

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)515/12-13
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 3 December 2012, at 2:30pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH (Chairman)
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

Member absent : Hon WONG Yuk-man

Public Officers attending : **For item III**

Mr D W PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Mr Eugene FUNG
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Special Duties)

Mrs Hedy CHU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Special Duties)

For Item IV

Mr D W PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Ms Ada FUNG, JP
Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Housing Department

Mr LEUNG Sai-chi
Assistant Director (Estate Management)¹
Housing Department

Ms Rosman WAI
Senior Manager / Environment
Housing Department

For Item V

Mr D W PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Clerk in Attendance : Ms Miranda HON
Chief Council Secretary (1)¹

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)1

Miss Mandy POON
Legislative Assistant (1)1

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I. Information paper issued since last meeting

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

(LC Paper No. CB(1)133/12-13(01) — "Land Registry Statistics in October 2012" provided by the Administration (press release))

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)231/12-13(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)231/12-13(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)242/12-13(01) — Letter dated 27 November 2012 from Hon Christopher CHUNG requesting early discussion of the policy on the redevelopment of old public rental housing estates (Chinese version only))

2. Referring to LC Paper No. CB(1)242/12-13(01), the Chairman said that he would relay to the Administration the request of Mr Christopher CHUNG to advance discussion of the policy on the redevelopment of old public rental housing estates.

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 7 January 2013, at 2:30 pm -

(a) Measures to deal with subdivided flats;

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- (b) PWP Item No. B079TI under Head 711 – Public Transport Interchange at Area 13, Hung Shui Kiu; and
- (c) Creation of directorate posts in the Housing Department for implementation of the new Home Ownership Scheme and other housing initiatives.

III. Proposed creation of directorate posts for implementation of the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance

(LC Paper No. CB(1)222/12-13(01) — Administration's paper on "Proposed creation of directorate posts for implementation of the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance")

4. The Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("PSTH(H)") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to create two directorate posts in the Housing Department ("HD") with effect from 1 April 2013 to cope with the workload arising from the implementation of the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance (Cap. 621) ("the Ordinance") by highlighting the salient points of the discussion paper.

Workload and staffing of the Sales of First-hand Residential Properties Authority

5. Dr KWOK Ka-ki agreed that there was a need for the proposed creation of the directorate posts. He however noted that a Special Duties Unit ("SDU") had already been set up to take forward the regulation of the sale of first-hand residential properties by legislation, including establishing the Sales of First-hand Residential Properties Authority ("SRPA"). As the manpower resources required by SRPA were based on the anticipated annual complaint rate of about 2% out of the 20 000 first-hand residential properties being offered for sale in a year (i.e. 400 complaint cases in a year), he was concerned that it might not be necessary to maintain a 30-member team to discharge the duties of SRPA if the complaint rate turned out to be lower than anticipated. He also questioned the need to engage Information Officer ("IO") grade staff to serve SRPA given that their services could instead be provided by the existing IOs of HD.

6. PSTH(H) responded that HD would closely monitor the staffing situation of SRPA. He stressed that the handling of complaints was only a part of SRPA's functions which ranged from issuance of guidelines to regular inspections and checks on sales brochures and advertisements, etc. The range of duties would have to be discharged regardless of the number of complaints received. The

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current staffing proposal was considered reasonable at this stage and would be reviewed when necessary. As regards the need for IO grade staff, PSTH(H) explained that SRPA had to be self-contained in performing its various functions. The only outside support provided to SRPA would be from the Department of Justice ("DoJ") for providing legal advice and handling prosecution matters.

