

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 893/08-09
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 5 January 2009, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH (Chairman)
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS

Member absent : Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP

Public officers attending : **For item IV**

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

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

Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing
Assistant Director (Estate Management) 2
Housing Department

Mr Allan WONG Nai-kwong
Head (Total Maintenance Scheme)
Housing Department

For item V

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

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

Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing
Assistant Director (Estate Management) 2
Housing Department

Mr CHIU Kin-chee
Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 1)
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Becky YU
Chief Council Secretary (1)1

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)4

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- I. Confirmation of minutes**
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 469/08-09 — Minutes of the meeting held on
3 November 2008)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2008 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted the following information paper which had been issued since last meeting -

LC Paper No. CB(1) 513/08-09(01) — Further submission from Mr LAI Ming-hung expressing concern about the high cost of liquefied petroleum gas supplied in public housing estates (Chinese version only) (Restricted to Members)

They also agreed to include the subject in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 490/08-09(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1) 490/08-09(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members noted that the following items were ready for discussion at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 2 February 2009, at 2:30 pm -

- (a) Progress report on the Housing Advisory and Service Team in Tin Shui Wai;
- (b) Green roof in the Fu Shan Estate market; and
- (c) Re-launching of Home Ownership Scheme and Tenants Purchase Scheme.

4. Mr Frederick FUNG enquired if the subject of rents for retail and car parking facilities as well as factory premises of the Housing Authority (HA) could be discussed at the next meeting. He found it hard to accept that HA would be increasing the rents for its factory buildings amid the financial tsunami on the one hand and offering a 50% rent reduction for the months of January and February 2009 on the other. He considered it necessary that the rent reduction should be extended beyond February 2009, and that the rate of reduction should be reviewed. Mr Abraham SHEK added that HA should also provide the basis, such as financial data, upon which HA had reached the decision on rent increase.

5. The Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) said that the Commercial Properties (CPC) Committee of HA kept a constant review of its relief measures for HA's commercial tenants. The Panel would be informed of the outcome shortly. Mr Frederick FUNG however pointed out that it would be better for CPC to take into account members' view before reaching a decision and not vice versa. After deliberation, it was agreed that item (b) in paragraph 3 would be replaced by the subject as proposed by Mr Frederick FUNG.

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IV. Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme and way forward

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 490/08-09(03) — Administration's paper on Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme and way forward

LC Paper No. CB(1) 490/08-09(04) — Paper on Total Maintenance Scheme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

6. The Assistant Director (Estate Management) 2 (AD(EM)2) gave a power-point presentation on the progress and way forward of the Total Maintenance Scheme (TMS) for public rental housing (PRH) estates conducted by HA.

7. Mr CHAN Hak-kan opined that there should be better coordination of different contractors to complete different repair/maintenance works for the flats at the same time to minimize the inconvenience caused to tenants. The Chairman said that during a recent Panel visit on 8 December 2008, participating members had seen for themselves the operation of TMS and generally found it satisfactory. He nevertheless enquired if there was any performance pledge for TMS. The Deputy Director (Estate Management) (DD(EM)) and AD(EM)2 said that performance pledges were being set not only for TMS but also for other repair and maintenance services undertaken by HA. To reduce inconvenience to tenants and to provide one-stop services, inspections and repair/maintenance works would be conducted by a team comprising an In-flat Inspection Ambassador (IIA), a contractor's supervisor and a workman. The team would endeavour to complete simple repair/maintenance works that could be performed on the spot within one or two days in an attempt to minimize the inconvenience to tenants. For repair/maintenance works which required replacement of parts and/or additional installations, it would usually take not more than two weeks. DD(EM) added that TMS was first launched in 2006 for a period of five years. In view of positive results, it was decided that in-flat inspection/repair using the TMS model would be developed into a regular programme upon completion of the current first cycle of TMS.

