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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 7 April 2014

**Updated background brief on "Progress of addition of lifts
and escalators in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates"
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper sets out the progress of the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges in the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA")'s existing public rental housing ("PRH") estates, and gives a brief account of the views expressed by members on the subject.

Background

2. PRH estates constructed on hillsides are normally provided with staircases for connecting the different platforms within the estate or with the adjacent estate/public road. To further improve the pedestrian access based on local needs, HA has provided lifts or escalators to some of these PRH estates, including Tai Wo Hau Estate, So Uk Estate, Tsz Ching Estate, Yau Tong Estate and Kwai Chung Estate, over the past few years.

3. Members of the Panel on Housing ("the Panel") have been regularly briefed on the progress of HA's programme to enhance the pedestrian access in identified PRH estates to cater for the need of tenants, the elderly and the disabled in particular, requiring barrier-free access. Enhancement works include the provision of new lifts, escalators and footbridges in external areas within PRH estate boundaries to connect elevated platforms with large-level differences and, where technically feasible, addition of lift towers to PRH blocks built without lift services.

4. The lift modernization programme ("LMP") in all existing PRH estates is an on-going programme. HA continues to modernize lifts aged over 25 years and takes the opportunity to provide lift openings for floors currently without any,

where the structure permits. The modernization programme will cover approximately 100 lifts each year over the next five years.

Addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas

5. The addition of facilities such as escalators or lifts with footbridges is considered an effective means for the pedestrians to overcome level differences. Escalators are however not suitable for wheelchair users and would only be used under circumstances where lift installations are technically not suitable due to site constraints. In evaluating the need and priority on the addition of lifts and escalators on hillsides and at external areas, HA will give consideration to vertical level difference, land status, technical feasibility and social acceptability. Higher priority will be accorded to estates with a higher percentage of elderly tenants and where the additional facilities would benefit a larger number of tenants.

6. There are 21 lift addition projects in external areas within PRH estate boundaries, 19 of which are completed. The remaining two projects, which are located at Lai Yiu Estate and Yiu Tung Estate respectively, should be completed in the first half of 2013. The extra time required is due to extensive slope improvement works required. These projects often involve heavy temporary works at slope and sometimes significant slope improvement works. To shorten construction time on site and to minimize possible nuisance to tenants, HA has used steel lift towers, steel footbridges and off-site prefabrication as far as possible.

Addition of lifts in existing PRH blocks without lift service

7. There are 14 lift addition projects, 13 of which have been completed. The remaining one at Lek Yuen Estate should be completed by the third quarter of 2013 due to unexpected geological conditions which affected the foundation construction works.

8. HA has encountered some challenges in carrying out these projects, which include the need to clear some flats to allow for access points for the new lifts, alteration to some existing structures to accommodate new lift towers as well as the installation of various measures to minimize disturbance to the tenants of both domestic flats and ground floor shops during construction. With the completion of the remaining lift addition project, HA will basically have accomplished the goal of providing lift services to existing PRH blocks without lift services as far as technically feasible.

Future programme on addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges

9. To continue enhancing the pedestrian access for tenants, the lift additional programme ("LAP") has become a rolling programme. In light of the Administration's new initiative to promote "universal accessibility", HA's future LAP will consider adding lifts beside existing footbridges as well. As a whole, HA follows the main guiding principles below in determining whether or not to add new lift facilities –

- (a) Topographical factors (vertical rise);
- (b) Existing accessibility of footbridges;
- (c) Social acceptability;
- (d) Effectiveness on spending public resource;
- (e) Technical feasibility; and
- (f) Estate redevelopment potential.

10. HA implemented a new stage ("Stage 2") of LAP to the existing PRH estates in the three years starting from 2013/14. Projects under Stage 2 of LAP will be completed by 2015/16 with a total estimated construction cost of \$250 million. HA has examined and coordinated the lift addition projects for the new stage of LAP. Based on the requests from various regions, HA has prioritized proposed lift addition projects for feasibility study and design in accordance with the guiding principles.

11. When prioritizing proposed lift addition projects for feasibility study and design, HA will consider the redevelopment potential of the estates in which the projects are located. Besides, the lift addition projects will be tendered for construction only when HA has no immediate plan for redevelopment of the selected estates.