7. The Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Special Duties) ("DSTH(SD)") added that SDU was headed by a supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade B post at the Deputy Director level in HD for the period from 16 December 2011 to 30 June 2013 to take forward the regulation of the sale of first-hand residential properties by legislation, including the setting up of SRPA. The post would lapse on 1 July 2013 or upon creation of the Administrative Officer Staff Grade B post in SPRA, whichever was the earlier. Apart from handling complaints, the 30-member team of SRPA would be responsible for a wide range of tasks including carrying out regular inspections and checks on sales brochures, price lists, register of transactions and advertisements, conducting investigations, issuing guidelines, maintaining a centralised database on first-hand residential properties, and planning and executing public education programmes, etc. Staff of SRPA would have to carry out regular inspections and checks on sales brochures, price lists, show flats, sales offices, registers of transactions, sales arrangement announcements, vendors' websites and advertisements, and so on. It was expected that about 70 to 80 first-hand residential developments would be put up for sale per annum, taking into account the situations in the past few years. This would generate enormous work for the staff of SRPA, in particular since a sales brochure had to be updated once every three months and the price lists would have to be revised whenever there were changes to the prices of the residential properties.

8. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired about the status of recruiting staff for SRPA and whether some of the posts had already been filled. He also asked about the criteria for deciding the number of staff required and the justifications for employing as many as 30 staff members for SRPA. DSTH(SD) referred members to the Organization Chart at Annex C to the discussion paper which set out all the posts to be created under SRPA. He said that subject to members' approval, the posts would be created in April 2013 and suitably filled. As to the workload of SRPA, he stressed that SRPA would be expected to carry out a wide range of duties, including regular inspections and checks on sales brochures, price lists, show flats, sales offices, sales arrangement announcements, vendors' websites and advertisements etc; investigations on cases of non-compliance; handling of complaints and public enquiries; and conduct of public education programmes.

9. Mr IP Kwok-him said that members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong would support the setting up of SRPA to implement the Ordinance. Noting that SRPA would be tasked to plan and execute

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public education programmes, he sought elaboration on the publicity programmes to be carried out.

10. DSTH(SD) responded that publicity efforts would be made to educate the public that property size and property price per square foot/metre might only be quoted on the basis of saleable area ("SA") in sales brochures, price lists, and advertisements. Also, publicity efforts would be made to raise public awareness of the obligations of vendors of first-hand residential properties to make public the sales brochure at least seven days immediately before the commencement of sale and price list(s) at least three days immediately before the commencement of sale. SRPA would also organise workshops for stakeholders. The IO grade staff of SRPA would be responsible for the public education programmes.

11. Mr Tony TSE said that he would support the setting up of SRPA to implement the Ordinance for the protection of consumers. He was however concerned about the implications on HD's manpower resources if SRPA staff were to be redeployed from within HD. He also considered it necessary for the two directorate posts to be filled by staff familiar with market practices. As the sales activities for residential properties were often held after office hours and on weekends and public holidays, adequate monitoring should be put in place to ensure the compliance of sales practices with the requirements of the Ordinance.

12. PSTH(H) stated that the 32 posts in the SRPA would be new posts to be created, rather than to be filled by redeployment of HD's existing posts or staff. There should not be impact on the staffing situation of HD. He agreed that the staff concerned would need to be familiar with the operation of the property market. DSTH(SD) added that the clear requirements in respect of the sales of first-hand residential properties as provided in the Ordinance would enhance the transparency of information, fairness of transactions and protection of consumers.

13. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung also said that he would support the setting up of SRPA to implement the Ordinance. With reference to the Inspection and Monitoring Unit ("IMU") of SRPA, he enquired whether on-site inspections would be conducted by IMU for each sale of residential properties. He also enquired whether developers were required to provide a full set of documents pertaining to the sale to IMU for inspection and uploading onto the internet for public reference. DSTH(SD) replied that vendors of first-hand residential properties were required to submit sales brochures, price lists, sales arrangement announcements and register of transactions etc to SRPA on the first day when they made those documents available to the public. Besides, IMU would conduct on-site inspections of show flats and sales offices.

14. On Mr IP Kwok-him's enquiry on the staff cost of SRPA, DSTH(SD) advised that the additional full annual average staff cost (including salaries and

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staff on-cost) for the two directorate posts would be \$4,680,000. As for the 30 additional non-directorate civil service posts to be created, the notional annual salary cost at mid-point and the full annual average staff cost (including salaries and staff on-cost) would be \$16,334,640 and \$23,839,000 respectively.