8. The Chairman was pleased to know that TMS would be developed into a regular programme under which thorough inspection/repair would be carried out every 10 years for estates aged 20 and above, while general inspection/repair would be carried out every five years for estates aged 10 and above. He also noticed that the Administration was carrying out a comprehensive structural investigation programme (CSIP) for PRH estates aged 40 years or above. He sought clarification on the age of buildings in which thorough inspection would be carried out. DD(EM) clarified that TMS and CSIP were two separate programmes. TMS was meant for repair and maintenance of in-flat installations, while CSIP was meant to provide structural investigation to ensure that the aged estate blocks were structurally safe. Thus far, HA had completed investigation for 10 estates and investigation for 32 estates had been scheduled in the coming 10 years. The progress of CSIP would be reported regularly to the Panel.

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9. While acknowledging that TMS was generally well received by the tenants, Mr Frederick FUNG noted that repair/maintenance works for certain items, such as sinks, iron gates, main/toilet doors and their frames, were not covered under the Scheme. He asked whether consideration could be given to including these items as standard fittings so that repair/maintenance works could be carried out on a regular basis rather than on a case-by-case basis at the request of members. DD(EM) said that repair/maintenance works were condition driven i.e. installations would be repaired as far as practicable or replaced if beyond repair. Repair works would be carried out for in-flat installations subject to normal wear and tear but not damages by tenants deliberately. The Head (TMS) (H(TMS)) said that HA would fulfil the general responsibility of a landlord and conduct repair/maintenance works for the in-flat installations provided as standard fittings. The checklist for inspection by IIA would cover 12 in-flat installations, including ceiling, wall, floor, window, drainage pipe, water pipe, door, iron gate, electricity supply, communication system, security system and gas supply system. To enable tenants to familiarize with the checklist, this was summarized in Chinese as 「天牆地窗 渠水門閘 電訊保氣」。 However, tenants who had refurbished their flats with additional fittings would have to arrange for repair of these fittings themselves.

10. Referring to the window repair records which revealed that the average window repair rate amounted to 0.44%, Mr Frederick FUNG enquired about the actual number of windows which required repair and the nature of defects. AD(EM)2 explained that the repair rate of 0.44% could be translated as one unit out of 230 units required window repair. Most of the defects involved damages to the handles/glass panels or rusty hinges, which could be repaired within a short time and did not pose hazard to public safety. More serious defects involved deformed window frames which required more time to repair. Of the 18 600 units inspected, 22 were found to have deformed window frames and of these, only one window frame required replacement. This meant that only one in 850 windows required replacement. As TMS started off with the repair/maintenance of older buildings, it was expected that the occurrence of dilapidated windows would become less frequent as the Scheme progressed to newer buildings.

11. Dr Joseph LEE enquired about the standards adopted for TMS to ensure the quality of repair/maintenance works. He also enquired if complaints about the repair/maintenance works had been received and if so, how these complaints were handled. AD(EM)2 said that as contractors were engaged to carry out repair/maintenance works under TMS, HA had set out in the contract specifications the necessary requirements. Besides, only those in the list of approved contractors of HA were allowed to participate in the tendering exercise. To ensure the quality of repair/maintenance works, IIAs were required to inspect the works and monitor the progress on a daily basis. Supervisory staff from the regional maintenance office would inspect the works at critical stages to ensure that the works were up to the required standard. So far, the standard of works was found acceptable and the progress satisfactory. As regards complaints, AD(EM)2 said that most of these were related to noise generated from repairing spalled concrete. To minimize nuisance, efforts had been made to carry out works in the day time and use low noise construction methods as far as practicable.

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12. Mr CHAN Hak-kan noted that only some \$222 million out of the annual expenditure of \$1,257 million under TMS had been used since its implementation in February 2006. He sought explanation on the rationale behind the under-spending. DD(EM) clarified that the \$222 million of accumulated expenditure referred only to repair/maintenance works within the units and did not include other planned maintenance and improvement works, the cost of which was much more than \$222 million. As a step forward, HA had planned to shorten the five-year TMS programme to four-year programme. This together with other construction works for new estates and other maintenance and improvement works to be carried out would provide a total of some 10 000 jobs for the construction industry in 2009/10. The Chairman welcome the expedition of TMS with a view to creating more jobs opportunities.

