



ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 建築署

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3 February 2020

Mr. Anthony CHU
 Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee
 Legislative Council
 Legislative Council Complex
 1 Legislative Council Road
 Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr. CHU,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 73
Planning, provision and management of public toilets by
the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Thank you for your letter dated 10 January 2020 requesting response/information to facilitate the Public Accounts Committee's consideration of the above Chapter. Please find our reply below:

Part 3 – Management of public works projects

- (a) With reference to Case 2 in paragraph 3.9 of the Audit Report, please advise when Consultant Y recommended the Architectural Services Department ("ArchSD") replaced the defective bricks to rectify the existing unsatisfactory condition, how long did ArchSD take to make the decision of terminating the contract with Contractor B, and when was ArchSD informed that the Audit Commission would study the case;

Consultant Y recommended ArchSD to replace the defective bricks to rectify the existing unsatisfactory condition on 17 January 2019. Based on the consultant's recommendation, Contractor B submitted a quotation for the replacing works to ArchSD for consideration on 12 February 2019. Considering that the quotation was too high, ArchSD and Consultant Y had several discussions with Contractor

B. Contractor B finally agreed on 12 March 2019 to terminate the contract with payment for the works that had already been carried out. ArchSD subsequently decided to terminate the contract with Contractor B on 8 April 2019. On 3 May 2019, Audit Commission informed ArchSD about the audit review on provision and management of public toilets.

Part 4 – Management of Public Toilets

- (b) regarding paragraph 4.10(a)(i) of the Audit Report, please advise the performance pledge of completing the repair works of public toilets and the actual achievement rates in the past three years;

Please refer to FEHD’s reply to item (h) in PAC’s letter dated 10 January 2020 concerning the performance pledge of completing the minor repairs of public toilets by FEHD’s cleansing contractor.

- (c) According to paragraph 4.13(a) of the Audit Report, one of the reasons for the increase in repair and maintenance works from 2015 to 2018 might be the stepped-up monitoring of public toilets since 2018 for service enhancement and thus the detection of defects and referrals had significantly increased. Please advise:

- (i) apart from conducting joint investigation, whether the Administration has come up with other measures, for example using enhanced design features/ installations, to tackle the issues leading to the increasing number of defects in public toilets requiring repair and maintenance; and

To enhance the results of the maintenance and repairs of public toilets and aqua privies, in the coming new maintenance term contracts, ArchSD will require the contractors to set up a dedicated team to manage and monitor the repair and maintenance works to public toilets and aqua privies, with a view to strengthening the monitoring and quality of works. The new maintenance term contracts with such requirement will commence in two batches in April 2020 and April 2021. Also, we have introduced the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme since 2019. Under this Programme, Public toilets will be refurbished/facelifted at a shorter interval to alleviate the ageing problem of public toilets.

- (ii) the results and findings of ArchSD’s analysis of repair requests and the joint investigations on the existing ageing public toilets and the repair and maintenance records of public toilets between the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”), ArchSD and any other departments (paragraphs 4.33(a) and 4.33(b) of the Audit Report);

***Note by Clerk, PAC:** *See Appendix 16 of this Report for the reply from Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene to PAC's letter dated 10 January 2020.*

ArchSD, in collaboration with FEHD, is conducting an analysis on repair requests to public toilets and aqua privies reported in the Audit Report and anticipate to complete the analysis by the second quarter of 2020.

- (d) referring to paragraph 4.17 of the Audit Report about the discrepancy on the repair and maintenance requests recorded by FEHD and ArchSD, please advise the reasons, the measures that have been taken to avoid recurrence of the problem and whether such problem can be resolved by using the mobile application to record and transmit repair and maintenance requests; and

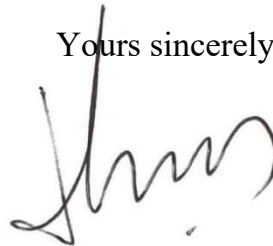
The differences between the record of number of repair request and number of repair works were due to different counting approaches being adopted by FEHD and ArchSD respectively to suit different modes of operation. For example, when FEHD submits a repair request to ArchSD, ArchSD may split it into different work items according to the work trades (such as plumbing and joinery works) to facilitate separate monitoring/administration, that resulting in differences in the number of repair requests and number of repair works. With the development of FEHD's new mobile application which provides automatic interfacing with ArchSD's works record computer system, the repair and maintenance records of both Departments will be synchronised.

- (e) with reference to paragraph 4.43 of the Audit Report, please advise:
- (i) whether FEHD and ArchSD have completed the review on all public toilets with toilet attendants but with no attendant rooms to study the feasibility of providing attendant rooms. If yes, the results, if not, when the review will be completed;
 - (ii) Details of the measures implemented for and the progress of improving the working conditions in public toilets for toilet attendants, and whether any difficulties have been encountered in the process;
 - (iii) details of the measures implemented for and the progress of improving the situation that two attendants might need to use the same toilet attendant room in the 53 toilets (paragraph 4.40(b)(i) of the Audit Report; and
 - (iv) The progress and timetable of installing power socket, fan or exhaust fan inside the attendant rooms of the 178 toilets mentioned in paragraph 4.40(b)(ii) of the Audit Report.

So far, ArchSD has received requests from FEHD to improve/provide attendant rooms for 175 public toilets. After studying, 50 nos. had been found technically not feasible. For the remaining 125 nos., 40 nos. have been included in the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme and are being studied for feasibility. 85 nos. had been found technically feasible to improve/provide attendant rooms. Of these, the works for 20 nos. have been completed, 20 nos. are in progress, and the scope of works for 45 nos. are being established. These are anticipated to be completed by September 2020.

ArchSD will continue to work closely with FEHD, and will provide necessary technical support and assistance to FEHD to improve existing attendant rooms in public toilets as far as practicable.

Yours sincerely,



(Allen LEUNG)

for Director of Architectural Services

- c.c. Secretary for Food and Health (fax no. 2526 3753)
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (fax no. 2524 1977)
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