

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)361/15-16(05)

Ref. : CB1/PL/HG

Panel on Housing

Meeting on 4 January 2016

**Background brief on "Drainage Ambassador Scheme"
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

1. This paper provides background information on the Drainage Ambassador Scheme ("the Scheme") and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by Members on related issues.

Background

2. Following the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome ("SARS") in 2003, the Housing Department ("HD") has stepped up a comprehensive programme to improve personal and environmental hygiene in public housing estates, including launching the Scheme in May 2003.

3. Under the Scheme, over 100 "Drainage Ambassadors" carried out door-to-door inspection and maintenance of indoor drainage pipes. Major maintenance works included repairing damaged or leaking pipelines, replacing pipe brackets, and repairing or replacing water traps and flushing cisterns. For sewage crossflow problems involving pedestal toilets of adjacent flats identified during the inspection, improvement works, such as improving the gradient of horizontal drain pipes, elevating the floor level of pedestal toilets or modifying the sewerage devices to divert sewage flow, were carried out as appropriate.

4. The Scheme was implemented in two phases. Phase I of the Scheme, completed in September 2003, covered about 140 000 flats in 35 public housing estates which were relatively aged or had more elderly tenants. Phase II covered the remaining 113 estates with some 420 000 flats. It commenced in September 2003 and completed in May 2004.

5. With the completion of door-to-door inspection of internal drainage pipes in public housing blocks, "Drainage Ambassadors" have continued to inspect external pipes. By October 2015, external drainage pipes in 61 public housing blocks were inspected, with repairs made to those defective ones in 53 blocks.

Panel deliberations

6. The Panel on Housing and the then Panel on Planning, Lands and Works held a joint meeting on 16 May 2003 to receive a briefing by the Administration on the "Design of sewerage system of residential buildings in Hong Kong" and meet with professional bodies on the topic. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Inspection and maintenance of drainage systems

7. Some members stressed the need to ensure proper maintenance and cleanliness of public housing estates to prevent large-scale outbreak of infectious disease. They asked if HD would carry out regular inspections and repair work for all drainage installations located inside public housing units, and involve voluntary organizations to assist elderly tenants in reporting any defects relating to drainage pipes.

8. The Administration advised that HD had stepped up cleansing of public housing estates consequent upon the outbreak of SARS. HD had also inspected all drainage installations located in common areas as well as external walls and repaired any defects detected. Notices had also been put up in every block to encourage tenants to report on drainage defects. Following the outbreak of SARS in Wing Shui House, HD had set up a technical team to help elderly tenants to inspect the drainage installations inside their flats. Similar arrangements would be extended to other public housing estates in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department or other voluntary agencies where necessary.

Materials for drain pipes

9. Some members were concerned whether the use of unplasticized polyvinyl chloride ("UPVC") was a better alternative than cast iron for soil and waste pipes, and asked whether HD would consider replacing all cast iron pipes in public housing estates with UPVC pipes. The Administration advised that UPVC drain pipes were used in about 80% of the public housing estates. HD would set up a task force to inspect the pipes and carry out repair and replacement if defects were detected.

Council question

10. Hon Albert HO Chun-yan raised a question related to the Scheme at the Council meeting of 25 February 2004. Details of the question are hyperlinked in **Appendix**.

Latest development

11. At the meeting of the Panel on Housing on 15 October 2015, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan requested the Administration to update the Panel on the implementation of the Scheme. He also expressed concern on the number of public housing estates where communal drainage pipes were shared with adjacent units and where replacement of galvanized iron drainage pipes by copper pipes was suspended following implementation of the Scheme in 2003.

12. The Administration will brief members on the implementation of the Scheme at the Panel meeting on 4 January 2016.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix**.

Drainage Ambassador Scheme

List of relevant papers

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	16 May 2003	<p>Administration's paper on "Drainage systems of residential buildings in Hong Kong" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1655/02-03(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/hg/papers/hgplw0516cb1-1655-2-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2079/02-03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/hg/minutes/hgpl0516.pdf</p>

Hyperlink to relevant Council Question:

Date	Council Question
25 February 2004	<p>Council question raised by Hon Albert HO Chun-yan http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200402/25/0225195.htm</p>