

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)1479/06-07  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

**Panel on Housing**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 5 February 2007, at 2:30 pm**  
**in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon LEE Wing-tat (Chairman)  
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Member attending** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
- Member absent** : Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

**Public officers  
attending**

: Agenda Item III

Mr Thomas C Y CHAN, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands  
(Housing)

Mr Kenneth MAK Ching-yu, JP  
Deputy Director (Corporate Services)  
Housing Department

Mr LEE Cert-quinn  
Assistant Director (Estate Management)1  
Housing Department

Agenda Item IV

Mr Thomas C Y CHAN, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands  
(Housing)

Mr LAU Kai-hung, JP  
Deputy Director (Estate Management)  
Housing Department

Mr WONG Bay  
Assistant Director (Estate Management)2  
Housing Department

Agenda Item V

Mr Kenneth WONG Hung-keung  
Chief Civil Engineer  
Housing Department

Miss Vera CHOI Sze-man  
Chief Architect/1  
Housing Department

Mrs Joanna KWOK TAM Yuk-ying  
Deputy Project Manager/New Territories East  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr YEUNG Wing-tsan  
Chief Engineer/TKO&SK  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr Horace CHEUNG Wing-yu  
Chief Leisure Manager (New Territories East)  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Peter KAN Tat-sing  
Chief Executive Officer (Planning)2  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms Connie SZETO  
Chief Council Secretary (1)6

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Debbie YAU  
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Ms Annette LAM  
Senior Council Secretary (1)3

Ms Michelle NIEN  
Legislative Assistant (1)9

---

Action

**I Information paper issued since last meeting**

Members noted that no information paper had been issued since last meeting.

**II Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

Regular meeting on 5 March 2007

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting to be held on Monday, 5 March 2007, at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Review of income and asset limits for Waiting List applicants; and
- (b) Creation of the post of Assistant Director (Independent Checking Unit).

3. On item (a), members noted that the Housing Authority (HA) reviewed the Waiting List Income and Asset Limits annually. The Administration would brief members on the outcomes of the 2007-2008 review. As regards item (b), the Administration would seek the Panel's support for obtaining funding approval from the Finance Committee for turning the concerned post into a permanent one.

4. Noting that HA would be holding brainstorming session(s) very soon to discuss issues related to under-occupation in public rental housing (PRH), the Chairman proposed and members agreed to include the item on "Policy on under-occupation in public rental housing" on the agenda for the meeting on 5 March 2007.

Regular meeting in April 2007

5. Members noted the letter dated 11 January 2007 from Mr Albert HO and Dr YEUNG Sum addressed to the Chairman expressing concern about the calculation of floor area in the sale arrangements for uncompleted first-hand residential units. Members agreed to include the subject matter in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion and tentatively scheduled it for discussion at the Panel meeting in April 2007.

*(Post-meeting note: The above letter was subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 899/06-07 on 6 February 2007.)*

Special meeting in April 2007

6. In response to Dr YEUNG Sum's enquiry about the follow-up action to invite Mr Victor SO, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of The Link Management Limited (The Link) to attend a meeting of the Panel for discussion on issues related to the provision and management of retail and car-parking facilities in public housing estates after the divestment of the facilities by HA, the Chairman said that Mr SO had replied in writing on 5 February 2007 indicating that he would be able to attend a meeting of the Panel in April 2007. The Chairman proposed and members agreed that a special meeting of the Panel be scheduled in April 2007 for the purpose, and the Secretariat would liaise with The Link on the meeting arrangements.

*(Post-meeting note: The special meeting was subsequently scheduled for Friday, 13 April 2007, at 8:30 am. The notice of meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)968/06-07 on 15 February 2007.)*

**III Allocation of public rental housing flats for the elderly to other applicants**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(03) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)886/06-07(01) -- Information provided by the Administration responding to enquiries raised by the Chairman

LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(04) -- Letter dated 9 January 2007 from Hon WONG Kwok-hing to the Chairman (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(05) -- Background brief on "Utilization of Housing for Senior Citizens units" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

7. At the Chairman's invitation, the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Housing) (PSH) briefed members on the Administration's information paper and the supplementary information in response to the Chairman's enquiries on the utilization of the Housing for Senior Citizens (HSC) and improvement measures to enhance their utilization. He informed members that, as at the end of December 2006, there were around 2 000 (approximately 20%) vacant HSC units out of a total of 9 820. In order to reduce the surplus of HSC units, HA had been implementing various measures since 2001 to improve utilization of these units, including allowing non-elderly single persons to apply for the units, converting the units into normal PRH flats or other purposes such as residential care home and social services centre, incorporating those units not included in the conversion programme in the Express Flat Allocation Scheme (EFAS) for PRH applicants to select. HA would continue to monitor the letting position of HSC units and formulate suitable arrangements with a view to achieving better utilization of public housing resources.

