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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 3 June 2014

**Updated background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme"
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the progress of the Total Maintenance Scheme ("TMS") for public rental housing ("PRH") estates, and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by members on the subject.

Background

2. In early 2006, the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") launched a five-year TMS to proactively inspect flats in PRH estates and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates aged 10 years or above to determine the in-flat conditions and if necessary to provide comprehensive repair services for a range of problems. The objective of TMS is to provide customer-oriented maintenance services so as to meet the rising expectation of PRH tenants. TMS adopts a three-pronged approach, which includes identifying maintenance problems proactively, responding to tenants' maintenance requests promptly and stepping up both promotional and educational programmes.

3. In-flat Inspection Ambassadors ("IIAs") have been recruited to carry out inspections in PRH flats, arrange one-stop repair services, and help promote the maintenance education. For the less complicated cases, minor repairs are arranged by IIAs on the spot. For the more complicated cases, works orders will be issued by IIAs through a dedicated computer system which records maintenance items immediately via a Personal Digital Assistant. The computer system features a Maintenance History Database which facilitates IIAs in answering queries from tenants on maintenance, conducting research analysis and budget preparation.

4. The first five-year cycle of TMS was completed by the end of March 2011 and had been well received by the tenants. On account of the success of the first cycle, HA decided to implement TMS as a regular programme.

Review of first cycle of TMS

5. As at end of March 2011, the first five-year cycle of TMS had been implemented by HA in all 177 estates, involving some 605 000 PRH flats. About 344 300 works orders had been issued and completed.

6. To support TMS, a TMS hotline has been set up to improve efficiency in handling tenants' enquiries, complaints, and requests for repair works and inspection appointments. For each estate, the TMS hotline concerned is manned by a dedicated Public Relations Officer. For the first cycle of TMS, about 89 200 inspection appointments were arranged and about 369 200 enquiries were handled through the TMS hotline system.

7. An independent consultant was commissioned by HA to conduct surveys to collect tenants' views on the services delivered under TMS. The results showed consistently high customer satisfaction rates of over 80% throughout the first cycle of TMS.

Second cycle of TMS

8. The second five-year cycle of the TMS was launched in early 2011. As at end of January 2013, the in-flat inspection programme had been rolled out in 58 estates, among which inspection and repair services for 31 estates involving about 88 100 PRH flats and 40 600 works orders were completed. In comparison with the first cycle, there were fewer maintenance cases which required follow-up action.

9. By January 2013, a total of some 98 400 appointments had been arranged and about 458 000 enquiries were handled through the TMS hotline system.

10. A customer satisfaction survey was conducted between the second quarter of 2011 and the third quarter of 2012. 2 131 households in 15 estates who had received maintenance services under TMS were interviewed. According to the preliminary result, the overall satisfaction rate was maintained at a level of about 80%.

Public relations and education

11. To enhance tenants' knowledge on TMS and promote a better understanding on the respective maintenance responsibilities by HA and the tenants, HA holds briefings, seminars and workshops on TMS for a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the Estate Management Advisory Committees and contractors, etc. For estates where TMS will soon be carried out, Mobile Maintenance Education Booths will be set up to display the relevant information.

Disturbance mitigation

12. To reduce inconvenience to tenants in carrying out TMS, HA requires the contractor to render assistance to the tenants in moving their furniture to facilitate inspection and repairs, particularly for households with elderly or disabled members. To mitigate nuisance during the progress of works, the contractor has also been required to provide enhanced protection by enclosing the works area and to take measures to protect the furniture and floor area. Payment to the contractor will be declined if insufficient protection measures are detected.

Deliberations by the Panel on Housing

13. The progress of implementation of TMS has been discussed by the Panel on Housing ("the Panel") at its meetings regularly since the scheme was launched in 2006, with the last time being 15 April 2013.

Performance of contractors

14. While acknowledging that TMS was generally well received by tenants, some Panel members expressed concern on how HA could prevent the recurrence of problems encountered in previous maintenance schemes, such as disputes and poor performance of works contractors etc, under TMS. To ensure quality of works of outside contractors, these members considered it necessary for HA to assess the performance of contractors which should be taken into account in the next tender exercises. HA should also review the practice of awarding the contracts to the lowest bidder lest this would inevitably compromise the quality of works.

