

January 10, 2025

The Editor
The Guardian

Dear Editor,

I strongly refute the alarmist and pessimistic sentiment in “Doomed to fail? Hong Kong’s attempt to tackle ‘shoebox housing’ runs into trouble” (January 3).

Hong Kong, a densely populated city with limited land resources, has long-standing housing challenges. I wish to highlight just a few of the initiatives that the current-term Government is taking to address key issues.

For subdivided units (SDUs), we are consulting stakeholders on a regulatory regime that imposes a number of minimum standards on SDUs. These basic yet sought-after accommodations would then qualify as “Basic Housing Units”. We also know that about 40% of roughly 110,000 SDU households are applying for Public Rental Housing (PRH).

Our overriding goal is to increase supply of PRH units and reduce the waiting list through various measures. Coupled with some 30,000 units of Light Public Housing (LPH) to be completed by 2026-27, the total public housing supply in the coming five years will reach 189,000 units, about 80% higher than that of the previous five-year period.

Around 18,400 Transitional Housing (TH) units are also in operation, with the remaining 2,800 units expected to be completed within this year to plug the short-term supply gap. The Government provides special allowance for eligible applicants to move to TH and LPH, where rent starts from HK\$880 for LPH.

As for so-called “cage homes” and other small bedspaces, the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance (Cap. 447) enacted in 1994 mandates safety standards and sanitary provisions and regulates bedspace apartments to ensure the safety of occupants. Strict enforcement action is taken against unlicensed bedspace apartments by our Home Affairs Department, with two such cases being prosecuted and convicted in September 2024.

I am confident that our multi-pronged housing strategy is destined to succeed, and that it could provide a model for many other cities around the world tackling similar housing issues.

Winnie Ho Wing-yin
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The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region