

**For discussion
on 4th January 2016**

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Update on the Drainage Ambassador Scheme

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the implementation of the Drainage Ambassador Scheme (the Scheme) undertaken by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) in 2003 and 2004 for public rental housing (PRH) estates.

BACKGROUND

2. HA launched the Scheme in late May 2003 as an one-off comprehensive inspection and repair of drain pipes in all PRH units in view of the possibility of health and hygiene issues related to drain pipes.

3. The Scheme was conducted in two phases. Phase I of the Scheme was completed in September 2003 and covered about 140 000 units in 35 PRH estates which were relatively aged or with more elderly tenants. Phase II was extended to cover all the remaining 113 PRH estates with some 420 000 units. It was commenced in September 2003 and completed in July 2004. The inspection and repair of drain pipes of all accessible units during that period was completed under the Scheme.

4. Under the Scheme, site supervisory staff were assigned as "Drainage Ambassadors" to proactively contact PRH tenants for carrying out in-flat inspection and repair of indoor drain pipes. Major maintenance items included repairing damaged or leaking pipes, replacing pipe brackets, as well as repairing or replacing water traps and flushing cisterns. If sewage crossflow problem involving the pedestal toilets of adjacent flats¹ was identified by the Drainage Ambassadors during inspection, appropriate improvement works would be arranged. Depending on site constraints of the affected units, improvement works such as increasing the gradient of horizontal drain pipes, elevating the floor level of pedestal toilets or modifying the sewerage devices to divert sewage flow would be carried out.

¹ The design of communal drain pipes shared by two adjacent units was mainly adopted in public housing blocks completed before 1991, including 230 000 units in 415 buildings of 65 PRH estates.

CONTINUOUS INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE

5. In view of the satisfactory outcome of the Scheme, HA decided to incorporate the continuous inspection of drain pipes into the annual inspection², the Total Maintenance Scheme (TMS)³ and the Responsive In-flat Maintenance Services (RIMS)⁴. Under the prevailing policy, HA's Drainage Ambassadors conduct annual inspection and repair to the external drain pipes in all PRH estates. For in-flat drain pipes, HA will conduct inspection and repair upon request of individual tenants. Besides, under the TMS, inspection for PRH estates aged between 10 to 30 years and those aged above 30 years will be conducted in every 10 years and 5 years respectively. The TMS features proactive in-flat inspection to survey the flat conditions, fixing minor defects on the spot and issuing works orders for prompt rectification of more serious problems. The RIMS is modeled on the TMS and aims to provide enhanced and responsive in-flat maintenance service for all PRH tenants.

6. Should any repair be required, PRH tenants may contact the estate management office for arrangement of necessary inspection and repair.

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² The 2015-16 annual inspection would cover the external drain pipes of a total of 1 183 PRH blocks. As at October 2015, 706 PRH blocks were inspected and among which, only 16 of them were found with damages. All required repair works were completed.

³ The first five-year cycle of the TMS was launched in 2006 and completed in 2011. The inspection and necessary repair works of 600 000 units in 177 PRH estates were completed in this cycle. The second five-year cycle of the TMS commenced in 2011. As at March 2015, the inspection and necessary repair works of 300 000 units in 97 PRH estates were completed.

⁴ For 2015-16, 11 000 PRH units were inspected and repaired under RIMS as at December 2015.