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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 7 May 2012

**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
(Position as at 4 May 2012)**

Purpose

This paper sets out the progress of the addition of lifts and escalators in 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. Some of the PRH blocks built in the 70's are without lifts. Tenants are required to walk up and down the stairs. In view of an aging population, there is an increasing need to provide lift services to tenants. HA adopts a holistic approach to enhance the pedestrian circulation for tenants and allow barrier-free access for the disabled and elderly.

Addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas

4. 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, the following guiding principles will be adopted -

- (a) Vertical level difference - the vertical level difference between the platforms to be connected should not be less than six metres (footbridges six metres above ground or equivalent to two-storey high would normally be provided with lifts);
- (b) Land status - the proposed locations of any escalator, lift tower and associated footbridge must be within the estate boundary;
- (c) Technical and social feasibility - every proposal is subject to a feasibility study including the space requirement, clearance of underground utilities or obstructions, and the site geotechnical aspects etc;
- (d) Social acceptability - HA will consult the tenants and concerned groups and evaluate the impact on tenants during construction before committing to the additional facilities; and
- (e) Priority - 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.

Based on the above guiding principles, HA has started a survey among existing PRH estates with a view to formulating an overall work programme. A list of the estates where addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas are considered necessary with details of progress is given in **Appendix I**.

Addition of lifts in existing PRH estates without lift service

5. There are 35 blocks in 12 estates which are without lift service. These blocks are mostly seven storeys high. HA has planned to add new lifts to these

blocks under a five-year programme, subject to feasibility study and consultation with tenants and concerned groups. The provision of lifts will in general take the form of a lift tower built adjacent to the block, with connections to the block on every floor. A pilot scheme in Tai Hing Estate has been completed and two new lifts have been put to use since 2008. A list of the estates with details of progress is given in **Appendix II**.

6. The above two programmes will cost around \$450 million and are targeted for completion by 2012.

Modernization work for lifts in existing estates

7. A structured lift modernization rolling programme has been put in place 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.

8. Eight and seven lift modernization contracts involving 124 and 83 lifts in eight and seven PRH estates have been awarded in 2009 and 2010 respectively, while contracts to replace another 164 lifts were expected to be let out in 2011.

Deliberations by the Panel on Housing

9. The addition of lifts and escalators in existing PRH estates was discussed by the Panel on Housing (the Panel) at its meetings on 5 January and 7 December 2009, as well as 10 February 2011.

10. With the aging population, Panel members generally supported the provision of lifts and escalators in PRH estates to cater for the need of the elderly and the disabled. However, some members were concerned about the long lead time for installation of lifts/escalators. These members also queried the need for feasibility studies when most PRH were of similar designs. Some other members enquired if residents, District Councillors and Estate Management Advisory Committees had been consulted on the provision of lifts/escalators to avoid possible under-utilization of these facilities. Consideration should also be given

to equipping the lifts/escalators with communication system and energy saving devices (such as energy-efficient lighting and sensors which would automatically turn off the lifts/escalators when these were not in use) where applicable. The Administration was requested to provide regular progress reports on these programmes, and to consider providing lifts/escalators at estates which were not included in the programmes but in need of these facilities.

11. On *addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges at external areas*, some Panel members noted that the locations of these facilities must be within the estate boundary. This had rendered many deserving cases not eligible for inclusion in the programme. Given that a consultancy study was underway to establish an assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems, members requested that an inter-departmental group should be set up to oversee the study which should be expedited for the benefit of residents. To observe how the need for elevator links and elevator systems could be met, a visit to Kwai Chung Estate and Oi Man Estate was arranged on 5 March 2009. When the provision of barrier-free access in PRH estates was discussed at the Panel meeting on 4 May 2009, members opined that HA should consult tenants at the design and planning stage of barrier-free access improvement works, including the installation of lifts and escalators, so that these facilities could be provided in such a way and location that would best suit the needs of the community.

12. Some Panel members considered a more definitive time frame should be provided for the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges within the boundaries of PRH estates, and that HA should take a more proactive role in providing these facilities to enhance pedestrian access. By way of illustration, HA should proceed with the installation of lifts and escalators at Tze Wan Shan without having to await the approval of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), albeit the provision of these facilities formed part of SCL. HA should consider carrying out the improvement works first and reimbursing the cost from MTR Corporation Limited upon approval of SCL to enable early provision of the needed facilities. Some other members expressed concern that if the lift installation programme would be subject to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement, local contractors might not be able to succeed in tendering the works. These members asked if the programme could be tendered out under several smaller contracts to enable the participation of local contractors, thus benefiting the local economy through the creation of more job opportunities for the local workforce. They also stressed the need for proper maintenance of lifts and escalators to ensure safety.