V. Addition of lifts in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates

LC Paper No. CB(1) 490/08-09(05) — Administration's paper on addition of lifts in housing authority's existing public housing estates

LC Paper No. CB(1) 505/08-09(01) — Submission from The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Kwai Tsing District Service Office (Chinese version only)

13. DD(EM) briefed members on the addition of lift towers, escalators, footbridges and other lift improvement works planned to be implemented in existing PRH estates by highlighting the salient points in the information paper.

14. The Chairman drew members' attention to the submission from 「無障礙社區關注組」 tabled at the meeting which was to replace the one circulated under LC Paper No. CB(1) 505/08-09(01). The concern group stressed the need to provide barrier-free access in Kwai Chung District in view of its ageing population. DD(EM) acknowledged the views of the concern group. He said that in cooperation with other Government departments, HA had endeavoured to provide barrier-free access in PRH estates. Consideration would also given to providing covered walkways as requested by the concern group for the benefit of residents as in the case of the covered walkways connecting the lift tower of Kwai Chung Estate to the Tai Wo Hau MTR Station.

(Post-meeting note: The submission was circulated under LC Paper No. CB(1) 505/08-09(01) on 7 January 2009)

15. Mr Alan LEONG acknowledged HA's efforts in providing barrier-free access for the ageing population in PRH estates. Referring to Appendices I and II of the Administration's paper, he noted that only four estates with addition of lifts already completed or in progress, while 18 estates were pending outcome of feasibility studies. He enquired how the guiding principles referred to in paragraph 5 of the paper were

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applied in evaluating the need and priority for the addition of lifts and escalators. He also enquired if a marking scheme would be introduced to allow for an objective assessment. The Chairman further enquired about the lead time between the design/study stage and the actual construction as well as the completion dates of the feasibility studies for the 18 estates in Appendix I.

16. DD(EM) clarified that Appendix I set out the estates situated at hillsides where the need for addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas was confirmed or being considered. Of these, installation works were already completed or in progress at the Kwai Chung Estate, Sai Wan Estate, Kwai Shing East Estate and Tin Wah Estate, while feasibility studies were being conducted for the 18 other estates. As the design for the lifts, escalators and footbridges for these 18 estates had yet to be worked out taking into account technical considerations, such as the extent of piling works required, it might not be possible to provide a concrete timetable for completion of works at this stage. Notwithstanding, arrangements would be made to report to the Panel on a regular basis the progress of feasibility and installation works for these estates. As regards Appendix II, DD(EM) said that this set out the older estates where addition of lifts for PRH blocks without lift service was required.

Addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas

17. While welcoming the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges in existing PRH estates to bring more convenience to residents, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung noted that under the guiding principles, the locations of these facilities must be within the estate boundary. If so, many deserving cases could not be included in the present programme. By way of illustration, residents of Kwai Chung Estate had been urging for the provision of lifts/escalators to facilitate connection to Kwai Hing MTR Station, without which they had to rely on the long and steep flight of stairs which was very inconvenient for the elderly and the disabled. He opined that Government officials should see for themselves how difficult it was for those on wheelchairs to have access to Kwai Hing MTR Station using the existing facilities. The same situation also applied to Lei Muk Shue Estate. The Chairman echoed that he had made similar requests for the early provision of lifts/escalators at the said estates, but was advised that this fell within the purview of the Highways Department. To facilitate better understanding on how the need for lifts were met in the proximity of PRH estates which fell outside the jurisdiction of HA, the Chairman instructed the Clerk to liaise with the Administration to arrange for a visit to Kwai Chung Estate. Members were also invited to suggest other places which they would like to include in the visit.

