

**New BN move ruffles feathers in Komtar**  
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A new procedure where the Penang state government has to win the approval of selected 'coordinators' before applying for housing and local government allocations is ruffling a few feathers in Komtar.

State Local Government, Traffic Management and Environment Committee chairperson Chow Kon Yeow Chow claimed that prior to March 2008, local councils could apply for such allocations through a special unit under the state secretary's office.

"Apparently, this procedure was changed after March 8, where applications now have to go through the state development officer as well," Chow told reporters today at a press conference in Komtar, where the state offices are located.

Chow, (left) who is Tanjong (DAP) parliamentarian, was referring to a meeting between local council officers and the federal government office on Aug 4, where next year's allocations for housing and local government was discussed.

He claimed council officers were informed that the ceiling for next year's allocation is RM4million and that a new directive will be imposed on those who wish to apply for the funds.

The directive requires every application to obtain the approval of 'local leaders' and a name list was distributed during the meeting, added Chow.

"All of them are BN politicians, they are mostly constituency coordinators and some defeated 2008 candidates," claimed Chow, who is Penang DAP chairperson.

"They can agree, reject or modify those applications. It seems they have been given more power than a state assemblyperson," he added.

Chow said previously, local council officers did not even need to refer to state assemblypersons, but currently they have to go through these coordinators to obtain approval for the needed allocations.

"I will ask the Penang and Seberang Perai municipal councils to request the directive in writing and the meeting's minutes before we decide on any further action," he added.

Meanwhile, the Penang Tanjong coordinator told Malaysiakini that he has yet to receive any directive from the implementation and coordination unit of the state secretariat's office.

"So far, we've been allowed only to manage general allocations like the ones for temples in our respective constituencies," he said.