

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1438/20-21
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by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 5 July 2021, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH, JP
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
- Member attending** : Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP

Members absent : Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Public Officers attending : Agenda Item III

Mr Stephen LEUNG
Deputy Director of Housing (Development & Construction)

Mr Daniel LEUNG
Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Housing Department

Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin
Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Housing Department

Mr Ricky LAM
Chief Manager / Management (Project Management)
Housing Department

Ms Edwina LIM
Senior Manager / Environment
Housing Department

Agenda Item IV

Mr Ricky YEUNG
Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Housing Department

Mrs TANG FUNG Shuk-yin
Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Housing Department

Ms LAI Suet-kwai
Chief Manager / Management (Support Services Section)2
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Mr Derek LO
Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Mr Fred PANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)5

Ms Michelle NIEN
Legislative Assistant (1)5

Ms Michelle LEE
Clerical Assistant (1)5

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I. Information papers issued since last meeting

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since last meeting –

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| LC Paper No. CB(1)998/20-21(01) | — Letter from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen dated 8 June 2021 on "Implementation of the Letting Scheme for Subsidised Sale Developments with Premium Unpaid" (Chinese version only) |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1075/20-21(01) | — Administration's response to the letter from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen dated 8 June 2021 on "Implementation of the Letting Scheme for Subsidised Sale Developments with Premium Unpaid" (LC Paper No. CB(1)998/20-21(01)) |

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II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 6 September 2021, at 2:30 pm –

- (a) Progress of the Total Maintenance Scheme;
- (b) Measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA"); and
- (c) Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates of HA.

(Post-meeting note: The notice of meeting and agenda were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1087/20-21 on 7 July 2021.)

III. Performance of the environmental targets and initiatives of the Hong Kong Housing Authority in 2020-21

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(03) — Administration's paper on performance of environmental targets and initiatives in 2020-21

LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(04) — Paper on performance of the environmental targets and initiatives of the Hong Kong Housing Authority prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

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3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Housing (Development & Construction) ("DDH(D&C)") briefed members on the HA's performance in respect of its environmental targets and initiatives in 2020-2021. With the aid of PowerPoint, Assistant Director (Development & Procurement), Housing Department elaborated on the details.

(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)1086/20-21(01)) for the item were issued to members on 6 July 2021 in electronic form.)

4. Mr Wilson OR declared that he was a member of HA.

5. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok declared that he was a member of several committees under HA.

6. Mr SHIU Ka-fai declared that he was a member of HA.

7. The Chairman declared that he was engaged in business related to recovery of used cooking oil.

Environmental targets and initiatives

8. Noting that among the 40 environmental targets that HA had set for the fiscal year 2020-2021, 37 of them were fully met while the remaining 3 were close to the targets, Mr Wilson OR opined that for the coming year, HA needed to be more progressive in setting the environmental targets and should take forward more environmental initiatives to keep abreast with the local and international developments in environmental protection. Mr Tony TSE asked about the criteria adopted by HA in setting its annual environmental targets. He cited examples that the amount of aluminium cans and plastic bottles recovered over past few years were more than the relevant annual targets, and asked whether HA would set higher targets for such initiatives.

9. DDH(D&C) replied that HA would determine the number and types of environmental targets for each fiscal year taking into account relevant factors, such as the HA's performance in achieving the environmental targets for the previous years, the relevant legal requirements and industry's practices, etc. For example, as part of its review for the energy efficiency target for 2020-2021 regarding the building services installation in communal areas of new public rental housing ("PRH") and subsidized sale flat developments, HA had adjusted the designed average electricity consumption to not exceeding 23.5 kWh per square metre per annum, which was a higher target as compared with the target of 24 kWh per square metre per annum for 2019-2020.

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Management of environmental facilities in estates

10. Mr Wilson OR opined that HA's estate management staff might face difficulties in carrying out the maintenance for some environmental facilities, such as vertical greening, installed during the development phase of a PRH estate. He asked how HA would strengthen the communication between its project teams and estate management staff to resolve such problem. DDH(D&C) replied that HA's project teams had been collaborating with its estate management staff in planning the provision of vertical greening in new PRH developments. With the experience gained and feedback from the estate management in recent years, HA had introduced measures to enhance the design of the greening facilities, such as providing vertical greening at accessible locations; using drought tolerant plants and installing Zero Irrigation System, which required less maintenance and irrigation.