Discussion

*Measures to enhance the utilization of HSC units*

8. Referring to views raised by concern groups including Alliance for Defending Grassroots Housing Rights (捍衛基層住屋權益聯盟), Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern that the current arrangements of allocating HSC units to non-elderly single persons and the sharing of kitchen and toilet facilities had given rise to disputes and tension among residents arising from age-related differences in living habits as well as social and personal preferences. As a long term solution, Mr WONG considered that the Administration should expedite the programme for converting HSC units into normal PRH flats. In this connection, he enquired about the conversion programme in the next few years.

9. While noting members' concerns about the unpopularity of HSC units among elderly tenants and problems associated with sharing common facilities, PSH pointed out that the progress of the conversion programme hinged on a number of factors including the letting position of HSC units, the willingness of existing elderly tenants to move out on a voluntary basis, and the supply of self-contained one-person flats to accommodate these tenants. Given the current short supply of self-contained one-person units, HA had set the target of converting only 500 HSC units a year. Referring to the results of a survey of the living conditions of HSC tenants conducted by HA in 2005, PSH said that while there were occasional disputes among tenants, the situation was not serious and the results indicated that in general HSC tenants could live together in harmony. The Administration was well aware of the need to address problems associated with shared facilities and was committed to expediting the conversion programme where possible. The Administration would continue to make every effort to provide a suitable living environment for the elderly.

10. Referring to the supplementary information provided by the Administration on the distribution of the 9 820 existing HSC units in different estates (information for question 3 in LC paper No. CB(1)886/06-07(01)), the Chairman enquired about the breakdowns of units by various design versions, i.e. HS1 design which were units created by partitioning a normal domestic PRH into two or three small units without independent kitchen and toilet facilities, and HS2 and 3 designs which were units with independent toilets but with shared kitchen facilities; and their respective vacancy rates. PSH undertook to provide the information after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1081/06-07(01) on 6 March 2007.)*

11. Mr Fred LI shared the concern that allowing non-elderly single persons to apply for HSC units had created disputes and practical problems arising from age-related differences in social and personal habits and preferences. He remarked that the persistently high vacancy rate of the two- or three-person shared HSC units had demonstrated the unpopularity of HSC of old-design. To tackle the problem, Mr LI urged the Administration to step up the construction of self-contained small flats for the elderly and the efforts to convert unpopular old-design HSC units with a high vacancy rate into normal PRH flats. In order to facilitate and encourage existing elderly tenants to move out from HSC units, Mr LI enquired whether the Administration would offer incentives to tenants, such as the provision of removal allowances.

12. On the suggestion to proceed with the conversion of HSC units with old design in full scale, PSH said that while the Administration fully agreed with the suggestion, it had to be noted that the conversion programme would take time as about 56% of the existing stock of 9 820 HSC units were in the oldest HS1 design. He reiterated that progress of the conversion depended on the willingness of the existing elderly tenants to move out on a voluntary basis and the availability of suitable self-contained one-person flats. The progress of the conversion

programme had not been encouraging due to the difficulty in persuading the remaining tenant in a two- or three-person HS1 unit to move out after the other tenants had moved out, as the remaining tenant could enjoy larger living space.

13. As regards provision of allowances to tenants, PSH confirmed that under the conversion programme, residents in HSC programmed for phasing-out would be granted a Domestic Removal Allowance of \$2,670 per person. Depending on the availability of units, HSC tenants would also be relocated to PRH flats of their preferred choice. The Housing Department (HD) would maintain close liaison and cooperation with the Social Welfare Department (SWD), elderly service agencies and welfare organizations to ensure smooth re-housing arrangements for the affected tenants.

14. Noting the difficulties encountered in recovering HSC units, Mr Fred LI opined that the Administration should come up with workable solutions to address the difficulties. He suggested the Administration to provide more incentives to tenants, such as granting special removal allowances and re-housing elderly HSC tenants to units in the same estate.

15. Echoing Mr WONG Kwok-hing's and Mr Fred LI's observations about the unpopularity of HSC units and the problems associated with shared facilities, Dr YEUNG Sum affirmed his support for the initiatives of ceasing the development of new HSC, concentrating on building more self-contained small flats for the elderly, and phasing out the surplus HSC units through conversion into normal PRH flats or other uses.

