b>
2004	Yaumatei/Mongkok, Tai Kok Tsui and Shum Shui Po.
2005	Service extended to cover Central & Western and Wanchai.
2006	Service extended to cover Ma Tau Kok.



2009	Further extended to cover Kwun Tong and Tsuen Wan.
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83. URA invites proposals from NGOs by posting advertisement on newspaper, and the selection of partners is based on their relevant experience and local network. The major scope of services includes<sup>29</sup>.
- marketing URA’s building rehabilitation incentive schemes through organizing workshops, seminars, briefings and promotional activities;
  - assisting owners to form OCs with a view to organizing rehabilitation works;
  - providing estate management advice and administrative support to the OCs in initial planning of rehabilitation works as necessary with a view to persuading them to successfully join the schemes;
  - assisting to resolve neighbourhood relation disputes arising in the course of planning and organization of building rehabilitation; and
  - facilitating owners with financial difficulties to apply for URA’s loan and grant and providing special assistance, where appropriate, to elderly or owners with special needs in the application process.
84. The contracts from URA to local organizations are on yearly base, and contract renewal is subject to their performance. To ensure the quality of service, some measures are designed by URA as below to monitor the service and also the partnering local organizations are required to submit quarterly report for record and assessment<sup>30</sup>.
- A target achievement needs to be submitted together with the proposal by NGOs for URA’s consideration before services contract award;
  - once the services contract is awarded, each NGO would submit a detailed action plan to URA for approval;
  - review meetings will be held quarterly to monitor the NGOs’ performance and achievement against the target achievement and the approved action plan; and
  - part of the sponsorship amount will be released based on the actual performance in OC formation and cases referral to join URA’s rehabilitation schemes.

### **Concluding Remarks**

85. We noted above that in the course of promoting and assisting building management, a variety of “teams” and centres are out there in the community. For organizing work, the URA partnering local organizations and the BD SSTs are actively helping owners to form OCs, while the PMACs of HKHS and the DBMLTs of HAD provide advises,

<sup>29</sup> Information from Works and Contracts Division of the URA.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

support services and education programmes. On casework, the BD SSTs help individual families in hardship and the NGO engaged by HKHS in one of its PMACs help individual elderly living in the community to deal with various issues of maintenance.

## Chapter 5 Concluding remarks, options ahead and recommendations

86. Apart from the community development services (in particular, the Community Centres, CCs) and the various services provided by the District Building Management Liaison Teams (DBMLTs) of the HAD, BD SSTs, Property Management Advisory Centres (PMACs) of HKHS, URA partnering local organizations, there are other players in the community. For instance, the other local organizations apart from those engaged by the URA, District Council Members, and political parties which are actively organizing and helping OCs. This was, in fact, one of the major reasons that in the past reviews of Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs), the Government has rejected the idea of having NLCDPs in the old urban area.
87. There are apparently considerable overlap in various types of work, particularly in community organizing and policy advocacy, though the relative emphasis and methods may vary for different bodies. For instance in organizing work, BD SSTs, DBMLTs, local organizations, District Council members and political parties focus on the formation and operation of the OCs, while URA SSTs organized affected individuals to express their views to the URA.

**Table 5.1 Different types of work performed by different bodies**

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Bodies involved</b>
Social Planning	CCs
Community Organizing	Public Funded: CCs, BD SSTs, URA SSTs, URA partnering local organizations, HAD DBMLTs Not directly public funded: District Council members Others: Political Parties
Policy Advocacy	Public funded: CCs, URA SSTs Not directly public funded: District Council members Others: Political Parties, pressure groups, and advocacy groups
Case work with needy families and individuals	BD SSTs, URA SSTs and other social service units in the community whenever needed NGO engaged by HKHS operated in PMAC for elderly residents

88. There are some variations across different districts in terms of the network of bodies that are involved in various aspects of urban renewal. In particular, there is no CC in the Shamshuipo district, though there are other NGOs in the district which are also active in community organizing and policy advocacy, e.g. the Society for Community Organization (SoCO).