Energy efficiency

11. Mr Michael TIEN asked whether apart from using energy efficient equipment in communal areas of PRH estates/blocks, HA would also require or encourage PRH households to use such equipment inside their flats, such as energy efficient lighting fittings, etc. DDH(D&C) replied that HA installed energy efficient equipment such as light-emitting diode ("LED") lighting in communal areas of PRH estates/blocks. HA had not required PRH tenants to use energy efficient equipment inside their flats, and would continue to promote the use of such equipment through education and publicity. In response to Mr TIEN's suggestion that HA should consider incentive measures to encourage PRH households' use of energy efficient equipment in their flats, DDH(D&C) advised that HA would study the suggestion.

12. Mr SHIU Ka-fai considered it appropriate for HA to implement various environmental initiatives, such as implementing Landscape Improvement Programme in 20 PRH estates, providing Zero Irrigation System in its new building projects, setting the designed average electricity consumption to not exceeding 23.5 kWh per square metre per annum, etc. He enquired about the use of photovoltaic ("PV") systems in PRH estates. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan raised a similar enquiry. She opined that in implementing the energy efficiency initiatives in its estates, HA should ensure that the lighting provision in communal areas of estates was sufficient or otherwise it might cause inconvenience to residents and give rise to law and order concerns. She enquired about how HA assessed the energy efficiency performance achieved through the use of LED lighting, and whether HA had replacement plans for the PV systems and LED lighting in its estates.

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13. DDH(D&C) replied that HA installed PV systems on building rooftops in new PRH developments, which according to its latest assessment could supply at least 1.5% of electricity for communal areas of each PRH block. As HA had participated in the Feed-in Tariff Scheme, the electricity produced by such systems could generate revenue to offset the relevant installation cost in about 10 to 13 years. For existing estates, HA would take into account various factors when considering the suitability of installing PV systems, such as whether sunlight to the roof of the PRH block concerned would be shaded by nearby structures/buildings, the rooftop loading capacity, etc. As addition of PV systems might affect the roof waterproofing, HA's estate management office would consider the feasibility of installing such systems when carrying out reroofing works of an existing PRH block. As regards LED lighting, HA implemented two-level lighting control system in PRH estates with a view to saving energy and at the same time ensuring sufficient illumination at various areas of estates that complied with the lighting standards as required by the relevant legislation. HA would make necessary improvements to deal with insufficient lighting in specific areas of PRH estates if necessary.

Water conservation

14. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok opined that through implementing suitable environmental initiatives in its public housing estates, HA would set an example for the community to support environmental protection. He asked whether apart from implementing its existing initiatives, HA would also introduce more measures to enhance water conservation in its estates, such as using reclaimed water. Mr Michael TIEN enquired about the proportion of PRH flats installed with flow controllers.

15. DDH(D&C) replied that to conserve water resources, HA installed water-efficient shower heads and water taps in all flats of new public housing developments. For existing PRH estates, Water Supplies Department ("WSD") had installed more than 350 000 flow controllers for shower heads and water taps in about 172 000 households in 150 existing PRH estates as at 15 May 2021. To reduce flushing water consumption, HA followed WSD's guidelines and installed six-litre dual flush water-closet suites in new public housing developments. To reduce irrigation water consumption, HA provided Zero Irrigation System in new public housing developments, which would collect and store rain water in retention boxes beneath planting area for irrigation through capillary action. In response to Mr TIEN's enquiry about the timetable for installing flow controllers for the remaining PRH flats, DDH(D&C) advised that HA and WSD would continue to carry out installation work for the remaining PRH flats as early as possible.

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Tree management

16. In view that HA had set the target of planting a minimum of one tree per 15 public housing flats, Mr Tony TSE asked about the inspection work for identifying trees at risk of collapse. DDH(D&C) replied that HA had a team of staff which monitored stability and health conditions of the trees, and would follow established procedures and practices to mitigate potential tree risks for protection of public safety, including removal of the trees concerned if necessary, etc.