16. Noting the high vacancy rate of HSC units of about 20% as at end of December 2006 and the various improvement measures taken by the Administration to enhance the utilization of HSC, Dr Joseph LEE was concerned whether these measures would lengthen the waiting time of elderly applicants for self-contained PRH units. He further enquired about the number of elderly applicants on the Waiting List and their average waiting time for allocation. Dr LEE was concerned that with the slow conversion rate of 500 HSC flats per year, it would take a long time to re-house HSC elderly tenants. He considered that the Administration should clarify its housing policy in respect of elderly persons.

17. In reply, PSH confirmed that HA had decided in November 2000 to cease development of HSC and concentrate on building one-person self-contained flats for the elderly. He assured members that incorporating HSC units in EFAS would not affect the waiting time for elderly applicants as those HSC units put under EFAS were mostly of unpopular old HS1 design or located in remote areas not preferred or even turned down by the elderly in allocation. Assistant Director (Estate Management)1, HD (AD(EM)1) added that as at end January 2007, about 12.4% (5 453 cases) of the single-person applicants on the Waiting List were elderly single persons and their average waiting time for PRH was about 1.2 year. Deputy Director (Corporate Services), HD (DD(CS)) pointed out that HSC units with a high vacancy rate were usually of old HS1 design with shared kitchen and toilet, while HS2 and 3 design units particularly those in urban and extended urban

areas, were in fact welcomed by some elderly tenants. PSH also remarked that there were architectural and structural constraints in converting some HSC units to normal PRH with independent kitchen and toilet facilities.

18. Referring to the measure of allocating non-elderly single persons to HSC units with high vacancy rate, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that this would work against the Administration's effort in recovering the units for conversion. He considered the target of converting 500 HSC units a year too low and enquired whether the Administration had formulated a concrete time-table for implementing the conversion programme.

19. In implementing the conversion programme for HSC units, DD(CS)) advised that priority consideration would be given to units of HS1 design with a vacancy rate of more than 30%, and HS2 and 3 designs with a vacancy rate of more than 50%. Given that it was necessary to re-house all tenants living in an entire HSC block before conversion works could commence, and considering the need to arrange re-housing of tenants on a voluntary basis, DD(CS)) said that it was inevitable that the whole process would take some time. PSH supplemented that to facilitate HSC conversion, HSC units identified for conversion would not be opened for allocation to PRH applicants. While it was impracticable to come up with a concrete time-table for implementing the conversion programme at the moment, the Administration would endeavour to expedite the programme where possible. He added that as some elderly tenants would prefer hostel-type accommodation with 24-hour warden service, sufficient number of HSC units had to be retained to meet the demand. As such, not all HSC units would be converted.

20. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that while the elderly tenants living in HSC units in general welcomed the provision of warden service, if given the choice, they would prefer units with independent toilet and kitchen. He shared the concern about the low target of converting only 500 units per year and strongly urged the Administration to step up construction of self-contained small flats to improve the living condition of the elderly.

21. PSH advised that of the total stock of 9 820 HSC, some over 5 000 units belonged to HS1 design. He added that apart from the target of converting 500 units per year, the Administration would increase building self-contained small flats (1-person or 1- to 2-person units). It was estimated that some 1 000, 7 000 and 11 000 such flats would be completed in 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively to meet the demand of the elderly for public housing.

22. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung remarked that if the elderly tenants living in HSC units preferred hostel-type accommodation and the provision of warden service, the Administration should not have lowered the rank of the warden from the original rank of Assistant Social Work Officer to Welfare Worker. In this connection, Mr LEUNG considered that instead of allocating HSC units to non-elderly PRH applicants, the Administration should expedite the progress in converting HSC units to self-contained flats to meet the increased demand. He opined that the



Administration's failure to provide sufficient self-contained 1-person flats had forced needy singletons to turn to the private rental market.

23. In response, PSH explained that in view of the gradual decline in the number of elderly tenants in HSC accommodation, a Welfare Worker was considered adequate to cater for the needs of the tenants. Moreover, social workers from other non-government welfare agencies would also organize social activities for the elderly tenants and assist in mediating any disputes.

*Other concerns and suggestions made*

24. Mr WONG Kwok-hing conveyed Mr LI Kwok-ying's concerns about complaints from elderly residents of HSC units who had found living in HSC units unsuitable that their applications for transfer to self-contained PRH flats had been refused, and that HA's policy disallowing family members of elderly tenants to stay overnight in HSC units had caused much inconvenience to the elderly. On behalf of Mr LI Kwok-ying, Mr WONG enquired whether HA would review the policies in question.

25. Sharing the concern, Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that she had also received many complaints from PRH tenants residing in remote areas or urban areas about refusal of transfer applications to live near their elderly parents in order to take care of the latter. In this regard, Miss CHAN considered it necessary for HA to conduct a comprehensive review of the concerned policy to bring it in line with the Administration's objective of strengthening family-based support network in promoting a harmonious society. Agreeing with Miss CHAN, the Chairman urged the Administration to adopt a flexible approach when considering transfer applications.