Performance pledges of SRPA

15. Mr LEUNG Chi-cheung expressed support for the setting up of SRPA to implement the Ordinance. He enquired if there were any performance pledges on the part of SRPA, for example, on the time frame for investigation of complaints. Dr Fernando CHEUNG also expressed support for the setting up of SRPA and considered it necessary that the Ordinance should be strictly enforced for the protection of consumers. While sharing the view on the need for performance pledges, he added that SRPA should be required to present annual reports on its work to the Panel on Housing, detailing the measures to deal with malpractices and contraventions and the outcome of investigations. He also enquired whether reservation of units by developers would be regulated under the Ordinance.

16. PSTH(H) stated that the Administration would be pleased to report on the work of SRPA to the Panel on Housing as and when necessary. DSTH(SD) said that in accordance with the general practices of the Administration, there were performance pledges on the time frame for dealing with complaints. SRPA would follow those established rules. It would have its own website, and maintain an electronic database containing the sales brochures, price lists, and registers of transactions of individual first-hand residential developments as required under the Ordinance. It would regularly report its work on its website, including the number and nature of the complaints received and handled. It would also maintain dialogue with stakeholders such as the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong ("REDA") on issues of public concern in the sales of first-hand residential properties.

Replacement of SRPA with an independent statutory body

17. Mr Kenneth LEUNG declared interest as a former member of the Estate Agents Authority ("EAA"). He pointed out that, in order to avoid EAA and SRPA from making duplicating efforts and to create synergy, there should be more coordination between them to enable sharing of resources in relation to legal and administrative work. Mr LEUNG and Mr Christopher CHUNG further enquired whether consideration would be given to replacing SRPA with an independent statutory body.

18. PSTH(H) said that the Administration's priority was to bring the Ordinance and SRPA into operation by end of April 2013. The Administration was open to the option of replacing SRPA with an independent statutory body at an appropriate

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time. The issue of setting up SRPA as an independent statutory body had been discussed by the Bills Committee on Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Bill. However, as the establishment of a statutory body took time and in view of the urgency of setting up SRPA to facilitate the early implementation of the Ordinance, it was proposed that SRPA be set up under the Housing Branch of the Transport and Housing Bureau. The Administration would make reference to existing models when considering the option of turning SRPA into a statutory body at an appropriate time, including that of the new Communications Authority which was formed by merging the then Office of the Telecommunications Authority and the relevant divisions of the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority.

Transitional arrangements

19. Mr LEUNG Chi-cheung said that as it would be a quite a few months before SRPA could be set up, he enquired if the requirements on sales brochures and price lists as well as the usage of SA could be taken forward under the Lands Department's Consent Scheme during the interim. DSTH(SD) responded that EAA had issued guidelines requiring all estate agents to use SA to quote property size and property price in the sales of second-hand residential properties starting from 1 January 2013. Since the enactment of the Ordinance in July 2012, the Administration had been in close liaison with stakeholders, including REDA and the Law Society of Hong Kong, on the formulation of guidelines under the Ordinance.

Application of the Ordinance to sales of residential properties in the secondary market

20. Mr Christopher CHUNG said that with the many transactions associated with uncompleted flats, the application of the Ordinance to first-hand residential properties only might not have served a useful purpose. He enquired whether consideration would be given to extending its scope to cover residential properties in the secondary market.

21. DSTH(SD) said that the question of whether the sales of second-hand residential properties had to be subject to similar regulation as first-hand residential properties had been discussed at length by the Bills Committee on Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Bill. Unlike the sales of first-hand residential properties where the vendors would usually be the developers, the vendors of second-hand residential properties would usually be individual owners. Under the Ordinance, the vendors of first-hand residential properties had to comply with stringent requirements on sales brochures, price lists, show flats, and advertisements, etc. There would be practical difficulties on the part of individual owners of second-hand residential properties to comply with such requirements. He added that as SRPA would maintain a centralized electronic database

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containing the sales brochures, price lists, and registers of transactions of individual first-hand residential developments, when the properties were subsequently sold in the second-hand market, purchasers would know about SA and other key information of the properties by searching the documents in SRPA's electronic database.

22. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired whether the use of SA to quote property size and property price would apply to the sale of residential properties in the secondary market. DSTH(SD) said that while the Ordinance would only apply to first-hand residential properties, EAA had requested estate agents to provide SA in the sale, purchase and leasing of residential properties in the secondary market so that the market could be geared up to the use of SA in property transactions.

Prosecution and penalty levels under the Ordinance

23. While indicating support for the proposal, the Chairman enquired about the level of authority for deciding whether or not prosecution actions should be taken against developers of first-hand residential properties for contravention of the Ordinance. He was concerned about offer of deferred benefits to senior officers of SRPA by developers for non-action against malpractices in property sales.

24. PSTH(H) said that decisions on carrying out intensive investigations would be jointly considered by the senior staff of SRPA and more importantly, the final decision of whether or not to take prosecution actions would rest with DoJ. He stressed that SRPA's work would be subject to public scrutiny. He was confident that decisions would be made in the best interest of the community and in accordance with the law. DSTH(SD) added that the provisions of the Ordinance were very clear about the compliance requirements in the sales of first-hand residential properties. The Head of SRPA would be required to make prompt and considered decisions on cases which should be referred to DoJ for consideration of prosecution and to explain SRPA's positions in public. The Chairman hoped that a working group could be set up to assess the effectiveness and fairness of SRPA after it had been in operation for one or two years. Efforts should also be made to ensure that no deferred benefits were incurred.

25. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the penalties for failure to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance. Given the high cost of property transactions, he suggested that all property transactions should be tape recorded, as in the case of transactions of investment products, to avoid any misunderstanding and/or misleading information. DSTH(SD) advised that the maximum penalty for contravention of regulatory requirements such as failure to provide buildings plans would be \$100,000. The penalty for offences in connection with misrepresentations and dissemination of false and misleading information would range from \$500,000 to \$5 million and imprisonment from six months to seven

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years. The penalty levels were set out in the Ordinance. He said that there were no provisions under the Ordinance requiring the tape recording of property transactions, but the vendor and purchaser could tape record the transactions if they mutually agreed to do so.

26. The Chairman concluded that members supported the proposal and its submission to the Establishment Subcommittee.

IV. Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2011/12

(LC Paper No. CB(1)231/12-13(03) — Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2011/12"

LC Paper No. CB(1)231/12-13(04) — Background brief on "Environment-friendly designs, green measures and energy saving initiatives implemented in public rental housing estates" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

27. PSTH(H) briefed members on the background to the establishment of the Environmental Policy by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and the performance of HA in respect of its environmental targets and initiatives in 2011/12. The Deputy Director of Housing (Development & Construction) ("DDH(D&C)") gave a power-point presentation on the subject.

(Post-meeting note: A set of the power-point presentation materials on the subject was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)257/12-13(01) on 4 December 2012.)

Waste management

28. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that as the largest developer in Hong Kong, HA had played a vital role in providing a clean living environment and its contribution to developing Hong Kong as a low-carbon city was commendable. He asked whether there were any cooperative efforts made with environmental groups to promote the recycling of used furniture. With reference to the progress on waste reduction in the past years, he enquired if additional measures could be taken to further reduce the average domestic waste production beyond the existing target of 0.7 kilogram ("kg") per person per day.

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29. DDH(D&C) responded that efforts would be made to recover and recycle used furniture and fittings as far as practicable, particularly in demolition projects, and to donate them to other organizations. She agreed to liaise with environmental groups to work out measures to promote the recycling of used furniture. She also said that the domestic waste production target of 0.7 kg per person per day appeared to have saturated and did not have much room for reduction. However, HD would adopt other measures, such as providing waste separation bins at communal areas of public rental housing ("PRH") blocks to facilitate source separation and collection of recyclable waste, with a view to reducing the amount of waste disposed at landfills.