Use of green materials and components

17. Mr Tony TSE referred to the HA's adoption of green materials and components in new public housing projects, such as use of softwood from sustainable forest sources for doors, and asked about the situation of new PRH tenants' disposal of such doors or other in-flat items such as sinks, etc. after moving in. DDH(D&C) replied that it was necessary to provide certain basic fixtures and fittings in new PRH flats. HA was aware that some PRH households might dispose of some fixtures when renovating their flats, and would continue to study measures to minimize the chance of such disposal and wastage. For example, HA would install adjustable cooking benches in all new PRH projects which could be adjusted to appropriate height at tenants' request during intake.

18. In response to Mr KWOK Wai-keung's enquiry on whether HA had studied the use of recovered materials for construction such as road paving in its estates, DDH(D&C) advised that HA had used recovered materials in HA's projects, e.g. recycled glass cum aggregates for external concrete paving blocks, and pulverized fuel ash to partly replace cement in concrete works.

Waste separation bins

19. Mr SHIU Ka-fai asked whether and how the HA's provision of 3-coloured waste separation bins ("waste separation bins") enhanced the effectiveness of waste recovery in its estates. Mr Vincent CHENG asked whether HA conducted regular inspections to prevent its waste separation bins from overflowing. He was concerned about the amount of recyclables collected from these bins and asked about the recyclables' recovery rate. Assistant Director (Estate Management)1, Housing Department ("AD(EM)1, HD") replied that HA provided waste separation bins on each floor of every block in new PRH developments. As regards existing PRH estates, HA provided such bins at the ground floor of each PRH block. HA required contractors to record

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and report on a monthly basis the amount of recyclables recovered from waste separation bins. During regular inspections, HA staff would deal with overfilling of such bins, if found.

20. The Chairman expressed concern about the dumping of non-recyclable items at waste separation bins, which would affect the recycling effectiveness. He opined that in contrast to aluminium cans and used papers, recyclers had fewer incentives to collect glass and plastic bottles, and HA/the Administration needed to consider measures to prevent dumping of such recyclables at landfills. In view that the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") had rolled out a pilot scheme on reverse vending machines ("RVMs") to promote recycling of used beverage containers for instant rebate and the number of venues for providing such RVMs would continue to increase, he suggested that HA should identify space for providing RVMs in its estates.

Municipal solid waste charging

21. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok asked about the preparatory work undertaken by HA to tie in with the passage of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 ("the Bill") in future. He opined that to carry out such preparatory work in HA's estates effectively would set a good example for private housing estates to follow.

22. DDH(D&C) and AD(EM)1, HD replied that to enable more stakeholders in PRH estates to try out municipal solid waste ("MSW") charging in actual settings in advance and help PRH tenants to get prepared for the implementation of MSW charging, EPD and the Housing Department ("HD") had jointly conducted Phase 1 of the trial project in some PRH estates in end 2018 for a period of about six months. Phase 2 of the trial which involved the participation of 50 PRH blocks in nine estates had commenced in May 2021 and would last for a period of about eight months. Under such trial projects, EPD would provide free dummy designated garbage bags to PRH tenants for on-site trial and simulating MSW charging arrangements during the trial period.

23. Mr Wilson OR opined that members of the public were concerned about the impact of the passage of the Bill on handling of waste in future. HA should make clear the arrangements to be put in place in PRH estates and the targets to be achieved having regard to the provisions and requirements under the Bill. He enquired on how the experience learnt by HD from the relevant trial would help HA come up with effective measures and targets to tie in with the future implementation of MSW charging. AD(EM)1, HD replied that HD had maintained close liaison with EPD on the future implementation of MSW

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charging, and had shared experience about the existing refuse collection system in PRH estates. In light of the experience learnt from the trial projects, HD would continue to collaborate with EPD and relevant stakeholders with a view to enhancing the existing refuse collection system in estates and stepping up the publicity and promotion of waste reduction. HD would work out measures to ensure that waste would be handled in accordance with the requirements upon the passage of the Bill, and report the proposed measures to HA in due course for consideration. Mr Vincent CHENG remarked that HA/the Administration needed to make earlier and more effective preparations for the implementation of MSW charging, taking into account members' concerns on the subject.

