

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

**Provision of Services in Public Rental Housing
through “Mobile Office”**

Purpose

This paper aims to brief Members on the progress and way forward of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“HA”)’s initiatives to provide services in the public rental housing (“PRH”) estates through “Mobile Office”.

Background

2. The HA is committed to providing quality management, maintenance and repair services to meet the needs of PRH tenants in a proactive and caring manner. Under the core value of providing people-oriented and innovative services, the HA has implemented various measures to assist the tenants over the years. These include the introduction of the concept of “Mobile Office” in the following two areas:

- maintenance and repair service; and
- housing management service.

3. The major merits of the concept of “Mobile Office” are:

- enabling “round-the-clock” operations through the use of portable Personal Digital Assistants (“PDAs”), thereby facilitating the work of frontline staff and enhancing operational efficiency;
- easier storage and access of relevant information from the database; and
- reducing paper consumption.

(I) Applying “Mobile Office” to Maintenance and Repair Service

“Total Maintenance Scheme”

4. The Total Maintenance Scheme (“TMS”), launched in early 2006, provides in-flat inspection and repair services for some 692 000 flats in the PRH estates under the HA. The Scheme employs the concept of “Mobile Office” which enables frontline staff to record on-site maintenance conditions and work progress of individual PRH flats with the relevant technologies. Not only does this help to improve transparency, it also enhances communication between the

staff of the Housing Department and tenants. We can also timely identify and tackle latent maintenance problems, thereby extending the lifespan of buildings.

(II) Applying “Mobile Office” to Housing Management Service

Mobile Housing Management Service

5. In recent years, we have applied the concept of “Mobile Office” to housing management service and introduced the use of PDAs to carry out day-to-day outreach management duties. Not only does it help to enhance operational efficiency of frontline staff and the quality of customer service, it also facilitates tenants in completing and submitting forms. With the use of mobile technology, we developed and applied the Mobile Application System for Housing Management (“MASHM”) in late 2008 to the biennial inspection of PRH flats. The use of PDAs has streamlined the business processes by dispensing PRH tenants with the need to fill in forms, since all procedures are completed on site during inspections. Errors in form completion are avoided and paper consumption is reduced as staff can instantly verify the information and input the findings. Progress of the inspections is also accelerated by 30% than before.

6. With the introduction of the TMS and the MASHM-aided biennial inspections, we estimate that paper consumption can be reduced by about 900 000 pieces each year. In support of the Government’s policy of saving resources in recent years, we have also electronised and digitalised day-to-day work records.

Progress

7. Given the favorable response of the mobile services and the positive results on internal operation, we are considering measures to further enhance maintenance and repair as well as housing management services in the light of experience gained from the implementation of TMS and MASHM.

(I) Applying “Mobile Office” to Maintenance and Repair Service

Responsive In-flat Repair Works

8. We have also adopted the TMS mobile service model in daily in-flat repair works **not covered by** the TMS. Dedicated in-flat technical teams have been set up in district maintenance offices and PDAs are used to promptly respond to tenants’ requests for repairs.

Inspection of Vacant Flat Refurbishment Works

9. The database developed under the TMS system will be used to enhance our site inspection of flat refurbishment works in a progressive manner. For example, issuing work orders on the spot will increase efficiency in the refurbishment works and result in better re-allocation of vacant flats.

Maintenance Scheme for Public Areas

10. Apart from in-flat maintenance works, we plan to draw reference from the strengths of the TMS System to improve maintenance projects in the public areas, such as conducting site inspections, issuing repair instructions on the spot and sharing maintenance-related records. We will integrate the processes of various major maintenance works for better interface. For example, air-conditioning condensation pipes will be installed during the painting of external walls to reduce nuisance to tenants and the public and to improve cost-effectiveness.

Development of Maintenance History Database

11. To enhance the management of maintenance and repair works, we are developing the Maintenance History Database that provides a more systematic servicing and repair record of various equipment such as air-conditioners, water pumps, electrical installations, elevators and fire services installations. Furthermore, our field staff will be equipped with portable PDAs incorporating radio-frequency identification technology for easy identification and retrieval of maintenance-related information with a view to increasing efficiency in maintenance management.

(II) Applying “Mobile Office” to Housing Management Service

Stepping up the Investigation of the Abuse of Public Housing Resources

12. The MASHM enables “round-the-clock” operations anytime and anywhere. With applications of additional functions such as photographing, audio recording, provision of floor plans etc. in the PDAs, frontline staff are better supported when performing out-of-office duties. These include stepping up of the investigation and monitoring of the abuse of public housing resources.

Enhancing Emergency Support

13. By further taking the advantage of the flexibility of the PDAs when performing outdoor duties, we have stored the non-tenancy related information

of household units, such as information on mobility-handicapped persons, in the PDAs. This helps to systematise the data originally contained in the household records. Apart from checking the lists of tenants with special needs kept in the management offices, duty staff can also retrieve relevant information from the PDAs so as to take prompt action and provide support in case of emergency.

Enhancing the Management of Environmental Hygiene

14. The environmental hygiene of the public areas of housing estates is essential to the improvement of tenants' quality of living. To increase operational flexibility, we have introduced the concept of mobile service into the Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in PRH estates ("Marking Scheme"). In carrying out their duties, frontline staff can use the PDAs to instantly check tenants' record under the Marking Scheme and give appropriate advice and response. For example, they can also immediately download the information of tenants who are allowed to keep dogs from the central database and check whether the tenants concerned have obtained the necessary approval. This will enhance the management of the environment of the housing estates.

Way Forward

15. The aforementioned two "Mobile Office" items are well-received by tenants and have gained widespread recognition. In reviewing the progress of the above schemes, we will draw on our past experience and examine the feasibility of the expansion of "Mobile Office" services. In the days ahead, we will continue to improve and develop the "Mobile Office" technology and provide support for our staff in performing all mobile duties. This will enable frontline staff to carry out instructions and finish their duties instantly. We will, as a result, achieve a "win-win" goal with the provision of value-added services to tenants and streamlined workflow.

16. Members are invited to note the progress of the PRH services provided through "Mobile Office".

**Transport and Housing Bureau
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