18. DD(EM) advised that a lift tower had just been installed in Kwai Chung Estate to allow barrier-free connection to Tai Wo Hau MTR Station. Extensive consultation had been held with district councils on the provision of lift tower in Kwai Chung Estate. Several options had been put forward and it was finally decided that the lift tower should be connected to Tai Wo Hau MTR Station. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung noted that the provision of lift tower in Kwai Chung Estate to provide barrier-free connection to Tai Wo Hau MTR Station was well received by residents. He however stressed the need for HA to take into account the needs of residents to provide a barrier-free connection from Kwai Chung Estate to Kwong Fai

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Circuit to facilitate access to Kwai Hing MTR Station.

19. In response, USTH explained that as the proposed barrier-free connection from Kwai Chung Estate to Kwai Hing MTR Station was not within the estate area, this fell outside the jurisdiction of HA. It would be the responsibility of the Transport Department and the Highways Department to assess the need for the barrier-free connection taking into account pedestrian flow and residents' needs. The expenditure for the provision of lifts/escalators outside estate areas would not be included in the present programme and separate funding would be sought for the purpose. To improve the pedestrian environment as set out in the Chief Executive's 2008-09 Policy Address, USTH said that consultants had been engaged to establish an assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator system. In deciding on the priority for the facilities, the consultants would take into account the pedestrian traffic, needs of ageing population, distribution of aged people, and vertical level difference. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it necessary that an inter-departmental working group should be set up to oversee the consultancy study, which should be expedited for the benefit of residents and with a view to creating more jobs for the construction industry. USTH said that he would convey Mr LEUNG's views to the Administration.

20. Mr Alan LEONG enquired about the status of Oi Man Estate as it appeared that this had not been given priority under the present programme. Mr James TO also enquired about the extent of works involved if the addition of lifts was considered necessary for Oi Man Estate. DD(EM) explained that feasibility study was being conducted on the addition of lifts in Oi Man Estate which was located at hillside. Given that there were three podiums in the Oi Man Estate, the feasibility of providing lifts to all three podiums was being explored. Nevertheless, the current provision of ramps had already allowed barrier-free access across the Princess Margaret Road for the physically disabled.

21. Referring to the hillside estates in Sham Shui Po due for redevelopment, Mr Frederick FUNG noted that while So Uk Estate would be fully provisioned with lifts/escalators to provide barrier-free access, the same did not apply to the Pak Tin Estate. He therefore hoped that Pak Tin Estate could be included in the list of estates where addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas would be provided. DD(EM) said that the list was worked out in consultation with residents. He was prepared to review the list, taking into account the need of residents.

Addition of lifts for PRH blocks without lift service

22. While welcoming the provision of lifts for PRH blocks without lift service, Mr Frederick FUNG enquired about the time frames for completion of the lift installation projects, particularly those under design or construction. DD(EM) said that the overall work programme for the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges was expected to complete in 2013 under a five-year programme starting 2008. However, efforts would be made to shorten the work programmes from five to four years.

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23. Given the uncertainties associated with the provision of lifts in estates, many of which were still under design and study stage, Mr Alan LEONG questioned if the lift installation programme could be completed by 2012 as planned. DD(EM) said that he failed to see why the programme could not be completed on time in 2012 when manpower resources, funding and technology were all available. He was confident that the programme could be completed as scheduled.

24. Mr Frederick FUNG enquired about the feasibility of providing lifts in older estates like Ma Tau Wai Estate where lifts were usually not provided at the top floors on account of the loud noise associated with lift operations. He asked if such problem could be overcome under the present lift installation programme. DD(EM) said that the comprehensive structural investigation on the four estate blocks of Ma Tau Wai Estate had confirmed that lifts could not be installed at the top floors due to loading problems. The Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 1) (CM/M(SS1)) added that as the lift engine rooms were located immediately above the top floors, lift openings could not be provided at top floors for technical reasons. Neither was it possible to construct an additional floor to house the engine rooms. As a result, arrangements had been made to transfer elderly living at top floors to other floors with lift service. In response to Mr FUNG's further question, DD(EM) confirmed that lift openings would be provided at both ends and in the middle of the long corridors of all floors for the four connected blocks of Ma Tau Wai Estate.

