

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)900/16-17
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 6 March 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Hon LUK Chung-hung

Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Dr Hon YIU Chung-yim

Member attending : Hon James TO Kun-sun

Members absent : Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, MH, JP
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung
Dr Hon LAU Siu-lai

Public Officers attending : Agenda Item IV

Mr Stanley YING, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Miss Agnes WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Mr Alfred LEE
Assistant Director (Strategic Planning)
Housing Department

Agenda Item V

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

Mr Steve LUK
Assistant Director (Estate Management) (3)
Housing Department

Mr Stephen YIM
Chief Architect (Development & Standards)
Housing Department

Miss Chimmy CHU
Senior Architect (27)
Housing Department

Agenda Item VI

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

Mr Stephen YIM
Chief Architect (Development & Standards)
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Mr Derek LO
Chief Council Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Mr Fred PANG
Senior Council Secretary (1)5

Ms Michelle NIEN
Legislative Assistant (1)5

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I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)628/16-17 — Minutes of meeting held on
9 January 2017)

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2017 were confirmed.

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II. Information papers issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 11 April 2017, at 4:30 pm –

(a) Head 711 projects no. B440RO – district open space adjoining public housing development at Anderson Road, and no. B446RO – district open space adjoining San Po Kong public housing development; and

(b) the work of the Sales of First-hand Residential Properties Authority.

(Post-meeting note: As requested by the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, the title of the aforesaid item (a) were subsequently revised to "Head 711 project no. B440RO – district open space adjoining public housing development at Anderson Road". Members were informed accordingly vide LC Paper No. CB(1)774/16-17 on 5 April 2017.)

4. The Chairman suggested that for Item Nos. 5, 8 and 9, namely, "Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates", "Performance of the environmental targets and initiatives of the Hong Kong Housing Authority in 2016-17" and "Progress of the Total Maintenance Scheme", on the list of outstanding items for discussion (LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(02)), the Administration should provide the relevant discussion papers in advance to facilitate members to consider whether it was necessary to discuss the items with the Administration at the Panel meetings, and whether other topics more of members' concern should be discussed instead. Members raised no objection to the suggestion. The Chairman instructed the Clerk to follow up the matter with the Administration.

Action

(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's paper for the item "Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates" was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)768/16-17(01) on 5 April 2017.)

IV. Review of income and asset limits for public rental housing for 2017-18

(LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(03) — Administration's paper on the review of income and asset limits for public rental housing for 2017-18

LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(04) — Paper on income and asset limits for public rental housing prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

5. With the aid of PowerPoint, Assistant Director (Strategic Planning), Housing Department ("AD(SP), HD") briefed members on the mechanism for determining the income and asset limits for public rental housing ("PRH"). He advised that the proposed income and asset limits for 2017-2018 would increase by an average of 3.9% and 1.1% respectively over those for 2016-2017. The outcome of the review would be considered by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA")'s Subsidised Housing Committee ("SHC") on 17 March 2017. The Administration would relay members' views on the review findings to SHC.

(*Post-meeting note:* Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)652/16-17(01)) for the item were issued to members on 7 March 2017 in electronic form.)

Proposed income limits

6. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the reason for the difference in the proposed income limits for one-person households, i.e. \$11,250, and two-person households, i.e. \$17,350. AD(SP), HD replied that the income limits were derived using a household expenditure approach, which consisted of housing costs and non-housing costs, plus a contingency provision. In calculating the housing costs, the Housing Department ("HD") took into account the differential unit rents for private accommodation from the Rent Survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") and the average space of flats

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allocated to PRH applicants. The non-housing costs were determined with reference to the latest Household Expenditure Survey conducted by C&SD, with adjustments made according to the latest movement in the Consumer Price Index (A) (excluding housing costs), or the change in the nominal wage index obtained through the Labour Earnings Survey conducted by C&SD as the income factor, whichever was higher. The income limits for one-person and two-person households were derived according to the above methodology. In particular, when calculating the housing costs, the average space of flats allocated to one-person PRH applicants and two-person PRH applicants amounted to 14.9 square metres and 22.3 square metres respectively.

7. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that the mechanism for reviewing the income limits might not reflect the actual situation. Given that in assessing the housing cost for one-person households, the Administration had made reference to the monthly cost of renting a private flat at a size comparable to 14.9 square metres, which was \$5,240, or \$352 per square metre, there were views that the rent of such flats had been under-estimated in the review because as indicated in a C&SD's survey conducted in 2015 on sub-divided units ("SDUs"), the monthly rent of SDUs with median area of 10.3 square metres was \$420 per square metre.

8. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that a two-person household with two working members each working with a pay at the new statutory minimum wage ("SMW") rate of \$34.5 per hour for 10 hours a day for 26 days a month would earn a monthly income of \$17,940, which would exceed the proposed income limit, i.e. \$17,350, and was hence ineligible for PRH. He criticized that the Administration was mean in setting the proposed income limit. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("DSTH(H)") replied that SMW only stipulated the minimum hourly wage. The actual monthly income earned by individual households varied, depending on various factors such as the number of working days and working hours of each member; and hence could not be generalized. Also, the current household expenditure-based mechanism could reflect affordability in an objective manner and therefore provided an objective basis for determining the PRH income limits.

9. Mr POON Siu-ping and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said it would be ridiculous that a household with members earning SMW was not eligible for PRH. Mr POON said that even if the two working members of a two-person household each earning an income at the new SMW level worked for an average of eight hours per day and 26 days per month, their monthly income would still exceed the proposed income limit as they were also paid for one-hour meal break daily and four rest days. HA should consider setting a higher income limit for these households. Mr Jeremy TAM said that HA should take into account the fact that SMW earners might receive double pay in addition to salary, and their household

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income might therefore exceed the prescribed limits. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung opined that the review mechanism was designed to expel at regular intervals part of the PRH applicants from the eligibility list. He enquired whether the Administration would fine-tune the proposed income limits in light of members' concerns at the meeting. Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr WU Chi-wai considered that the Administration should re-examine whether the existing factors used for deriving the income limits were still appropriate in light of the actual situation in the society. Noting that the proposed income limits for two-person households and four-person households were \$17,350 and \$27,000 respectively, Dr KWOK opined that households with such income levels might not be able to afford renting a private accommodation while also meeting other non-housing expenditure. He enquired whether the Administration would increase the proposed limits.

10. In reply, DSTH(H) said that the Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF") Schemes Authority had made reference to the median monthly working hours of various low-paying sectors, such as catering, retail, and security, etc., and calculated the minimum relevant income levels under MPF on the basis that each working member worked for nine hours per day and 26 days per month. By adopting this benchmark as a reference, the monthly income of a two-person household with two working members earning an income at the new SMW level (i.e. \$16,146) would not exceed the proposed PRH income limit for two-person households (i.e. \$17,350). DSTH(H) added that the SMW would increase by 6.2% from \$32.5 per hour since 1 May 2015 to \$34.5 per hour since 1 May 2017. Such a rate of increase was lower than the average rate of increase in PRH income limits over the same period (i.e. by 13%).

Mechanism for determining the eligibility for public rental housing

11. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that under the existing mechanism for determining the eligibility for PRH, many people including those belonging to the lower stratum of middle-class families who could not afford high flat prices or private rentals were not eligible for PRH. Setting the income limits at low levels would also discourage PRH tenants/applicants from joining the workforce to improve their financial position. He further opined that the mechanism could not prevent allocation of PRH units to applicants who had residential properties and other assets in Mainland. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that some young PRH applicants had given up opportunities for job promotion or pay rise in order to be able to remain eligible for PRH.

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12. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the proposed income limits for 2017-2018 were close to the total of the housing and non-housing costs derived under the review methodology, and were in line with the actual situation of the society. While the mechanism for determining the eligibility for PRH should be maintained, HA should consider whether the income limits should take into account the implementation and changes of SMW, and other relevant indicators such as poverty lines. Mr Wilson OR opined that if HA adopted the proposed income limits, many two-person household applicants might be removed from the PRH eligibility list. HA should give consideration to including the level of SMW as one of the factors for determining the income limits. Dr Fernando CHEUNG subscribed to the view that the level of SMW should be incorporated in the methodology for deriving the income limits. The Chairman remarked that she had expressed concern at a Panel meeting in 2012-2013 that the methodology under the review mechanism would penalize PRH applicants who worked hard to earn more for a living. A two-person household with the two members engaging in some low-paying occupations such as security guards in PRH estates would be ineligible for PRH because they commonly worked for 12 hours a day. HA should review whether the level of SMW and the rents of SDUs should be incorporated into the methodology for deriving the limits.

13. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("PSH") replied that members' views and suggestions would be relayed to SHC for consideration. The existing mechanism for reviewing the PRH income and asset limits was an established arrangement, and HA should in accordance with the mechanism work out the figures. Under the mechanism, housing costs were calculated based on the differential unit rents of private flats sampled in C&SD's survey, which covered households residing in different kinds of flats, including those residing in SDUs. DSTH(H) advised that the eligibility of PRH applicants could be assessed more objectively under the current household expenditure-based mechanism than using the criterion of SMW, which only stipulated the minimum hourly wage.

14. Mr Tommy CHEUNG declared that he was a member of HA. He said that after the implementation of SMW, the employment income of PRH tenants earning SMW had improved, and the consumer spending in PRH shopping arcades was at high level. With the further upward adjustment of SMW, the income of more PRH households might exceed the prescribed limits, and to stay below the limits, members of these households such as wives might be discouraged from joining the workforce, hence aggravating the shortage of manpower. He cited the shortage of dish-washing workers in the restaurant industry as an example, and said that the salaries of these workers were increasing and were comparable to those of restaurant managers.

Action

15. The Chairman, Mr Jeremy TAM and Dr CHENG Chung-tai disagreed to the view that the living quality of PRH tenants had improved because of the implementation of SMW. The Chairman said that SMW provided a level of income for workers to safeguard the most basic standard of living. The difficulties faced by restaurants or other small and medium enterprises in sustaining their business could be due to high property rentals rather than raises in the level of SMW. Mr TAM did not subscribe to the view about the impact of implementation of SMW on female labour participation. He emphasized the essential roles of women as wives and mothers in families, and considered that they might not take up employment if they were fully occupied with taking care of their families.

Impact on public rental housing tenants/applicants

16. Prof Joseph LEE enquired about the impact of the proposed adjustments of income and asset limits on PRH applicants and their waiting time. In view that the number of households who were required to vacate their flats under the Well-off Tenant Policies might be reduced subsequent to the adjustments, he was concerned about the circulation of PRH flats in future. PSH replied that the proposed adjustments would not affect the waiting time of those general applicants who were already waiting for PRH allocation, given that new applications received after the implementation of the new PRH income and asset limits would be placed at the end of the queue. As regards well-off tenants, it was possible that their total number would reduce if the proposed limits were endorsed. As the relevant amendments to the Well-off Tenant Policies would not be implemented until October 2017, HA was unable to estimate the number of PRH units to be recovered subsequent to the endorsement of the new limits at this stage.

17. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that the proposed increase in income and asset limits was appropriate because more people who could not afford the high rents for private accommodations would fall within the PRH eligibility net. In view that the number of eligible applicants and the average waiting time for PRH would increase in future subsequent to the endorsement of the limits, he enquired whether the Administration would take measures such as rent subsidy to relieve the housing difficulties faced by PRH applicants who had been waiting for PRH allocation for more than three years. Mr Wilson OR asked whether the Administration would take forward the suggestion of providing rent subsidy to grass-roots households on the Waiting List ("WL"), and the relevant implementation details.

Action

18. PSH replied that to address the housing difficulties of grass-roots households, increasing the supply of PRH units was the fundamental solution. As stipulated in the Long Term Housing Strategy ("LTHS"), the Government adopted the supply-led principle to meet long-term housing demand, and had been making its best efforts to increase housing supply. If housing sites required to meet demand could be delivered on time for development, this should help contain the average waiting time for PRH in the long run. The current-term Government had carefully considered the suggestions for various short-to-medium term measures, such as rent subsidy and tenancy control, to assist general applicants who were waiting for PRH allocation. As explained on different occasions, such measures had various problems, could not increase the housing supply, and not help the housing situation of those whom the measures sought to help. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that as the Administration could not maintain the target of allocating PRH units to general applicants on WL within three years on average, it should consider providing rent subsidy to needy households.

19. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung asked whether the Administration would provide a set of more relaxed PRH eligibility limits for residents affected by its land clearance exercises, as these residents had sacrificed their own interests and moved out from their homes to facilitate the Administration's development projects. In response, PSH said the Administration all along considered that a uniform set of income and asset limits should be adopted for assessing eligibility for PRH. Providing more relaxed income and asset limits especially for clearerees would give rise to concerns as to whether this was fair to those who had been waiting for a PRH.

(At 3:43 pm, the Chairman announced that the meeting be extended for 15 minutes to 4:45 pm to allow more time for discussion.)