### Options ahead

89. One of the major issues to deal with the future role of SSTs in urban renewal is related to the level of independence.
90. There are apparently three possibilities for future directions of forming SSTs under the auspice of urban redevelopment
- The status quo, i.e. URA contracting NGOs to operate the SSTs.
  - Forming independent SSTs funded and monitored by bodies other than URA
  - Forming district base SSTs for social planning, policy advocacy and community organizing while URA employing its own social workers to perform case work
91. In the URS review and in this study, hardly anyone expressed the wish to retain the status quo option. The pros and cons of the three options are summarized in the following table:

**Table 5.2 Pros and Cons of different Options**

Option	Pros	Cons
1. The status quo	Fair coordination between URA and SSTs	The issue of independence is not adequately addressed
2. Forming independent SSTs with monitoring by bodies other than URA	SSTs are seen to be more independent	Requires more coordination efforts between URA and SSTs
3. Forming district based SSTs for social planning, policy advocacy and community organizing while URA employs its own social workers to perform case work	There will be no role conflicts within the SST teams; and much better coordination between the acquisition team and social work team within URA	URA social workers will find it hard and sometimes impossible to build rapport and hence working relationship with needy individuals and families when they have a grievance with the work of URA; recommendation of Compassionate Re-housing and other forms of assistance may not be seen as independent and fair; and SSTs' work overlap with other services in the community

92. The major advantage of the second option (i.e. SST monitored and funded by bodies other than URA) is its perceived independence while its disadvantage (i.e. coordination between URA and SST) can be remedied by additional efforts of coordination and possibly by additional training provided to the social workers in SSTs.

93. The advantage of the third option (i.e. separating advocacy/organizing work from casework) is the removal of role conflict and the improvement in coordination at case work level, while its disadvantages can hardly be remedied except for seeking outside help, e.g. Integrated Family Service Centers<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, the setting up of district based SSTs for social planning, policy advocacy and community organizing is debatable as in the previous reviews of NLCDPs and INPs. There will be considerable difficulties to justify the establishment of additional social service teams when there are already many service units and organizations doing very similar work already in the community as illustrated in Table 5.1 above.
94. Apparently, Option 2 is more acceptable to the social work field while the URA management would have worries about the management and coordination of the SSTs. On the other hand, social workers have expressed strong objections to option 3, while some URA staff members in the acquisition team are also worried about the perceived loss of “independency” and the possible reduction in “credibility” of recommendations coming from within the URA as an interested party in the redevelopment process, particularly in cases of disputes.

## **Recommendations**

95. While no option is perfect, option 2 appears to be more acceptable or the least unacceptable to most parties. Moreover, remedies are more readily available for the disadvantages of option 2 than for those of option 3.

### Option 2 – Independent SSTs

96. If option 2 is taken on board, it is possible for the source of funding coming from either the Development Bureau or the URA, while contracted and monitored by the Development Bureau, Social Welfare Department (SWD), or a new trust fund as advocated by some social workers.
97. Whether the resource comes from the Development Bureau or from the URA, the funding is still public and the difference is minimal. Yet, on the other hand, if the resource comes from the Development Bureau, the SSTs would be seen as more independent from the URA, i.e. the redevelopment implementation agent.

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<sup>31</sup> We will expect strong resistance from the IFSCs as reflected in the recent review exercise done on the IFSCs. In fact, in the recent review, many social workers of IFSC congratulated that the URA has its own contract SSTs while regretting that they have to do the job “for” the Housing Department.

98. Comparatively, having the Social Welfare Department to serve as the contracting and monitoring agent, with its established contracting and service performance monitoring system in place, would be relatively more efficient than setting up new systems in the Development Bureau or even a new trust fund. Furthermore, professionals in the SWD serving in related service branches, district offices and subvention branch are social workers and these will facilitate better communication and interfacing with other related social services in the community. While it would be more efficient if the contracting and monitoring work is performed by the SWD, there may still be some resource implications for the SWD.
99. Similar to the operation of NLCDPs, it would also be necessary to set up a steering committee, at least, in the early stages of development, under the Development Bureau including representatives from the URA and other stakeholders in the community to ensure that the service directions are in line with the urban renewal strategy and the needs of the community affected by urban renewal.
100. As there would be variations in the demand of services in different districts depending on the number of redevelopment projects and households being affected, there is also a need to develop funding standards according to the scope of services and possible caseloads.
101. Regular induction training programmes for social workers would also be advantageous to help them acquire the basic understanding of the relevant knowledge in urban renewal, the community dynamics in urban renewal, and the needs of the individuals and families affected by urban renewal.

#### Option 3 – separate SSTs and in-house caseworkers for URA

102. If option 3 is taken on board, the relevant issues related to funding, contracting and monitoring of the separate SSTs would be similar to those of option 2.
103. Similar to option 2, there still exists some possible service overlap between the SSTs and the existing community development services in the community, and this has to be sorted out on individual district basis.
104. Having in-house social workers to provide the necessary casework services, it would still be necessary to keep some degree of independence for the social workers by putting them into a different department from the acquisition team and managed by a senior

social worker accountable to the senior management instead of to the project management team.