Waste reduction and recycling

24. Mr SHIU Ka-fai opined that with the implementation of MSW charging, PRH households would have higher incentives to practise waste separation and return recyclables to collection points in estates in order to minimize the use of designated garbage bags and payment of MSW charges. HA therefore needed to strengthen the waste recovery system in its estates to tie in with the introduction of MSW charging. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that MSW charging aimed at incentivizing source separation of recyclables which would in turn reduce waste generation. It would be desirable if the implementation of this initiative would help create more employment opportunities in the relevant industry. He suggested HA to make use of the open space in estates to support households to practise source separation of waste so that households could in turn reduce waste and hence the payment of MSW charges.

25. DDH(D&C) replied that HA acknowledged the importance of reducing waste generation at source, and its estate offices all along promoted the practice of waste reduction and recovery through various measures, such as providing waste separation bins and collection points for used clothes in estates, etc. To tie in with the implementation of MSW charging, HA would strengthen the education activities to enhance participants' understanding of the types of materials that could be recycled.

26. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan opined that PRH tenants had expectations that apart from waste separation bins, HA would also provide one-stop services for collecting recyclables in estates, such as electrical appliances, batteries, used papers and bags, etc. In view of the limited types of recyclables collected in waste separation bins, Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired whether to broaden the types of recyclables and further enhance tenants' environmental awareness, HA would make reference to overseas experience and provide waste separation and recycling points in estates. DDH(D&C) replied that open spaces in HA's

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estates were limited and often used for providing various estate facilities, such as greeneries. In considering whether it was practicable to take forward the suggestion of providing a central point for waste separation and recycling in each estate, HA needed to consider carefully the area requirement and consult EPD. Mr KWOK remarked that HA should further study the suggestion.

27. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether HA would strengthen its work in promoting the recovery of used clothes. The Chairman enquired about the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the collection arrangement for used clothes in PRH estates. AD(EM)1, HD replied that the amount of used clothes recovered from PRH estates in 2020-2021 was slightly less than the annual target of 850 tonnes. Apart from the suspension of most of the promotional activities under the COVID-19 epidemic situation, the increase in collection points for used clothes in the community was another reason explaining the drop in used clothes recovered in PRH estates. HA would continue to liaise with EPD and relevant stakeholders to promote recovery of used clothes.

28. The Chairman said that HA should consider suitable measures and incentives to facilitate the recovery of used cooking oil from households in its estates and encourage participation.

Food waste recovery

29. Mr Tony TSE recalled that HA had previously implemented a trial scheme on food waste recycling in its housing estates which had subsequently come to an end. In view that some HA's markets and shopping centres were participating in the Government's Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection, he and the Chairman enquired whether HA/the Administration would consider extending the scheme to residential units. Mr Vincent CHENG opined that HA should be more progressive in supporting food waste recovery in its housing estates and in encouraging tenants to develop the habit of food waste recovery.

30. AD(EM)1, HD replied that the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection launched by EPD covered various venues, including 18 markets/shopping centres under HA. EPD planned to extend the scope of collection under the scheme to food waste in domestic units. A PRH estate would participate in the pilot scheme and HA had been liaising with EPD on the implementation and other relevant details.

31. Mr Vincent CHENG opined that HA should consider arranging more PRH estates to join the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection. Mr Michael TIEN enquired about the details of implementing the Pilot Scheme in the HA's estate concerned, and whether HA had communicated with EPD regarding the

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difficulties that might be faced by tenants in separating food waste from domestic waste or in delivering the food waste to the estate's collection points. AD(EM)1, HD replied that the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection would facilitate EPD to identify suitable food waste collection methods in housing estates. HA had been sharing experience with EPD about the existing waste recovery procedures in PRH estates as well as the relevant living habit of PRH tenants. DDH(D&C) advised that HA would continue to liaise with EPD regarding the difficulties that might be encountered by PRH tenants participating in food waste recovery and the measures to overcome them.

Environmental awareness and participation in environmental protection initiatives

32. In view that HA had not established a target on food waste recovery, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired on how HA would measure the effectiveness in implementing such initiative in future, and whether HA would carry out in advance the relevant education and publicity work. She opined that the Community Green Stations developed by EPD in districts were well received by the public, and asked whether HA would facilitate the implementation of this initiative in its estates. AD(EM)1, HD replied that HA all along conducted educational programme in its estates to encourage waste reduction and recycling. To promote waste separation at source, HA had implemented the "Source Separation of Domestic Waste" Programme and the programme on Source Separation of Glass Bottles. Apart from waste separation bins, HA also set up collection counters or points in its estates to collect glass containers, fluorescent lamps and used clothes, etc. She advised that HA promoted waste reduction through publicity campaigns, such as the "Let's join hands to reduce waste in our estates" campaign, and through display of banners and distribution of leaflets. Where practicable, EPD, including its Community Green Stations in different districts, would carry out activities and public education relating to environmental protection in PRH estates.