25. Mr Frederick FUNG recalled that residents' request for addition of lifts for Pak Tin Estate was denied in 1990 on grounds of loading. Noting that Pak Tin Estate was now included in lift installation programme, he enquired about the rationale behind such inclusion. CM/M(SS1) said that studies on the structural feasibility of providing lifts in old estates like Pak Tin Estate had been revisited. Design for the addition of lifts in Pak Tin Estate was in progress and building plans had been submitted to the Independent Checking Unit of Housing Department for consideration. HA was now in the process of working out engineering solutions for the provision of lifts. He assured members that HA would endeavour to provide the additional lifts in Pak Tin Estate.

26. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired about the location of the lift/escalator to be provided at Lei Muk Shue Estate. DD(EM) said that a lift tower and a connecting footbridge would be provided at Pak Shue House at Lei Muk Shue Estate.

Maintenance of lifts

27. Given the availability of resources, Mr Tommy CHEUNG opined that a working group should be set up to work out measures to provide more lifts/escalators with a view to improving barrier-free access for the benefit of the ageing population. This would meet with the aspirations of all political parties. He nevertheless stressed the need for proper maintenance of lifts/escalators to ensure safety. USTH said that the Administration was well aware of the needs of the population. He agreed to consult residents as well as political parties on the provision of more lift/escalators to provide barrier-free access to the community.

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28. Mr KAM Nai-wai shared the concern on the need for proper maintenance of lifts in estates. Noting that only some \$230 million would be spent under the five-year programme for implementing the improvement works for lifts/escalators by 2013, he was of the view that the programme was too slow and the spending was not enough. As the improvement works would benefit estate tenants, he would support expediting the programme with increased spending. DD(EM) clarified that the spending of \$230 million was meant for the addition of lifts/escalators and footbridges at external areas only. The total spending for the overall work programme, including the addition of lifts in existing PRH blocks without lift service and the modernization works for lifts in existing PRH, would be around \$950 million. He reiterated that effort would be made to shorten the programme from five to four years so that early improvements could be made. As regards the maintenance of lifts, DD(EM) said that the 5 000 lifts in PRH estates comprised about 10% of the total number of lifts in Hong Kong. These lifts were under regular maintenance and warranty by the original installation contractors.

Implementation details

29. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired if the lift installation programme would be subject to the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement. He was concerned that if this was the case, local contractors might not be able to succeed in tendering the works. DD(EM) said that while the programme was subject to WTO Agreement on Government Procurement, local construction contractors who were competent in lift installation works should have no difficulty in tendering the works. In fact, past experience showed that local contractors had been successful in tendering lift installation works.

30. Mr James TO enquired whether the lift installation programme would be tendered under one major contract or several smaller contracts, the latter of which would enable the participation of local contractors. He hoped that the programme could benefit the local economy through the creation of more job opportunities for the local workforce. DD(EM) said that lift installation works for each estate would be tendered out separately. AD(EM)2 added that contractors participating in the tender exercises would be those from HA's list of qualified contractors, most of whom were local construction companies. With the compression of the programme from five years to four years, there was a need to expedite the works. Therefore, HA would proceed with the tender for design and construction of additional lifts in individual estates once the relevant feasibility studies were completed. Under such circumstances, it was likely that local contractors would be able to participate and succeed in these tenders.

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31. In concluding, the Chairman requested the Administration to -

- (a) provide regular progress reports on the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas for the 18 estates referred to in Appendix I to the Administration's paper;

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- (b) provide regular progress reports on the addition of lifts for PRH blocks without lifts service for the 12 estates referred to in Appendix II;
- (c) consider the provision of lifts/escalators at estates which were not included in Appendices I and II but were in need of barrier-free access; and
- (d) provide the timeframe for completion of the consultancy study on establishing an assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator system, as well as the expected timeframe for reporting to the Panel.

VI. Any other business

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 February 2009