105. There is also a need to develop protocols spelling out the procedures where cases should be referred out to other case service centers, such as the Integrated Family Service Centers. Such protocols and possible caseload management issues would have to be sorted out with the relevant steering committees or working groups under the Social Welfare Department.

### Scope of Service

106. As noted earlier, to enable a bottom-up planning approach in urban renewal, the existing community centers operated by NGOs can already serve as agents to help organizing and mobilizing local residents to participate in the planning process, and they will be doing that anyway. If option 2 is taken on board, there is probably no need to include social planning in the scope of service except in communities with no NGO community centers, and in such cases, the more efficient method is to add “planning” in the relevant funding and service agreement with consideration of additional resources.
107. There is a need to decide whether the case work services provided by the SSTs should be focused on those affected by redevelopment, should include those where relocation is needed as in some cases of preservation, or should include all those affected by various urban renewal projects, including rehabilitation projects. Since the nature of service needs arising from relocation caused by some form of preservation is very similar to redevelopment, it appears to be logical to include these cases.
108. As for cases related to rehabilitation, due to the number of players involved currently, there is a definite need to streamline the services provided by various bodies to organize the residents to deal with the management, repair and maintenance of their buildings. However, this issue is beyond the scope of the present study.

### **Timing of setting up of SSTs**

109. It is obvious that the statement “should preferably be in place before the first redevelopment project has actually commenced in a target area” within the URS (2001) is no longer necessary.

110. However, the timing of setting up of SST is still an issue that has to be addressed in the future appointment of SSTs. If option 2 is taken on board, SSTs should be in place at least a few months before redevelopment projects commenced as the building of rapport and working relationship takes time. The difficult part is related to the issue of confidentiality about the commencement date of the redevelopment projects. If a SST starts its work with residents in a particular site a certain number of months ahead of project announcement by practice, people will then know when the commencement date will be once they see the SST starting their work. After the review of URA, if bottom-up planning approach is adopted for future urban renewal projects, possible redevelopment sites would be identified well ahead of their commencement, and in that case, SSTs can start their initial relationship building work well ahead of time.

### **Concluding Remarks**

111. While social work professional autonomy is something that cannot be and will not be compromised by funding relationship or service performance monitoring mechanisms, the lack of the sense of independence would create substantial stress among front-line social workers. However, the prime consideration is not so much related to professional autonomy but related to the effectiveness of helping those needing help during the redevelopment process. To build up rapport and working relationship with clients, trust is one of the primary assets of the social work profession. Social workers who are not just being independent but can be seen as independent would have a clear advantage in developing working relationship with people, who are practically strangers, in the shortest possible time. The primarily purpose of setting up SSTs is to provide assistance to those needing help and hence the issue of independence would be the one of the prime considerations for the future development of SSTs.



## **Appendix 1 List of informants interviewed or participated in focus groups**

### Government Department

1. Ms. YUEN, Fiona Yu-yin, Chief Liaison Officer (Building Management), Home Affairs Department
2. Mrs. LEE, Connie, Senior Liaison Officer (Building Management) 2, Home Affairs Department

### Urban Renewal Authority

3. Mr. LEE, Joseph King-chi, Director (Acquisition & Clearance)
4. Ms. WONG, Ellen Lai-kuen, General Manager (Acquisition and Clearance)
5. Mr. CHUNG, Kelvin, Senior Manager (Acquisition & Clearance)
6. Ms. TONG, Michelle Yat-man, Senior Manager (Acquisition & Clearance)
7. Mr. SO, Ngai long, Senior Manager (Community Development)
8. Ms. YUN, Sarah, Senior Manager (Community Development)
9. Mr. LAW, Matthew, Manager – (Acquisition and Clearance)
10. Ms. TSUI, Joan, Senior Officer (Community Development)

### In-house Social Service Team (Building Department funded)

11. Mr. WONG, Paul, Service Manger, Christian Family Service Centre
12. Ms. CHENG, Yuk-chun, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
13. Ms. CHAN, Siu-wan, Social Worker, Methodist Centre
14. Ms. LO, Phoebe Siu-ping, Centre-In-Charge, The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council

### Urban Renewal Social Service Team (Urban Renewal Authority funded)

15. Mr. NG, Charles Ka-kui, Programme Director, Christian Family Service Centre
16. Mr. IU, Albert Ho-tat, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
17. Mr. LEE, Desmond Hang-kin, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
18. Ms. LEE, Tammy Suk-ling, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
19. Mr. SIU, Chun-keung, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
20. Ms. SIU, Wai-ying, Social Worker, Christian Family Service Centre
21. Ms. LEUNG, Janet, Supervisor, The Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command
22. Ms. LAM, Jessica, Team Leader, The Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command
23. Mr. LAI, Oscar, Social Worker, The Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command
24. Ms. LEONG, Emily, Social Worker, The Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command
25. Mr. LEUNG, Kenneth Kwok-hei, Social Worker, St. James Settlement
26. Mr. YUEN, Wai-tak, Social Worker, St. James Settlement