33. Mr Vincent CHENG asked about the results of the HA's latest biennial survey to assess PRH tenants' environmental awareness, and the measures introduced in order to follow up the survey results and further enhance the tenants' environmental awareness. DDH(D&C) replied that HA received positive feedbacks from PRH tenants in the biennial surveys, and that the level of satisfaction of households towards new PRH estates was over 90%. HA and its estate offices would continue the efforts in raising environmental awareness among PRH tenants through organizing various activities such as the "Green Delight in Estates" programme; collaborating with EPD/non-government organizations in promoting recycling; and broadcasting environmental videos in the PRH estates, etc.

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IV. New initiative on Full Rent Exemption for Elderly Under-occupation Households in public rental housing estates

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(05) — Administration's paper on new initiative on Lifetime Full Rent Exemption for Elderly Under-occupation Households in public rental housing estates

LC Paper No. CB(1)1063/20-21(06) — Paper on new initiative on Full Rent Exemption for Elderly Under-occupation Households in public rental housing estates prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director (Estate Management), Housing Department ("DD(EM), HD") briefed members on the new initiative on Lifetime Full Rent Exemption for Elderly Under-occupation ("UO") Households in PRH estates launched by HA and its implementation. With the aid of PowerPoint, AD(EM)1, HD elaborated on the details.

(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)1086/20-21(02)) for the item were issued to members on 6 July 2021 in electronic form.)

Flat allocation to eligible applicants for the Scheme

35. Mr Wilson OR expressed commendation on HA's efforts in introducing and enhancing the Lifetime Full Rent Exemption Scheme for Elderly UO Households ("the Scheme") to facilitate the PRH circulation and make good use of existing resources. Noting that of the 374 approved applications under the Scheme, only 77 households had accepted the flat allocations as at end-May 2021, he asked whether HA would expedite the allocation process for

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other approved applicants or put in place a performance pledge in this regard in order to alleviate the applicants' concern on the time required for processing their applications. Mr KWOK Wai-keung acknowledged the benefits brought about by the initiative. He and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked about the reason that there were only 77 successful allocations.

36. DD(EM), HD replied that as some applicants had requested for allocation of PRH flats in specific districts or estates, such as the estates where their children resided, they might need to wait for availability of vacant flats that could meet their requests. Of the 374 approved applications, HA had made about 280 housing offers, and about 180 of them were refused by the applicants. He explained that as the approved applicants were sitting tenants who might not have an imminent need to move to another PRH unit and HA would provide a maximum of three housing offers to them under the Scheme, some of these applicants might choose to wait for the second or third offers to see whether they would be given a more desirable option.

37. Mr KWOK Wai-keung suggested that to increase the number of successful cases under the Scheme, instead of providing only one flat in each offer for an applicant's consideration, HA should consider allowing the applicant to choose among all the PRH flats which were set aside for allocations under the Scheme. If more than one applicant had chosen the same PRH unit, HA might determine the allocation by drawing of lots. DD(EM), HD replied that HA would take note of Mr KWOK's views. He advised that the HA's present arrangement for allocating flats to PRH applicants had taken into account various factors including the need of maintaining fairness and preventing corruptive practices, and taking forward Mr KWOK's suggestion would depart from the current practice.

38. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan opined that the initiative would enable flexible use of HA's existing housing resources, and it was appropriate for HA to implement it on a regular basis and adopt a people-oriented approach in handling each application in order to cater for the specific needs and concerns of the elderly applicants. Noting that HA would allocate a maximum of 300 PRH flats annually to approved applicants, she asked whether this would limit the number of successful allocations and whether HA would increase such quota.

39. DD(EM), HD replied that the number of approved applications under the Scheme had increased from about 270 in 2020 to 374 as at end-May 2021 and had reached 392 on 5 July 2021, and the number of successful flat allocations had increased from 45 in 2020 to 77 as at end-May 2021, and had reached 86 on 5 July 2021. The increasing number of applications and

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successful cases reflected the growing acceptance of the initiative, and HA would continue to promote the Scheme.