Modernization work for lifts in existing estates

12. HA has put in place a structured lift modernization rolling programme where the conditions of all lifts over 25 years of age are evaluated regularly. Lifts are replaced in accordance with priority based on their age, breakdown rates, and the benefits after replacement in terms of improved safety, comfort, travel time and energy efficiency. Opportunity is also taken to provide lift openings for every floor if not previously provided, where the structure permits. HA plans to replace about 100 lifts each year over the period from 2008-2009 to 2013-2014 with a total estimated expenditure of \$500 million.

13. Four lift modernization projects involving 94 lifts in four PRH estates were awarded in 2012 while contracts to further replace approximately 100 lifts were let out in 2013.

Deliberations by the Panel on Housing

14. The addition of lifts and escalators in existing PRH estates was discussed by the Panel at the meetings on 5 January and 7 December 2009, 10 February 2011 and 7 May 2012. The Panel was last briefed on the progress of addition of lifts and escalators in HA's existing PRH estates at its meeting on 15 April 2013. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

15. While supporting the implementation of LAP and LMP, some members emphasized the need to reduce the inconvenience caused by the installation of lifts and shorten the installation time. There was also the suggestion that HA should consider providing lifts in addition to escalators for the convenience of the elderly and the wheel-chair bound passengers who were unable to use escalators. Some other members were concerned about the performance of some lift maintenance contractors and requested that inspections other than regular maintenance be carried out on the lifts in PRH estates on account of their high usage rate, with a view to ensuring lift safety. Moreover, in order to avoid recurrence of the situation that lifts in PRH estates due for redevelopment had to be demolished shortly after they were installed, some members requested the Administration to consolidate and learn from the experience in this respect, with a view to ensuring that public money would not be wasted.

16. Members were also concerned that LMPs had to be carried out in stages and supported expediting both LAP and LMP. The Housing Department ("HD") advised that if LMPs were all implemented in tandem, there would be significant impact on tenants, particularly those who had mobility problems.

17. Some other members enquired whether all PRH estates would be provided with "universal accessibility" upon completion of LAP. They hoped that with LMP, the number of PRH units which did not have lift services would be reduced. HD advised that while efforts would be made to provide lifts and escalators in PRH estates as far as possible, there were some older estates where lifts and escalators could not be provided due to technical difficulties or topographical constraints, as in the case of the Model Housing Estate. Tenants living in units without lift services could apply for transfer if they were in need of such services.

Latest development

18. The Administration will brief members on the latest progress of adding lifts in HA's existing PRH estates at the Panel meeting on 7 April 2014.

Relevant papers

19. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 April 2014

List of relevant papers

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Panel on Housing | 5 January 2009 | <p>Administration's paper on "Addition of Lifts in Housing Authority's Existing Public Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)490/08-09(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0105cb1-490-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)893/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20090105.pdf</p> |
| Panel on Housing | 4 May 2009 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress of the provision of barrier-free access in public housing estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1447/08-09(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0504cb1-1447-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2071/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20090504.pdf</p> |
| Panel on Housing | 7 December 2009 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress Report on the Addition of Lifts and Escalators in Housing Authority's Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)534/09-10(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/hg/papers/hg1207cb1-534-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)987/09-10) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20091207.pdf</p> |

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Panel on Housing | 10 February 2011 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1209/10-11(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0210cb1-1209-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Progress of addition of lifts and escalators in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1209/10-11(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0210cb1-1209-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2023/10-11) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20110210.pdf</p> |
| Panel on Housing | 7 May 2012 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress report on addition of lifts and escalators to existing public rental housing estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1764/11-12(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0507cb1-1764-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Progress of addition of lifts and escalators in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)1764/11-12(06)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0507cb1-1764-6-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2426/11-12) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20120507.pdf</p> |

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Panel on Housing | 15 April 2013 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress report on addition of lifts and escalators to existing public rental housing estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)826/12-13(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0415cb1-826-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Administration's follow-up paper on "Progress report on addition of lifts and escalators to existing public rental housing estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1829/12-13(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0415cb1-1829-1-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Progress of addition of lifts and escalators in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)826/12-13(06)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0415cb1-826-6-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1638/12-13) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20130415.pdf</p> |