Community Centre

27. Mr. CHAN, Lo-kin, Social Work Supervisor, Caritas Community Centre - Kowloon
28. Mr. KO, Chun-wa, Social Work Supervisor, Caritas Community Centre – Caine Road
29. Mr. NG, William Man-sui, Social Work Supervisor, Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Kun Community Centre
30. Ms. YAU Wong, Asis Mei-kuen, Social Work Supervisor, Caritas Community Centre, Ngau Tau Kok
31. Ms. MAN, Tracy Pui-shan, Officer-In-Charge, Martha Boss Lutheran Community Centre Group & Community Work Unit, Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, LC-HKS
32. Mr. NG, Ernest Kwok-kwa, Deputy Executive Director, The Mong Kok Kai Fong Association Limited Chan Hing Social Service Centre
33. Mr. NG, Sze-on, Service-In-Charge, Community Development Services, St. James Settlement
34. Ms. YUK, Helina, Director, HKSKH Lady MacLehouse Centre

## **Appendix II Scope of Service for SST**

### **Scope of service prior to the Review completed in 2008**

- a) To identify the needs of the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of ethnic minority groups, as well as their employees and provide assistance and counseling services to individuals and families in crisis or in need as a result of the changes brought about by the urban renewal process; to facilitate effective problem solving through volunteer support and case management; and to maintain contacts and refer those who are in need to necessary community resources and services;
- b) To help the affected owners and residents in particular, the vulnerable groups, including those who are of ethnic minority groups, in maintaining and rebuilding their social support network, to develop a mechanism to identify high-risk cases in terms of mental health and social vulnerability; and to make recommendations to the Authority to act on compassionate grounds where appropriate;
- c) To establish rapport with and build trust among the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of ethnic minority groups as well as their employees and assist them to express their views and anxieties on issues of urban renewal, their concerns about the Authority's work and policies, and to reflect these views and concerns to the district management of the Authority;
- d) To facilitate effective communication between the Authority and the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of ethnic minority groups as well as their employees; to assist in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project in accordance with the Urban Renewal Strategy and the Authority's policies and to provide a mediation channel between the Authority and those affected who have exceptional anxieties and resistance to urban renewal;
- e) To provide service in promoting owners' and residents' ability to help themselves and participate positively in the urban renewal process including redevelopment, preservation, rehabilitation, and revitalization; and
- f) To maintain regular and effective communication with the Authority and to work in close cooperation with district front-line staff of the Authority in furtherance of the objectives of the Authority.

## **Scope of Service after the review in 2008**

- a) To identify the needs of the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of minority ethnic groups, as well as their employees and provide assistance and counseling services to individuals and families in crisis or in need as a result of the changes brought about by the urban renewal process; to facilitate effective problem solving through volunteer support and case management; and to maintain contacts and refer those who are in need to necessary community resources and services;
- b) To help the affected owners and residents in particular, the vulnerable groups, including those who are of minority ethnic groups, in maintaining and rebuilding their social support network, to develop a mechanism to identify high-risk cases in terms of mental health and social vulnerability; and to make recommendations to the Authority to act on compassionate grounds where appropriate;
- c) To establish rapport with and build trust among the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of minority ethnic groups as well as their employees and assist them to express their views and anxieties on issues of urban renewal, their concerns about the Authority's work and policies, and to reflect these views and concerns to the district management of the Authority;
- d) To facilitate effective communication between the Authority and the affected owners, residents, shop operators and hawkers, including those who are of minority ethnic groups as well as their employees; to assist in ensuring the smooth implementation of the project in accordance with the Urban Renewal Strategy and the Authority's policies and to provide a mediation channel between the Authority and those residents who have exceptional anxieties and resistance to urban renewal;
- e) To provide service in promoting owners' and residents' ability to help themselves and participate positively in the urban renewal process including redevelopment, preservation, rehabilitation, and revitalization;
- f) To follow up each case for an average of 6 months after relocation;

- g) In following up cases after relocation,
  - (i) to assist the displaced persons to maintain contacts with their previous neighbours; and
  - (ii) to ensure that the displaced persons needing education, cultural/religious, leisure, health and welfare services can obtain similar services in their new neighbourhoods whenever appropriate; and
  
- h) To maintain regular and effective communication with the Authority and to work in close cooperation with district front-line staff of the Authority.