26. In reply, PSH said that it was the Administration's policy objective to encourage children to look after their elderly parents. HD had all along attached importance in meeting the re-housing needs of elderly tenants and all cases were given careful consideration on the basis of individual merits. He assured members that flexibility would be exercised in making transfer arrangements where justified and subject to the availability of suitable units in the preferred estate or locality. He said that HA would discuss issues relating to measures to encourage PRH tenants and applicants to live with their parents at a brainstorming session to be held in February 2007.

27. Dr YEUNG Sum referred to cases where elderly residents living in a 2- or 3-person HSC unit did not switch on lights in order to save electricity charges, thus get hurt when they meddled in the dark. He asked if the Administration would consider providing public lighting facilities to facilitate the elderly. PSH advised that lights and power sockets of the shared facilities in HSC units were provided with independent power supply and tenants paid their own electricity charges according to user-pay principle. Nonetheless, he took note of Dr YEUNG's suggestion and would look further into the matter.

(*Post-meeting note*: The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1081/06-07(01) on 6 March 2007.)

28. While agreeing that shared kitchen and toilet facilities in HSC units were causes of disputes and arguments among the tenants, Miss CHAN Yuen-han commended the provision of warden service and other tailor-made services catering the needs of tenants. She urged that such services should continue to be provided to elderly tenants living in self-contained PRH flats. PSH advised that elderly community centres and social centres run by non-governmental organizations were established in most PRH estates to meet the needs of elderly tenants.

29. In response to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's suggestion for HD to consider installing safety alarm device for the elderly tenants, PSH said that the Administration had been providing assistance to the two organizations operating such services.

### *Conclusion*

30. Summing up, the Chairman said that problems associated with HSC units had remained unresolved for a long time and effective measures for tackling the problems were long overdue. He shared members' view that with a conversion target of only 500 HSC units per year while continue to allocate units to non-elderly singleton, it would take an unacceptably long time to re-house all HSC tenants in vacating the units for conversion. He stressed the need for the Administration to draw up strategic plans and take rigorous action to complete the conversion programme for at least 15 to 20 estates within a specified time-frame over the next two to three years. He considered that instead of converting 3-person HSC units into separate self-contained units for the elderly, with some simple modification, such units could be converted into flats for allocation to two or three-person families. He urged the Administration to take note of members' views expressed at the meeting and assess the effectiveness of the various measures for improving HSC utilization with a view to reporting the progress and results to the Panel in the 2007-2008 session.

#### **IV Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(06) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(07) -- Background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme for Public Rental Housing Estates" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat

LC Paper No. CB(1)904/06-07 -- A set of power-point presentation materials provided by the Administration)

Presentation by the Administration

31. With the aid of power-point, the Deputy Director (Estate Management), HD (DD(EM)), briefed members on the progress and latest development of the Total Maintenance Scheme (TMS) launched by HD in early 2006. He highlighted the following points:

- (a) In order to provide quality service to PRH tenants, TMS adopted a three-pronged approach, namely, a proactive and comprehensive approach to identify maintenance problems; taking prompt response to emergencies and tenants' requests for repairs; and enhancing promotional and educational programmes for tenants;
- (b) Over 80 In-flat Inspection Ambassadors (IIAs) had been recruited and provided with two-week training covering customer services, building maintenance techniques and computer application, etc. A set of guidelines on "customer-oriented" in-flat inspection and maintenance service (e.g. guidelines on communication skill and manners) had also been compiled. The IIAs commenced their service on 8 February 2006. As at early January 2007, TMS had been implemented in 19 estates with more than 24 000 units inspected. Inspection work was being undertaken in 15 estates at present. Among these estates, over 19 000 units had been inspected;
- (c) HD had issued more than 18 700 works orders at a total value of about \$23 million. The average cost for each piece of works was approximately \$1,200. So far, 11 900 works orders (64% of the total) had been completed. The maintenance works involved mainly problems relating to spalling concrete (47%), drainage facilities (17%) and seepage (10%);
- (d) HD was also conducting comprehensive structural investigation for estates of over 40 years old under the "Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme". If the structure of a building was found to be structurally sound and sustainable for another 15 years or more, HD would study and carry out improvement works to enhance the living environment. Sai Wan Estate was the first estate to benefit from this programme;
- (e) Three main computer systems, i.e. In-flat Inspection Sub-system, Maintenance Information Sub-system and Appointment and Scheduling Sub-system, were being developed to support TMS. In order to enhance the capability to deal with emergencies and to promptly respond to tenants' requests, a number of initiatives, including setting up a dedicated maintenance hotline and streamlining of workflow, had also been taken. To mitigate the impact of the works on residents, HA had formulated "people-oriented" mitigation

measures in respect of six maintenance items mainly undertaken inside a flat;