30. The Chairman enquired whether the used fixtures and fittings left by outgoing PRH tenants could be retained for use by incoming tenants to avoid wastage. The Assistant Director of Housing (Estate Management)1 ("ADH(EM)1") said that used fixtures and fittings would be retained if they were found to be in safe and good re-usable conditions. Guidelines had been issued to frontline staff on the retention of fixtures and fittings which complied with building and fire safety requirements.

31. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok further enquired whether the recycled marine mud bricks and environmental concrete technology adopted in the construction of PRH estates in the Kai Tak Development would be applied in other PRH construction projects. DDH(D&C) replied that marine mud bricks could not be produced at sites where marine mud was not available. Nevertheless, recycled products would be used in construction projects where appropriate.

32. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that some social enterprises had been promoting waste recycling through incentives such as provision of coupons in exchange for recycled products. He supported that assistance be given by HD to promote such recycling schemes to all PRH estates. PSTH(H) responded that HD had already been assisting in promoting waste recycling schemes. However, as HD was responsible for providing public housing and not waste recycling, it would have to rely on external support to recycle waste. The viability of waste recycling schemes had to be tested before consideration could be given to extending the schemes to all PRH estates.

33. Mr Alan LEONG was aware that many private residential developments had been promoting the collection of recyclables such as waste glass bottles and aluminium cans in exchange for small gifts or coupons. He enquired whether HD would consider adopting similar initiatives in PRH estates in cooperation with waste recyclers. DDH(D&C) said that environmental activities which involved the exchange of re-usable goods and recyclable products had been organized in PRH estates. ADH(EM)1 added that recyclable collection stations were provided

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in PRH estates to facilitate the collection of recyclable items and tenants were encouraged to participate.

34. Mr Michael TIEN enquired about the performance of other countries like Singapore in waste generation and reduction. PSTH(H) said that while he did not have the waste generation figures for Singapore, he was aware that Singapore shared the same waste problems as Hong Kong in terms of space constraints. The overall waste production per household in Singapore was in general lower than that of Hong Kong.

Food waste recycling

35. While commending HD for its efforts in achieving the environmental targets in 2011/12, Mr Frederick FUNG said that there was a need for wider participation by tenants of PRH estates in food waste recycling. Referring to the trial scheme on off-site food waste recycling in five estates, namely Ching Ho, Lai Kok, Nam Shan, Tin Wah and Tin Tsz estates, he considered that efforts should be made to widen the scale of the scheme and expedite its progress. The Environmental Protection Department ("EPD") and the green groups should be tasked with the development of a territory-wide food waste recycling programme which would help avert the disposal of food waste at landfills. The compost converted from food waste could be used for greening purposes in PRH estates. Miss Alice MAK expressed support for the implementation of food waste recycling projects. She enquired if the on-site trial scheme on food waste recycling conducted at Tin Ching and Tsz Ching estates in collaboration with EPD could be further extended to other estates, particularly older estates. Dr KWOK Ka-ki also enquired if there was any target on food waste reduction.

36. PSTH(H) clarified that there were two types of trial schemes on food waste recycling, namely, the on-site trial scheme on food waste recycling and composting conducted at Tin Ching and Tsz Ching estates and the off-site trial scheme on food waste recycling in five other estates. The trial schemes were conducted in conjunction with EPD and non-government organizations. Close cooperation was sought from tenants on food waste recycling with a view to reducing waste generation. PSTH(H) stated that the on-site trial scheme was not particularly successful because of the lack of industrial strength in the composting process and there was no capacity for further extension. Complaints had been received on odour nuisances associated with on-site food waste recycling. The off-site trial scheme conducted in the five estates provided for centralized collection of food waste for transport to Yuen Long for recycling into animal feed and composting. The main difficulty with food waste recycling was the lack of space for the collection, transportation and storage of food waste and for distribution of compost.