Scope of TMS

15. Given that there had been much contention on the nature of repairs and the party who should be held responsible for the repairs, some members enquired about the criteria for determining which elements or service

installations should be repaired or replaced. These members opined that HA should review the scope of TMS to include more items (such as sinks, metal gates, main/toilet doors and their frames) as standard fittings so that repair/maintenance works could be carried out on a regular basis rather than on a case-by-case basis at tenants' requests.

16. Some members requested that apart from in-flat inspection and repair services, consideration should be given by HA to expanding the scope of TMS to cover amenities and facilities provided in PRH estates, particularly the older estates. There was also the suggestion that arrangements should be made for the retention of fittings and finishes at the request of incoming tenants in an attempt to reduce wastage and ensure sustainability. Other members further suggested that consideration should be given to allowing TMS contractors to undertake repair works which fell outside the scope of TMS upon request by tenants who might prefer to make use of the services of TMS contractors rather than engaging separate contractors to carry out minor works, given the high labour cost.

17. Some members requested HA to consider extending the scope of TMS to cover items which were damaged by tenants, and electrical wiring of the ageing units, particularly for the units occupied by elderly tenants. They also suggested that HA should make special arrangements with the Social Welfare Department to enable TMS contractors to carry out works which were outside TMS's scope for the elderly recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance.

Mitigation of inconvenience caused by TMS

18. Some Panel members expressed concern about the inconvenience and nuisances (such as noise and dust) brought by the repair works. They hoped that TMS could be enhanced to reduce the associated inconvenience and nuisances. Efforts should be made to coordinate the works among different contractors and sub-contractors with a view to completing the works in a flat within the same day. Temporary rehousing should be considered for residents affected by large-scale in-flat repairs/maintenance works. Transfer to other housing units should be provided for tenants whose flats were in extremely poor condition.

Other concerns

19. Panel members also raised questions on the adequacy of IIAs recruited under TMS to carry out in-flat inspections, cost implications associated with the development of computer systems for TMS, long lead time for minor repair works, inclusion of aged estates in TMS, and maintenance problems in Tenant Purchase Scheme estates with a mix of owners and tenants. They considered

that HA should make use of TMS to promote greening and environmental protection initiatives, such as green rooftops and energy conservation, in PRH estates. Barrier-free access and appropriate facilities in common areas and inside individual flats should also be provided to cater for the needs of disabled and elderly residents. Facilities, such as ramps and railings, should be provided in estates with high proportion of elderly residents. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to providing lifts or escalators in some old estates.

Latest development

20. The Administration will brief the Panel on the latest progress of TMS at the Panel meeting on 3 June 2014.

Relevant papers

21. A list of relevant papers since the fourth Legislative Council is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
27 May 2014

List of relevant papers

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---|
| Panel on Housing | 8 April 2008 | <p>Administration's paper on "Review of the Total Maintenance Scheme" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1161/07-08(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0408cb1-1161-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2025/07-08) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg080408.pdf</p> |
| Panel on Housing | 5 January 2009 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme and Way Forward" (LC Paper No. CB(1)490/08-09(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0105cb1-490-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)490/08-09(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0105cb1-490-4-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> |

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
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| Panel on Housing | 7 June 2010 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme" (LC Paper No. CB(1)2099/09-10(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0607cb1-2099-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)2099/09-10(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0607cb1-2099-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2653/09-10) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20100607.pdf</p> |
| Panel on Housing | 4 June 2012 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme" (LC Paper No. CB(1)2038/11-12(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0604cb1-2038-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)2038/11-12(06)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0604cb1-2038-6-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2557/11-12) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20120604.pdf</p> |

| Council/ Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Panel on Housing | 15 April 2013 | <p>Administration's paper on "Progress of Total Maintenance Scheme" (LC Paper No. CB(1)826/12-13(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0415cb1-826-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Updated background brief on "Total Maintenance Scheme" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)826/12-13(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/papers/hg0415cb1-826-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1638/12-13) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/hg/minutes/hg20130415.pdf</p> |