Measures to encourage participation in the Scheme

40. Mr Wilson OR said that HA should make good use of its online and offline channels to increase elderly tenants' awareness of the initiative, and should consider strengthening the collaboration between its estate offices and the Social Welfare Department's elderly centres in promoting the Scheme. DD(EM), HD replied that HA would continue to encourage participation in the Scheme through various promotion channels, including those which were elderly-friendly. For example, HA had produced two promotion video clips for uploading to the HA's YouTube channel and had invited four successful applicants to take part in the shooting.

41. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan opined that allowing eligible households to enjoy full rent exemption for life was an effective incentive to encourage applications for the Scheme. She queried about the justification for waiving the Comprehensive Means Test and Domestic Property Test for the applicants and whether the arrangement would give rise to unfairness. She further asked whether instead of implementing such arrangement permanently, HA would consider introducing other incentive measures to encourage participation in the Scheme.

42. DD(EM), HD replied that taking into consideration that most elderly tenants were retirees and needed to keep personal savings in meeting expenses for daily living, HA had endorsed waiving the Comprehensive Means Test and Domestic Property Test as one of the incentives to encourage participation in the Scheme. He explained that the incentive was in line with HA's age-friendly policies and measures and HA would review whether this waiver measure should continue in future, taking into account members' views. DD(EM), HD advised that HA staff had communicated with some applicants to find out why they did not accept the flat offer. Taking into account their feedbacks, HA would consider enhancement measures when reviewing the Scheme in future.

43. The Chairman said that his political affiliation supported the initiative, and HA should consider further incentive measures to encourage applications for the Scheme. He asked whether HA would provide suitable facilities inside the PRH flats to be allocated to the applicants, such as installation of grab rails in bathrooms, etc., to cater for the elderly needs. DD(EM), HD replied that HA all along undertook adaptation/home modification works for the flats of sitting/prospective elderly tenants to facilitate their mobility needs, such as installing grab rails in bathrooms, laying non-slip floor tiles on suitable floor surfaces, etc.

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44. Mr Wilson OR suggested that HA should deploy manpower to provide volunteer support to help the applicants adapt to the new living environment after moving to the newly-allocated PRH flats. DD(EM), HD replied that HA would consider the suggestion.

Eligibility criteria for the Scheme

45. Mr Wilson OR asked whether HA would consider the suggestion of relaxing the eligibility criteria for the Scheme in its next review so that UO households whose family members were aged 65 or above would also be eligible for the Scheme. DD(EM), HD replied that HA had considered the suggestion as mentioned by Mr OR. As there were about 20 000 UO households whose family members were all aged 70 or above and the maximum number of PRH flats for allocation to approved applicants was 300 annually, HA considered it appropriate to give priority to households whose family members were all aged 70 or above and re-consider the suggestion in future reviews of the Scheme.

46. In view that one of the married couple in a 2-person UO household might be aged 70 or above whereas the other one might be aged between 60 and 69, the Chairman suggested that HA should consider extending the eligibility for the Scheme to cover such households. DD(EM), HD replied that HA would consider the suggestion in the next review of the Scheme.

Review of the Scheme

47. Mr Tony TSE said that the total number of UO households had increased from about 63 000 in 2017 to about 80 000 in March 2021, representing an annual average increase of around 3 900 UO households, whereas the annual average number of UO cases resolved by HA in the past five years was limited to about 2 200 only. He was concerned that amidst ageing in society, the UO problem might continue to be serious if HA did not enhance its existing policies on transfer of UO households. He opined that the number of successful cases under the Scheme was limited. HA should not wait until the next review of the Scheme in 2023 before studying members' views on the initiative, such as relaxing the age limit of eligible applicants as suggested by the Chairman, and implementing suitable enhancement measures so that more large-sized PRH flats could be released as early as possible for allocation to needy families. The Chairman said that HA might also consider conducting the review earlier.

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48. DD(EM), HD replied that HA had no intention to wait until the next review of the Scheme before introducing any measures which could encourage participation in the Scheme or enhance its effectiveness.

V. Any other business

49. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:06 pm

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 October 2021