13. On *modernization work for lifts in existing PRH estates*, some Panel members enquired if the programme would deal with the existing problem where lift openings were not provided for every floor in some PRH blocks, and whether special arrangements would be provided to transfer elderly or physically disabled tenants living in the top floor units which were not provided with lift openings. Noting that some lifts in PRH estates were not equipped with sensors, members were concerned that passengers could easily get caught between closing lift doors. To facilitate the visually impaired, HA should provide floor numbers in Braille characters for existing lifts in PRH estates. HA should also consider installing more lifts in larger estates (such as Lok Wah Estate), and providing covers for escalators for the convenience of residents. To facilitate monitoring, the Administration was requested to provide a list of estates where lift improvement works were to be carried out.

Latest development

14. The Administration proposes to report on the latest progress of the programme on the addition of lifts or escalators in HA's existing PRH estates at the Panel meeting on 7 May 2012.

Relevant papers

15. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix III**.

Appendix I

Addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges within the boundaries of PRH estates

Estate		Stage of work			Anticipated completion date	
		as at Jan 2009	as at Nov 2009	as at Feb 2011		
Kwai Chung Estate	Linking Tai Wo Hau	Completed	Completed	Completed	-	
	near Block 4	-	Under construction	Under construction	2011-2012	
Sai Wan Estate		Under construction	Completed	Completed	-	
Kwai Shing East Estate						
Kwai Shing West Estate		Feasibility study	Design	Design	2012	
Tin Wah Estate				Design	Under construction	2011-2012
Lei Muk Shue (II) Estate		Feasibility study	Feasibility study completed; consultants engaged to commence designing	Design	2012	
Shek Lei (II) Estate	Near Shek Wai House			Under construction	Under construction	2011
	near Block 8					
Tsz Lok Estate (Phase 1)						
Shun Tin Estate					Tender	
Ping Tin Estate						
Oi Man Estate						
Yiu Tung Estate					Design	
Wah Fu (I) Estate					Tender	2012
Wah Fu (II) Estate						
Cheung Ching Estate						
Cheung Hong Estate					Under construction	
Cheung Hang Estate						
Lai King Estate						
Lai Yiu Estate				Feasibility study	Tender	

Appendix II

Addition of lifts for PRH blocks without lift service

Estate	Block	Stage of work			Anticipated completion date	
		as at Jan 2009	as at Nov 2009	as at Feb 2011		
Tai Hing Estate	Hing Wai	Completed	Completed	Completed	-	
Yue Wan Estate	Yue Fung, Yue On, Yue Tai	Under construction	Under construction			
Lei Muk Shue (II) Estate	Block 4	Tender		Design	Design	2012
	Block 1	Feasibility study				
Shiu Pin Wai Estate	Bik Shui	Design	Under construction	Completed	-	
Choi Hung Estate	Kam Hon, Kam Pik, Kam Wah	Design	Tender			
Shun On Estate	On Kwan		Under construction	Design	2012	
Ping Shek Estate	Tsuen Shek, Yuk Shek					
Wo Lok Estate	Cheung On, Fu On, Hing On, Kin On, Man On, Ping On, Tai On, Yee On				2011-2012	
Pak Tin Estate	Block 1 & 3					Design
	Block 2 & 12				Under construction	
Fuk Loi Estate	Wing Ning, Wing Cheung, Wing Ting, Wing Hing, Wing Lung				Tender	2012
Kwai Shing West Estate	Block 2	Feasibility study			Feasibility study	(see Note)
	Block 7		Design	Design	2012	
	Block 4		Feasibility study			
Lek Yuen Estate	Wah Fung, Fu Yu					

Note: No lift is required for Block 2 of Kwai Shing West Estate as access is already provided through Blocks 1 and 3.

Appendix III

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Housing Panel	5 January 2009	<p>Information paper on "Addition of Lifts in Housing Authority's Existing Public Housing Estates" provided by the Administration (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>
Housing Panel	4 May 2009	<p>Information paper on "Progress of the provision of barrier-free access in public housing estates" provided by the Administration (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>
Housing Panel	7 December 2009	<p>Information paper on "Progress Report on the Addition of Lifts and Escalators in Housing Authority's Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" provided by the Administration (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
Housing Panel	10 February 2011	<p>Information paper on "Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" provided by the Administration (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>Paper on progress of addition of lifts and escalators in Housing Authority's existing public housing estates prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief) (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>