- (f) In order to enhance monitoring of property services agencies (PSAs) and maintenance contractors, HA had established a Monitoring Unit on PSAs and held regular seminars for PSAs and maintenance contractors. In granting new maintenance contracts, HD had made an additional requirement for the maintenance contractor to engage a public relations manager with the aim to enhance communication between contractors and tenants;
- (g) HA had attended a number of District Council (DC) meetings, Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) meetings and estate tenants open forums to brief tenants on TMS and collect their views on the maintenance service of HD. In addition, HA had produced several announcements of public interest, posters and pamphlets with the aim to enhance tenants' understanding of maintenance and proper use of facilities inside the flats;
- (h) To enhance customer services, HA had arranged customer services training for HD staff and maintenance contractors responsible for TMS. HA was also developing a service performance audit mechanism to keep up the service standard; and
- (i) An independent consultant had been commissioned to conduct a customer satisfaction survey to measure the effectiveness of TMS. The customer satisfaction survey for the first five estates had been completed and the results had shown that residents were generally satisfied with the maintenance service.

*(Post-meeting note: The power-point presentation materials were circulated to members by e-mail on 6 February 2007.)*

## Discussion

### *Implementation details*

32. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether tenants with maintenance works completed in their flats under TMS would be responsible for the costs for subsequent repairs, and whether there would be any defect guarantee period for the works concerned. In response, DD(EM) advised that the costs of repair for structural defects and those arising from normal wear and tear would be borne by HA. However, tenants would be responsible for rectifying defects deliberately caused by themselves.

33. Mr WONG Kwok-hing questioned the adequacy of recruiting only 80 IIAs. He further enquired about the number of flats each IIA would be responsible and whether HA would consider recruiting more IIAs to extend the scope of TMS and speed up the progress of in-flat inspection. In response, DD(EM) reported that approval had already been obtained to increase the number of IIAs to 153. Under the current planning, each IIA would visit 1 000 flats per year. The Administration was confident that in-flat inspection covering sixty estates could be completed within two years and the target of conducting maintenance for some 680 000 PRH units within five years could be met.

34. Referring to tenants' previous complains that maintenance works were only carried out for damaged parts inside the flats, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether thorough maintenance and improvement works would be carried out under TMS. He also enquired about the criteria adopted in determining whether a facility should be repaired or the entire facility should be replaced, and how disputes in this regard would be handled. The Assistant Director (Estate Management)2, HD (AD(EM)2) elaborated that in-flat inspection covering 12 maintenance items to the building elements including major provisions inside the flats, the water and power supply and drainage systems (including replacement of fresh water pipes, mending of leaking pipes and damaged wooden doors), and problems concerning building structure (such as concrete spalling) would be carried out under TMS. While necessary repair works on the 12 maintenance items identified would be implemented immediately, large-scale repair works involving detailed design and planning would be carried out in due course. He assured members that repair and maintenance works would be carried out where necessary and in a comprehensive manner under TMS.

35. Pointing out that HD had been carrying out maintenance works in PRH flats under different schemes, Miss CHAN Yuen-han enquired about the differences between TMS and these schemes. She expressed concern about how TMS could address problems encountered in previous maintenance schemes, in particular, how HD could tackle related disputes and monitor the performance of IIAs and works contractors. In response, DD(EM) re-iterated that TMS covered all PRH units with priority given to aged estates. He explained that apart from providing IIAs with suitable training covering customer services, building maintenance techniques and computer application, etc., they were also provided technical support (e.g. the company of multi-skilled maintenance staff during in-flat inspection) to ensure prompt response to emergencies and tenants' requests for repairs. Moreover, training was provided to works contractors to ensure their services could meet the needs of tenants. DD(EM) re-iterated that tenants' satisfaction with TMS had been high. To further improve TMS, HA was developing a service performance audit mechanism. In granting new maintenance contracts, HA had made an additional requirement for the maintenance contractor to engage a public relations manager with the aim to enhance communication between contractors and tenants. Tenants had also been assured that the costs of repair for structural defects and those arising from normal wear and tear would be borne by HA, and HA was committed to improving not only the overall environment of PRH estates but also the facilities inside flats.

36. While indicating support for TMS, Mr Abraham SHEK expressed concern about cost implications of developing computer systems for handling requests for inspection/repair and keeping records of inspection and maintenance works. In response, DD(EM) assured members that HD would closely monitor the costs to ensure that most funding for TMS would be used for carrying out maintenance works. He stressed that the computer systems being developed were necessary to support TMS and would take up only a small portion of the funding for TMS.

