Public Hearing Summary
Thursday April 20, 2017

Committee Members:
The following Committee Members were present at the meeting:

- Dr. Lackram Bodoe - Vice-Chairman
- Mr. Maxie Cuffie - Member
- Mr. Wade Mark - Member
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy - Member
- Ms. Allyson Baksh - Member
- Ms. Nicole Olivierre - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

- Mrs. Marion Hayes - Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
- Ms. Danragie Mootoo - Director, Human Resource Management Division
- Ms. Nina Antoine - Senior Economist, Economic Research and Planning Unit
- Ms. Lydia Brown - Executive Officer, Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee
- Mr. Solomon Lamb - Accountant
- Mr. Brent Lyons - Managing Director, HDC
- Mr. Inskip Pollonais - Divisional Manager, Finance (Ag.), HDC
Key Issues Discussed:

i. An overview of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development;

ii. The Housing policies to treat with the needs of the population;

iii. The current complement of the housing stock of throughout Trinidad and Tobago;

iv. The status of the Ministry’s outstanding Administrative Reports and Audited Financial Statements;

v. The status of the outstanding Administrative Reports and Audited Financial Statements of the Agencies/State Enterprises under the purview of the Ministry;

vi. The percentage of the Ministry’s budgetary allocation that has been spent to date;

vii. The status of the HDC’s Public-Private partnerships;

viii. The maintenance of the Inventory Register;

ix. The causes for the delays in updating the Inventory Register;

x. The training provided for staff responsible for maintaining the Inventory Register;

xi. The status of the Ministry’s implementation of an electronic system for the monitoring of inventory;

xii. The frequency of checks conducted on the Inventory Register and vehicle Register;

xiii. The ways in which the Ministry accounts for the inventory and vehicles kept by its Agencies/State Enterprises under its purview;

xiv. The inadequacy of staffing of the Ministry’s Internal Audit Unit;

xv. The status of the Internal Audit Units in Agencies/State Enterprises under the purview of the Ministry;

xvi. The inability of the Ministry to cover all areas of the Ministry’s functions when carrying out internal audits;

xvii. The level of Risk Management practiced by the Ministry;

xviii. The absence of a Risk Register;
xix. The level of the Ministry’s compliance with the Operational Health and Safety Act (OSHA);
xx. The absence of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at the HDC and the burden placed on the Economic and Planning Unit to engage in some aspects of monitoring and evaluation;
xxi. The status of the HDC’s Internal Audit Unit;
xxii. The level of the HDC’s compliance with the Operational Health and Safety Act (OSHA);
xxiii. The status of the HDC’s Risk Register;
xxiv. The status of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee’s (SILWC) Internal Audit Unit;
xxv. The Accounting Officer’s level of satisfaction with the present Internal Audit Function at the Ministry and in Agencies/State Enterprises under its purview;
xxvi. The progress made in the restructuring exercise carried out by the Ministry;
xxvii. The current complement of the HDC’s housing stock;
xxviii. The lack of Internal Audit Units at New City Mall and East Side Plaza;
xxix. The absence of Internal Audits carried out by New City Mall and East Side Plaza;
xxx. The instances of high-end vehicles being leased by the Ministry;
xxxi. The lack of a policy to guide the acquisition of motor vehicles;
xxxii. The status of the tagging of vehicles leased by the Ministry and the HDC;
xxxiii. The level of project management practiced by the HDC;
xxxiv. The process of following up on HDC projects;
xxxv. The challenges faced by the HDC in its revenue collection and initiatives to reconcile same;
xxxvi. The status of the HDC’s Mortgage Conversion Caravan Drive;
xxxvii. The strategies to encourage HDC renters to bring outstanding arrears up to date;
xxxviii. The status of HDC’s revenue collection over the current financial year;
xxxix. The existence of a debt servicing programme provided by the HDC;
xl. The need for new arrangements/terms and conditions for HDC external debt collectors in 2017 to close gap between when debt is collected and remitted to HDC;
xli. The limitations in carrying out assessments for new incoming HDC home owners;
xlii. The measures in place to treat with abandoned HDC homes;
xliii. The total value of the abandoned housing stock;
Measures put in place to monitor HDC housing stock;

The plans to address applicant uncertainty for HDC applications;

The status of the Ministry’s relocation plans;

The status of the sale of abandoned HDC units;

The need for the Ministry to implement a public education drive for prospective home applicants and current owners;

The measures taken by the Ministry to reduce the occurrences of fraudulent home occupation;

The measures for applicants to track their applications;

The level of customer service received by HDC applicants;

The deficiencies of the current point system for HDC applications which are in excess of 10 years;

The Ministry’s process to employ persons under 'short term employment';

The number of HDC employees (1020);

The reasons for the delayed preparation of HDC management accounts;

The status of outstanding HDC audited financial statements from 2004/2005;

The need for additional external auditors to expedite the auditing of outstanding HDC audited financial statements from 2005-2016;

The key findings of the 2004 HDC audited statements;

The reasons for the delayed Board appointment of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee and the impact on infrastructural works;

The projected revenue for the Victoria Keyes Housing Development and realized revenue to date;

The role of Regional Corporations to assist with providing maintenance for current housing projects for the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee;

The eligibility criteria for housing units of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee Board;

The status of the 2,500 units under Accelerated Housing Programme;

The status of the two abandoned HDC towers at Edinburgh 500;

The percentage of the Ministry’s Development Programme implemented to date;

The training and community services provided by the East Port of Spain Development Company;

The timeliness of the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance to the East Port of Spain Development Company; and

The recommendations to assist the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and its agencies in performing its duties and functions.
View the Hearing:
The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube Channel, Parlview via the following link:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVoIr1xydqU

Next Meeting:
The next Public Hearing of the Committee will be held on Thursday April 27, 2017 at 2:30 p.m. At this meeting, the Committee intends to commence its examination of the Tobago House of Assembly as it relates to Inventory Control, Internal Audit, Accountability and Transparency, Sub - Head 02 - Goods and Services and Sub - Head 03 - Minor Equipment Purchases for the Financial Year 2017.

PAAC Secretariat
April 24, 2017