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37. PSTH(H) further said that HD deliberately adopted a cautious approach in developing food waste recycling in PRH estates lest there would be environmental problems, such as unattended food waste leading to vermin problem. HD would report the outcome of the trial schemes and make more efforts to reduce food waste.

38. As to the request for extending food waste recycling to older estates, PSTH(H) said that there were practical difficulties associated with food waste recycling at older estates as they were not designed for such. The placement of waste collection bins at communal areas of PRH estates had already given rise to environmental problems. The insufficient capacity to store waste properly might also pose risk to public health.

39. Noting the practical difficulties in conducting on-site food waste recycling, Mr WU Chi-wai supported that more efforts be made to separate food waste, so that food waste generated before and after meals could be separated to facilitate recycling. PSTH(H) responded that one of the purposes of the trial schemes on food waste recycling was to educate the community on the need to reduce food waste and for food waste recycling. The difficulty of food waste recycling rested with its liquid content as the food waste had to be dried before processing. The food waste and its packaging would need to be separated to facilitate recycling. The outcome of a practical trial which could be shared through the Estate Management Advisory Committees ("EMACs") would be useful for educating tenants. Funding would be provided to EMACs as appropriate to implement the trial schemes.

40. Dr Fernando CHEUNG welcomed the implementation of environmental initiatives by HA but considered that more should be done to improve the environment. He supported the extension of the trial schemes on food waste recycling to all PRH estates. PSTH(H) said that the off-site trial scheme, if found successful, would be extended to other PRH estates. However, HD would also need to deal with the environmental problems associated with the separation, storage and transportation of food waste for off-site food waste recycling.

Energy efficiency

41. Mr Frederick FUNG said that incentives should be introduced to encourage energy conservation. For example, PRH households which could achieve electricity savings in the past six months could be entitled to rental deductions equivalent to the savings achieved. PSTH(H) responded that the use of energy saving equipment such as photovoltaic panel systems and light-emitting diode ("LED") lighting systems had been explored and studied in some PRH estates. Efforts had also been made to educate PRH tenants on the importance of energy conservation through EMACs. HA was not in favour of providing financial

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incentives for energy conservation in the form of rental reductions as the PRH rentals were already very low and further reductions would affect the viability of PRH programmes.

42. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that while he appreciated the efforts made to conserve electricity through reduced lighting, he was concerned that the insufficient lighting might cause inconvenience to tenants. He would support the use of sensors in lighting systems for new estates as they would be more energy efficient. PSTH(H) advised that environmental lighting controls using two-level lighting systems were being tried out in new estates. The electrical capacity of PRH estates would have to be taken into account when installing new lighting systems.

43. Mr WU Chi-wai enquired whether any targets on energy efficiency had been set by HA. DDH(D&C) said that the electricity consumption of HA's offices in 2011-2012 had been reduced by 4.5% as compared with that of 2007-2008. The overall reduction target was 5% within a period of five years from 2007-2008 and continued efforts would be made to reduce electricity consumption.

44. Dr KWOK-Ka-ki was of the view that the 4.5% reduction in electricity consumption within a period of four years was not enough and more should be done to improve energy efficiency. He supported that lighting at the communal areas of housing estates should be reduced during late night hours in order to conserve energy and that the more energy efficient LED lighting and sensor systems should be adopted. DDH(D&C) explained that the overall reduction target of 5% within a period of five years was set by Government. More energy efficient lighting systems would be installed with a view to reducing electricity consumption. She undertook to provide information on the levels of reduction in the total electricity consumption of HA's offices since 1999.

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45. Mr Michael TIEN enquired whether the more energy efficient LED lighting systems would be installed in both new and old estates. He also enquired about the policy on the installation of lighting systems in PRH estates on account of technological advance in lighting technologies. PSTH(H) explained that the Administration had been monitoring the emerging lighting technologies closely. Tests were being performed on new lighting systems like LED and two-level lighting systems. If their performance was satisfactory in new estates, consideration would be given to how best to implement them in older estates. Meanwhile, the replacement and installation of light fittings with electronic ballasts would be carried out respectively in old estates and new PRH estates.