37. Mr Frederick FUNG noted that although So Uk Estate had been scheduled for clearance within five years under the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme, the estate was currently undergoing inspection under TMS. He enquired whether maintenance works would be conducted in So Uk Estate in the normal manner. In reply, DD(EM) said that as So Uk Estate was planned for demolition, large-scale in-flat maintenance works would not be carried out. Notwithstanding, small-scale works would be conducted as necessary to maintain a comfortable and healthy living environment for the tenants concerned.

*Quality of the maintenance works*

38. Prof Patrick LAU stressed the importance of ensuring the works contractors would provide quality services to tenants. He cast doubt on the need to require maintenance contractors to engage a public relations manager as in his view, more building and maintenance professionals should be engaged as they would fare better in ensuring the smooth implementation of works. In response, AD(EM)2 explained that maintenance was both works and service. The engagement of the public relations manager was essential to strengthen customer services in ensuring smooth and successful implementation of works. The manager could help enhance communication between contractors and tenants and arrange for assistance to tenants where necessary in a timely manner. DD(EM) supplemented that there were similar practices in overseas countries, such as the United Kingdom, of engaging public relations managers when conducting maintenance works. He assured members that only a small number of public relations managers would be engaged by maintenance contractors.

39. Noting that the average cost for each piece of works was only approximately \$1,200, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern that HD's practice of awarding contracts to the lowest bid might compromise the quality of the works and there was low incentive for contractors to mitigate the negative impact arising from the maintenance works on tenants. Miss CHAN Yuen-han concurred that there was difficulty in ensuring the quality of works of the contractors.

40. In response, DD(EM) explained that as mainly minor works were involved, costs for the works under TMS were relatively low. He added that in vetting the relevant tenders, HD had already assessed the reasonableness of the bidding prices. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung requested the Administration to provide information on the comparison of the average repair cost of \$1,200 with the price of comparable works in the private market, as well as measures for monitoring the performance of

works contractors engaged under TMS to ensure the quality of services and workmanship.

*Measures to mitigate nuisances caused to tenants during the works periods*

41. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern that in-flat maintenance works carried out under various programmes, such as the Estate Improvement Programme and the Comprehensive Structural Investigation Programme, would cause inconvenience to tenants and serious disruption to their daily lives. For instance, there were complaints about nuisances to tenants during the process of works, failure of maintenance workers to turn up at the appointed time, works being scheduled to be carried out on different days, and delay by contractors in completing simple works. He urged the Administration to take note of residents' concerns and implement measures to address the problems. Miss CHAN Yuen-han concurred that HD should endeavour to minimize nuisances caused to tenants during the process of works.

42. In response, DD(EM) pointed out that TMS had already been implemented in 19 estates with a high access rate of 85% on in-flat inspection. As different from the past, TMS had adopted a proactive and comprehensive approach to actively address tenants' needs and minimize disruptions caused to them. In addition to deploying IIAs to carry out proactive in-flat inspections and provide one-stop repair services for tenants, HD had also set up mobile service counters for residents to make appointments for works and enquire about progress of inspection and maintenance works. When making in-flat inspections, IIAs were accompanied by multi-skilled maintenance staff who had received customer services training to ensure prompt response to emergencies and tenants' requests for necessary repairs. Special requests for in-flat inspections to be conducted in the evening, on Saturdays and public holidays instead of during office hours would be considered where appropriate. Complaints in relation to repairs could be made at the mobile service counters. Moreover, a dedicated maintenance hotline was provided under a pilot scheme for tenants of estates where TMS was in progress. Tenants could call the hotline to make requests for repairs, enquire about the works progress and express their opinions, including lodging complaints.

43. As to members' concern about the impact of the works on residents, DD(EM) said that HD had formulated "people-oriented" mitigation measures in respect of six maintenance items undertaken inside a flat to mitigate possible negative impact on tenants. The measures included better communication with tenants prior to works, adequate training for workers, complete and proper enclosure of affected areas, improvement of dust removal installation and enhanced cleaning services after completion of works, etc. HD would take note of views from tenants, relevant DCs and EMACs in making further improvement in this area.

44. Mr Abraham SHEK commented that in adopting a "people-oriented" approach, HA should aim at enhancing the quality of PRH flats to avoid undertaking frequent repair/maintenance in flats. Highlighting the nuisances and inconveniences caused to tenants, Mr SHEK stressed that good planning for

repair/maintenance works was important. He emphasized the health hazards created by dust and suggested that where practicable consideration should be given to remove a facility/provision from the flat for repair to avoid causing disruption to tenants' daily activities. The Chairman shared the views. They considered it necessary for HD to arrange visits for members to understand the process of the works and the measures taken to mitigate nuisances caused to tenants.

