

Penang exco Chow 'talking rot'
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Housing and local government minister Chor Chee Heung has charged Penang exco Chow Kon Yeow with "talking rot", in claiming that local authorities in the state have to get permission from BN coordinators to apply for project funding.

Chor, met at a MCA event in Sungai Petani yesterday, said Chow "does not know what he is talking about".

"You must know the subject mca new cabinet member 180308 chor chee heungwell before you speak. Every year, village heads write to the ministry (for funding)," explained the minister (right).

"This is sometimes endorsed by the wakil rakyat (MPs or state assemblypersons) because they want to give the impression that the project is recognised and must be carried out."

Chor said he accepts all kinds of recommendations, suggesting that Chow also send his applications (for funding) to him.

"I will definitely go through his requests. Chow sees me in Parliament and he talks to me very often. He highlights his problems and I jot it down; that is not for him but for the benefit of the people of Penang."

Chow, who is DAP's Tanjong parliamentarian, chairs the local government, traffic management and environment portfolio in the Penang executive council.

Last week, he had NONE complained that local authorities in Penang have been told to comply with a new directive - that local council officers have to obtain approval from selected 'coordinators' before applying for housing and local government allocations.

Chow (left) said that, prior to 2008 - when Pakatan Rakyat wrested the state from BN in the general election - local councils could apply for allocations via the state secretary's office.

He also referred to a meeting between local council officers and the ministry on Aug 4, to determine next year's allocations for housing and local government.

Chow claimed that the new directive was also discussed and that a list of BN-linked coordinators had been distributed during the meeting.

Process explained

Chor clarified that they are two types of funds - the compulsory allocation for every local council, as stipulated in the federal constitution; and funds allocated directly to local councils or village committees. The latter is under the minister's purview.

Elaborating on the second type, Chor said the minister can allocate additional funds if there is a need for this.

"We do not require anybody's (endorsement), apart from the local council concerned," he said.

"This includes funds to develop new villages. The minister has absolute authority to grant the funds if applications are sent and received in a proper manner."

NONEChor said the funds are disbursed for the benefit of local councils or projects under them, as done in the case of kampongs and traditional villages.

"There is no BN coordinator involved. The local authority can apply directly to the minister," he said.

Chor said it is likely that the Penang government does not fully understand the process of fund allocation, and was probably referring to grants for small or minor projects.

These include projects carried out by village security and development committees.

"They do not have to go through intermediaries. Even MPs or state assemblypersons can write to me about their constituencies and I will accept it (the applications)," he added.

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