

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1) 2409/08-09
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 6 July 2009, at 4:00 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 James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS

Members absent : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Public officers attending : **For item III**

Ms Eva CHENG, JP
Secretary for Transport and Housing

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

Mr Tony LIU
Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 2)
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

I. Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1906/08-09 — Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2009
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2071/08-09 — Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2009
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2073/08-09(01) — List of follow-up actions
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2073/08-09(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 April and 4 May 2009 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted the following information papers which had been issued since last meeting –

- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1867/08-09 — Submissions from the Society for Community Organizations (Chinese version only)
- LC Paper Nos. CB(1) 1525/08-09(01) and CB(1) 1805/08-09(01) — Land Registry Statistics in April and May 2009 (press release)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2053/08-09 — Referral arising from the meeting between Legislative Council Members and Kwai Tsing District Council members on 22 January 2009

III. Provision of metal gateset for flat entrance in public rental housing estates

- (LC Paper No. CB(1) 2073/08-09(03) — Administration's paper on provision of metal gateset for flat entrance in public rental housing estates
and CB(1) 2148/08-09(01)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 2148/08-09(01) — Submission from Mr TANG Ka-piu, Islands District Council members (Chinese version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1770/08-09(01) — Submission from the Democratic Party (Chinese version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(1) 1770/08-09(02) — Submission from the 葵涌愛心義工組 (Chinese version only))

3. The Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH) briefed members on the background to the provision of flat entrance metal gateset in public rental housing (PRH) estates. She said that the policy of not providing new PRH estates with entrance metal gateset was approved by the Building Committee (BC) of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in June 2003 having considered, mainly from a security angle, that the overall security system had been enhanced, which might replace the metal gatesets. Upon careful consideration of various factors, BC decided on 20 March 2009 to resume the provision of entrance metal gateset for new PRH development projects completed after January 2009. This was so decided mainly out of the consideration that in the past few years, tenants and concern groups appealed to HA from time to time for reviewing the arrangement, and that in mid-2008 a survey was conducted which supported the installation of entrance metal gatesets. The Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) of HA discussed the arrangement and the condition of existing tenants at its meeting on 19 May 2009 and would continue the discussion on 31 July 2009. Hence, views from members were welcome for consideration by SHC.

4. Mr LEE Wing-tat opined that the present contention over the provision of entrance metal gateset was a result of the wavering policies of HA. To compensate those tenants who had installed entrance metal gateset at their own cost, consideration should be given to providing them with some forms of reimbursement. The Deputy Director of Housing (Estate Management) (DDH(EM)) said that SHC had concerns on reimbursing the relevant tenants as there was no precedent of this nature. By way of illustration, no reimbursement had been provided to tenants who had installed clothes-drying racks at their own cost even after HA decided to subsidize half of the installation cost for clothes-drying racks in 2004. The same treatment was applicable to tenants who had installed aluminum windows at their own cost.

5. Mr Frederick FUNG considered a direct comparison between the provision of clothes-drying rack and entrance metal gateset inappropriate since the former was offered as a new item while the latter was taken away from and later given back to

tenants. Following HA's decision not to provide entrance metal gateset for PRH estates from 2003 onwards, many tenants had to install entrance metal gateset at their own cost. Therefore, it was most unfair to these tenants now that HA had decided to resume the provision of entrance metal gateset for new PRH development projects completed after January 2009. He urged HA to reimburse those tenants who had installed their own entrance metal gatesets.

6. In response, DDH(EM) clarified that entrance metal gateset was not provided to PRH flats converted from the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) or the Private Sector Participation Scheme (PSPS). While more than 90% of tenants of these PRH flats applied to the Housing Department for installing entrance metal gateset at their own cost, no complaints were received so far. By the same token, tenants who moved in PRH flats completed between 2003 and 2008 and installed entrance metal gatesets at their own cost should not be reimbursed. Mr Frederick FUNG was not convinced of the Administration's response. He pointed out that the management and security system of PRH flats converted from HOS or PSPS flats were quite different from that of standard PRH flats. He added that the wavering policy on the provision of entrance metal gateset had created inequalities among tenants. By way of illustration, Yuen Chau Estate (YCE) was one of those PRH estates without entrance metal gatesets. However, tenants affected by the Comprehensive Redevelopment Programme (CRP) and rehoused to YCE were provided with entrance metal gatesets. In addition, households affected by HA-initiated clearance projects outside CRP who chose to move in YCE were granted a non-accountable ex-gratia allowance to install entrance metal gateset. As a result, different households within the same estate had different treatments over the provision of entrance metal gateset. The same confusion was also found in Hoi Lai Estate which was converted from HOS.

7. Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired whether HA would consider providing appropriate assistance, such as maintenance service, to those tenants who had installed their own entrance metal gatesets if HA was not prepared to reimburse the installation costs. STH agreed to relay members' views to SHC, which would hold further discussion on the subject in late July 2009. She however pointed out that there were constraints in HA's resources. Meanwhile, consideration would be given to providing entrance metal gatesets during major renovation of estates under the Total Maintenance Scheme (TMS).

8. Mr WONG Kwok-kin noted that among the 76 000 flats occupied during the period from 2003 to 2008, tenants of about 65 900 units had installed entrance metal gateset at their own cost. He asked if HA was prepared to provide entrance metal gateset for tenants of the remaining 10 100 units and if so, it would be quite unfair to those tenants who had chosen to do so at their own cost. To this end, remedial measures should be taken to resolve the situation which was a result of HA's wavering policies. Expressing similar concern, Mr Alan LEONG said that most PRH tenants would prefer to leave their doors open not only to foster a closer relationship with their neighbours, but also to facilitate better ventilation. However, they could not do so in the absence of entrance metal gateset. Therefore, it was generally accepted that

entrance metal gateset was a necessity for PRH tenants. With hindsight, the decision of not providing entrance metal gateset in 2003 was flawed. It followed that tenants of the remaining 10 100 units who had chosen not to install entrance metal gateset should be provided with the gatesets. Consideration should also be given to working out the cost for installing a standard entrance metal gateset as the basis of reimbursement for tenants of the 65 900 units who had installed their own gatesets. The proposed provision of maintenance service and replacement cost for gateset installed by tenants would not appease them as this would apply across the board, regardless whether the gatesets were installed at their own cost or not.

9. In response, DDH(EM) said that the tenants of the 65 900 units who had chosen to install entrance metal gateset at their own cost would be given the choice to keep their existing gatesets or have them replaced with new ones, future maintenance of which would be borne by HA. As regards the proposed provision of maintenance service and replacement cost for gateset installed by tenants, DDH(EM) said that there might be a need for setting up a maintenance fund which would be a subject for consideration by SHC. He nevertheless reiterated that there were no precedent cases for reimbursement to tenants in respect of their upgrading works. Mr Alan LEONG was concerned that the replacement of existing gatesets with new ones would result in substantial amount of waste to be disposed of at landfills.

10. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that he was opposed to the decision of not providing new PRH estates with entrance metal gateset in 2003 since most PRH tenants would prefer to leave their doors open, hence the need for entrance metal gateset. To allay tenants' grievances on inequity associated with the wavering policies on the provision of entrance metal gateset, measures should be taken to resolve the problem, e.g., either reimbursement of the installation cost for entrance metal gateset, or provision of maintenance service and replacement of broken gateset. He also hoped that HA could learn from the experience to ensure consistency in policy implementation to avoid similar recurrences in future. STH said that the decision made in 2003 was based on the fact that there were sufficient security measures to ensure safety. Hence, the entrance metal gateset was only an ancillary installation. As a caring landlord, HA decided on 20 March 2009 to resume the provision of entrance metal gateset for new PRH development projects completed after January 2009. The suggested provision of maintenance and replacement of gateset installed by tenants would be possible options to be pursued by SHC.

11. In concluding, the Chairman said that the entrance metal gateset was a basic necessity which would not only help improve ventilation, but also enhance security and foster closer relationship with neighbours. He urged HA to provide entrance metal gateset to all PRH estates, including those completed between 2003 and 2008, as soon as possible, without having to await major renovation under TMS. As for the tenants of the 65 900 units who had chosen to install entrance metal gateset at their own cost, HA should, on top of offering free repair services, including replacement of the metal gateset should tenants consider their metal gateset in unsatisfactory condition (although it was unlikely that tenants would prefer metal gateset offered by HA), consider reimbursing these tenants with the cost of installing

a standard entrance metal gateset, which was a simple and easy way out. STH said that members' views and suggestions would be relayed to SHC for consideration.

12. As this was the last meeting of the Panel in the 2008-2009 legislative session, the Chairman took the opportunity to thank members, the Administration and the Secretariat for their contribution and support during the past year.

IV. Any other business

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 August 2009