45. DD(EM) assured members that nuisances caused by works relating to spalling concrete could be significantly reduced by provision of full height dust screen and the use of high efficiency vacuum cleaner in the work process. The contractors would also arrange comprehensive cleaning of works areas upon completion of works. The Administration would arrange visits on TMS if so requested by members. He further emphasized that it was HA's aim to produce PRH of better quality to minimize the need for repair in future. In fact, since April 2000 HA had implemented by two phases 50 initiatives to enhance public housing quality.

46. Prof Patrick LAU and Mr Abraham SHEK stressed the need to arrange temporary re-housing for residents affected by large-scale in-flat repair/maintenance works. They opined that vacating the flats could facilitate the conduct of comprehensive repair works inside the flats in a more efficient manner, and could better address security and safety concerns of tenants. Mr Frederick FUNG opined that transfer arrangement should also be made for tenants whose flats were of poor quality necessitating frequent maintenance works. In this connection, Mr James TO enquired about the criteria for determining whether temporary re-housing would be arranged.

47. In response, AD(EM)2 said that when large-scale in-flat repair or maintenance works were carried out, such as works involving replacement of the ceiling which would create serious disruptions to tenants, subject to availability of vacant flats within the same estate, HD would arrange temporary accommodation for the affected tenants. DD(EM) re-iterated that repair or maintenance works under TMS mainly involved minor works which were not expected to be disruptive. Hence, the need to re-house affected tenants was small. At members' request, he agreed to provide supplementary information regarding re-housing arrangements for affected residents after the meeting.

48. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it inhumane to conduct works in flats occupied. He further questioned how HD could properly co-ordinate the various works, especially where different contractors and sub-contractors were involved, to be conducted in a flat to ensure completion within one day so as to minimize the nuisances to tenants. He requested the Administration to provide information on measures to mitigate the impact of the repair/maintenance works, including nuisances caused during work process, and disruption and inconvenience to residents with different types of works carried out by different contractors on different dates.



49. Sharing the concern about the disruptions caused to tenants, the Chairman urged HD to improve the co-ordination of works, in particular works to tackle spalling concrete and water seepage. He was aware of cases where works to break up the old concrete and resurface the walls were separately conducted with a time gap of weeks, and inspection of water seepage problem was conducted days after receipt of the complaints when the problem had already subsided.

50. In response, DD(EM) assured members that both the co-ordination and quality of works would be improved under TMS. Where possible, all works falling under the same category to be carried out in a flat would be conducted in one go. AD(EM)2 explained that repair works for spalling concrete involved complicated breaking out, derusting and patching processes and had to be carried out in stages by specially trained workers. Hence, it might not be possible to engage the same contractor responsible for other maintenance items in the flat to conduct the works. He re-iterated that the Administration would endeavour to improve co-ordination in works to minimize nuisances caused to tenants. He added that under TMS, inspection of water seepage would be conducted shortly after receiving the complaints.

51. Dr Fernando CHEUNG cautioned that asbestos used in old public housing estates might be affected by repair/maintenance works carried out under TMS. He enquired about measures to mitigate the possible impact on residents concerned.

52. In response, AD(EM)2 assured members that HD had kept detailed records on asbestos containing materials (ACM) inside PRH flats. These materials had either been removed or properly encapsulated. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was unconvinced and requested the Administration to provide the details of ACM in old estates and measures to mitigate the possible impact on residents concerned.

#### *Provision of additional facilities*

53. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and the Chairman urged HA to consider the needs of disabled and elderly residents, and take the opportunity of TMS to provide additional facilities in both the common areas of estates and inside the flats of these residents to cater for their needs. Facilities including ramps for disabled residents to facilitate access to their flats, and railings in public areas where appropriate should be provided in estates with high population of elderly residents.

54. In response, DD(EM) said that railings were already available in public areas in new estates. As to old ones, HA was making efforts in this direction. It was also necessary to strike a balance between the interests of elderly tenants and other tenants. He further advised that HD had put in place a comprehensive plan to improve the living environment of elderly and disabled tenants. HD had closely liaised with social workers and consulted occupational therapists for recommendations on special facilities to be provided for these tenants. Ramps and railings to facilitate access had also been provided where feasible in the common areas. Where such facilities could not be provided, transfer for tenants would be arranged. He undertook to consider members' views and suggestions in this

regard.

55. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was unconvinced and highlighted the difficulties he had encountered in pursuing the provision of proper facilities for disabled residents in estates in Tseung Kwan O. DD(EM) admitted that there had been problems in this regard at the beginning but efforts had already been made to gradually resolve them. At Dr CHEUNG's request, he agreed to provide the details of the consultations with welfare agencies and occupational therapists, including the number of cases and the follow-up actions taken by HD.