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Greening

46. Referring to the overall target of 30% with a minimum of 20% green coverage for new estates, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired whether this included green roofing and vertical greening which should be promoted in shopping arcades, carparks and community facilities. PSTH(H) explained that the green coverage target included all forms of greening, including green roof and vertical greening. DDH(D&C) added that green roof would be provided as far as possible, except for rooftops of multi-storey residential blocks which had to cater for fire escape requirement. Moreover, vertical greening would be provided at appropriate places within PRH estates.

47. Mr Michael TIEN noted that unlike other countries which adopted "at grade" greening, Hong Kong's greening was mostly at an elevated level. He considered that it would be more preferable and aesthetical to have "at grade" greening. DDH(D&C) said that "at grade" greening would be provided as far as practicable in communal areas. Sitting areas would also be provided alongside green planters for use by the public.

Environmental awareness and participation

48. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung commended HA and HD for their efforts in achieving the environmental targets in 2011/12. He supported wider participation and cooperation on the part of PRH tenants in improving the environmental performance of PRH estates. He considered that there should be more interaction with tenants in the implementation of greening and energy efficiency initiatives. More resources should be provided to EMACs in promoting environmental awareness and community participation by way of environmental campaigns and seminars. Mr Alan LEONG enquired about the efforts made to enhance HA staff's environmental awareness and knowledge. DDH(D&C) responded that there were environmental campaigns on the collection of recyclables. Waste separation bins were provided at HA offices to facilitate the collection of recyclables for use by waste recyclers.

Control of hazardous materials

49. Dr KWOK-Ka-ki enquired about the progress of removal of asbestos-containing materials from buildings. DDH(D&C) said that asbestos-containing materials were present in 38 building blocks in 19 PRH estates, and the details of their locations could be found in HD's website. The building blocks would be demolished according to the redevelopment schedule of the estates concerned. As the asbestos-containing materials had been covered and had remained intact, the risk of their exposure was low.

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V. Any other business

Setting up of a subcommittee on the Long Term Housing Strategy

(LC Paper No. CB(1)222/12-13(02) — Paper on "Setting up of a subcommittee on the Long Term Housing Strategy" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

50. The Chairman sought members' views on the setting up of a subcommittee on the Long Term Housing Strategy ("LTHS") as suggested by Mr Abraham SHEK at the Panel meeting on 5 November 2012.

51. Mr Abraham SHEK said that as a two-tier institutional framework had been set up by the Administration to take forward the review on LTHS, he considered it necessary that a subcommittee should be set up under the Panel to work in parallel with the Administration. In this way, members' views could be taken into account in the course of the review, without having to await the outcome of the review by the Administration. He supported the proposed work plan as set out in paragraph 7 of the discussion paper.

52. Dr LAM Tai-fai said that he supported Mr Abraham SHEK's proposal to set up a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS. Given the importance of the housing problem, there was a need for members' participation in drawing up LTHS for Hong Kong, as members' views would broadly represent those of the community. The terms of reference of the subcommittee should be similar to that of the LTHS Steering Committee set up by the Administration.

53. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that members of the Labour Party supported the proposal to set up a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS. He recalled that a working group had been set up by the Legislative Council in 1996 on the review of LTHS at that time. A number of research reports on land supply and housing demand had been compiled by the then Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat for members' reference.

54. Mr Alan LEONG said that members of the Civic Party also supported the proposal to set up a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS given the importance of the subject.

55. The Chairman said that as a member of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, he supported Mr Abraham SHEK's proposal to set up a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS. PSTH(H) said that it would be up to members to decide on the need for setting up a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS.

Action

The Administration would try its best to comply with members' requests.

56. The Chairman concluded that members supported the setting up of a subcommittee under the Panel to review LTHS. Mr Abraham SHEK and Dr LAM Tai-fai indicated their intention to join the subcommittee. The Chairman said that a notice on the signification of membership of the subcommittee would be issued to members shortly.

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:25 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 February 2013