

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the programme for adding lifts, escalators and footbridges to the Housing Authority (HA)'s existing public rental housing (PRH) estates.

Background

2. At the Legislative Council Panel on Housing meetings held in December 2009, February 2011 and May 2012, Members were briefed on the progress of our programme to enhance the pedestrian access in identified PRH estates to respond to tenants' (the elderly and the disabled in particular) need for barrier-free access. The enhancement works include the provision of new lifts, escalators and footbridges in external areas within PRH estate boundaries to connect elevated platforms with large-level differences and, where technically feasible, addition of lift towers to PRH blocks built without lift services. Most of these lift addition projects have been completed as scheduled.

3. The lift modernization programme in all existing PRH estates is an on-going programme. The HA will continue to modernize lifts aged over 25 years and will take the opportunity to provide lift openings for floors currently without any, where the structure permits. The modernization programme will cover approximately 100 lifts each year over the next five years.

Progress Update

4. An update on the progress of these two programmes is as follows –

(a) Lift Addition Programme (LAP) in Existing PRH Estates

Addition of Lifts in Existing PRH Blocks without Lift Service

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

6. The HA encountered some challenges in carrying out these projects, which include clearance of some flats to allow access for the new lifts, alteration to some existing building structures to accommodate new lift towers as well as having to take various measures to minimize disturbance to both the tenants of domestic flats and ground floor shops during construction.

7. With the completion of the remaining lift addition project, the HA will basically have accomplished the goal of providing lift services to existing PRH blocks without lift services as far as technically feasible.

Addition of Lifts, Escalators and Footbridges in External Areas

8. There are 21 lift addition projects in external areas within PRH estate boundaries 19 of which are completed. The remaining two projects, which are located at Lai Yiu Estate and Yiu Tung Estate respectively, will be completed in the first half of 2013. The extra time required is due to extensive slope improvement works required.

9. The addition of lift, escalators and footbridges in external areas of existing PRH estates often involve construction at slope toes and crests as well as on existing footpaths. These works always involve heavy temporary works at slope and sometimes require slope improvement works. To shorten construction time on site and to minimize possible nuisance to tenants, the HA has as far as possible use steel lift towers, steel footbridges and off-site prefabrication.

Future Programme on Addition of Lifts, Escalators and Footbridges

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

- (i) Topographical factors (vertical rise)
- (ii) Existing accessibility of footbridges
- (iii) Social acceptability
- (iv) Effectiveness on spending public resource
- (v) Technical feasibility, and
- (vi) Estate redevelopment potential

11. The HA will implement a new stage (Stage 2) of the LAP to the existing PRH estates in the three years starting from 2013/14. Projects under Stage 2 of the LAP will be completed by 2015/16 with a total estimated construction cost of \$250 million.

12. The HA is now examining and coordinating the lift addition projects for the new stage of the LAP. Based on the requests from various regions, we have prioritized proposed lift addition projects for feasibility study and design in accordance with the guiding principles. The feasibility study is expected to be completed in the second half of this year for finalizing the project list of Stage 2 of the LAP. Tendering of the construction works will commence thereafter.

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

14. The HA will continue to invite and examine future views from the public for lift additions within existing PRH estates for the planning of the next stage of the LAP.

(b) Lift Modernization Programme in Existing PRH Estates

15. Lift modernization projects are moving ahead as planned. In 2012 we awarded four lift modernization projects involving 94 lifts in four PRH estates. In 2013, we plan to let out contracts to further replace approximately 100 lifts.

Tenants Communication and Reaction

16. The communication with and cooperation from tenants are keys to success of the programmes. Throughout the course of the programmes, HA has communicated with our tenants closely through the Estate Management Advisory Committee meetings and other meetings to acquaint tenants with the updated progress of enhancement works. To minimize disturbance of tenants' living environment, the HA has taken steps to ensure the timely completion of the improvement works while dealing with difficult site and development constraints. Both the LAP and Lift Modernization Programme are welcomed by the tenants.

17. Members are invited to note the progress on the addition of lifts, escalators and footbridges and modernization of lifts in HA's existing PRH estates.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
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