56. Mr Frederick FUNG enquired whether to facilitate access of the elderly, lifts or escalators would be installed for old estates in Sham Shui Po, such as Pak Tin Estate, and those in Ma Tau Wai. In reply, DD(EM) advised that all PRH estates in Ma Tau Wai already had lifts. As to Pak Tin Estate, subject to technical feasibility, consideration would be given to installing lifts there if such a need was confirmed.

*Customer satisfaction*

57. Mr James TO cast doubt on the findings of the customer satisfaction survey conducted by HD for the first five estates covered in TMS. He also stressed the need to identify the reasons for dissatisfaction to bring about real improvements. To ascertain the credibility of the findings, he and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung requested the Administration to provide further details of the survey including the following aspects:

- (a) The timing for conducting the survey (whether it had been conducted before or after the inspection of flats, or before or after the completion of the repair/maintenance works), details of the sampling method, the number of sample households taken, the means through which the households' views had been gauged, and a sample questionnaire used in the survey; and
- (b) The follow-up actions for households who had expressed dissatisfaction towards the repair/maintenance works taken in their flats.

58. In response, AD(EM)2 agreed to provide the information requested by members. He advised that the households surveyed were randomly selected from flats which had undergone the maintenance/repair works. To ensure objectivity of the survey, HD had engaged an independent consultancy firm to conduct the survey. As such, there was little room for manipulation of the findings.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's responses regarding the follow-up actions in paragraphs 40, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55 and 57 were circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1080/06-07(01) on 6 March 2007.)*

59. As the meeting was approaching its appointed ending time but there was still one discussion item to deal with, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the ending time of the meeting be extended for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time.

**V Construction of Local Open Space adjoining Tseung Kwan O Area 73B public housing development**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)836/06-07(08) -- Information paper provided by the Administration)

60. The Chairman suggested and members agreed to proceed direct to the discussion of the Administration's proposal to upgrade PWP Item No. 416RO to Category A to develop a local open space adjoining Tseung Kwan O (TKO LOS) Area 73B public housing development.

Disposal of construction and demolition materials

61. On the disposal of the construction and demolition (C&D) materials generated by the project, the Chairman said that he had learnt from sources that the public fill reception facilities and landfills in Hong Kong had already reached their maximum capacity and C&D materials were taken to the Mainland for disposal at high charges. He enquired whether this was indeed the case.

62. In reply, Deputy Project Manager/New Territories East of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (DPM (NTE)/CEDD) said that of the 3 230 tonnes of C&D materials estimated to be generated in TKO LOS project, about 1 600 tonnes would be reused on site, about 1 600 tonnes would be delivered as fill to public fill reception facilities for subsequent reuse, and the remaining about 30 tonnes would be disposed of at landfills in Hong Kong according the charges prescribed under the Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation. She confirmed that to her knowledge no C&D materials were at present disposed of in the Mainland.

Design of and proposed facilities in TKO LOS

63. On the proposed facilities in TKO LOS, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed concern that no football pitch would be provided and enquired about the reasons involved. Chief Executive Officer (Planning)2 of Leisure and Cultural Services Department (CEO(P)2/LCSD) explained that due to the relatively small area of the site covering only about 3 900 square metres, it could not accommodate a 7-a-side football pitch. He advised that the proposed facilities for the project were drawn up following consultation with the District Facilities Management Committee of the Sai Kung District Council, which arrived at a consensus to give priority to two basketball-cum-volleyball courts plus sitting out facilities for the residents in the neighbourhood, including a fitness corner for the elderly.

64. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung pointed out that soccer was a popular sport in such a great demand that the black market value for a rental of a football pitch was high. He further remarked that as the Administration had spent a lot of resources on the 2009 East Asian Games, the Administration should be requested to grant more space to provide a football pitch in TKO LOS project. Given that policies on recreation and leisure facilities were under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau, The Chairman suggested that members could pursue the matter at meetings of the Panel on Home Affairs.

65. Chief Civil Engineer of Housing Department informed members that in view of the support of the Sai Kung District Council and residents' aspiration for the early construction and timely completion of TKO LOS project to tie in with the completion of the adjoining public housing development, the Administration hoped to advance commencement of the construction work from March 2009 to April 2008 for completion by October 2009.

66. Noting that members had no further questions on the project, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the early commencement and timely completion of TKO LOS project. Members noted the Administration's plan to seek funding approval from the Public Works Sub-Committee and Finance Committee in April and May 2007 respectively for upgrading the project to Category A.

## **VI Any other business**

67. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:50 pm.