Supply of flats to meet public housing demand

20. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that if the proposed income and asset limits were adopted, it was estimated that the number of non-owner occupied households in the private sector which would be eligible for PRH would increase from about 149 000 to about 153 000. He enquired about the measures in place to increase the PRH supply and turnover to meet the new demand. Prof Joseph LEE asked about the additional PRH units required to be produced to cater for the demand of a new batch of eligible PRH applicants subsequent to the endorsement of the proposed limits. Mr Wilson OR enquired how the Administration would speed up land supply for PRH. Mr WU Chi-wai was concerned about the cooperation between the Development Bureau ("DEVB") and the Transport and Housing

Action

Bureau ("THB") on the land supply for housing. He said that as there was a gap between the land available for public housing construction and the ten-year supply target under LTHS, DEVB should squarely address the difficulties faced by THB in meeting the shortfall, whereas THB should make full efforts in demanding DEVB to allocate sufficient land for HA to achieve the housing supply target.

21. PSH replied that the projection on long-term housing demand as set out in LTHS was premised objectively on different demand components, such as the domestic household projections published by C&SD. Whether the projected housing demand could be met hinged essentially on the availability of land. The Government had made its best efforts in finding suitable sites for public housing development, and THB had all along maintained close liaison with DEVB on this matter. In terms of housing land supply, sites that had been secured for constructing PRH and Subsidized Sales Flats in recent years were much more than those in the earlier periods. While some sites might provide more for private housing, others provided more for public housing. For example, the sites at Wang Chau and Queen's Hill were designated solely for public housing, and could provide for 17 000 and 12 000 public housing units respectively. Apart from increasing public housing production, HA had been examining ways to better prioritize demand for PRH, and would continue its efforts to recover PRH units from surrender of flats by sitting tenants and enforcement actions against abuse of PRH resources.

22. Mr Jeremy TAM said that more Home Ownership Scheme ("HOS") flats should be produced to relieve pressure on PRH supply, and to meet the home ownership aspirations of PRH tenants and of those WL applicants who could afford a HOS unit due to improved financial situation. Mr HO Kai-ming opined that apart from the long-term initiative to increase housing land, the Administration should also formulate timely measures to make use of existing resources to meet the housing need of WL households, such as those waiting for PRH allocation for a very long time. He enquired whether the Administration had examined the feasibility of a Chief Executive candidate's suggestion of allowing owners of HOS flats with premium not yet paid to rent out their flats through co-operation with social enterprises. The Chairman asked whether the Administration would release more HOS flats with unpaid premium into the HOS Secondary Market, as part of its measures to deal with the increase of eligible applicants for PRH subsequent to the endorsement of the proposed income and asset limits. Mr WU Chi-wai said in view of the housing shortage, he had previously suggested that if owners of HOS flats with premium not yet paid were allowed to let out their flats, to prevent double housing benefits, they should share the rents received by them with the Administration according to the ratio of premium not yet paid.

Action

23. PSH replied that the suggestion of allowing HOS flat owners with premium not yet paid to let out their flats might have legal and operational implications. Detailed study would be needed to assess the feasibility of the proposal. Such ideas were possible within the LTHS framework. A similar idea was that to provide more housing choices for households with Green Form status, HA had introduced the "Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Pilot Scheme". Those living in PRH with aspiration for home ownership could also purchase second-hand subsidized sale flats with premium not yet paid in the HOS Secondary Market, and sitting tenants in the 39 Tenant Purchase Scheme ("TPS") estates could opt to buy the rental flats in which they were living. Besides, HA had introduced two rounds of "Interim Scheme to Extend the Home Ownership Scheme Secondary Market to White Form Buyers" to allow eligible White Form applicants to purchase flats with premium not yet paid in the HOS Secondary Market. PSH advised that one of the strategies recommended under LTHS was to expand the forms of subsidized home ownership and to facilitate the market circulation of existing subsidized sale flats. The Administration would continue to explore whether, and if so how, to implement further measures in this regard, and welcome members' suggestions. In response to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry on whether HA would consider following the approach adopted by the Hong Kong Housing Society to provide different categories of rental units to cater for families at different income levels, PSH advised that HA had no plan to introduce other forms of PRH units for families with their household income exceeding the relevant PRH income limits.

Motion

24. The Chairman referred members to the following motion, which she considered relevant to the agenda item –

Motion moved by Mr SHIU Ka-chun:

本委員會促請政府當局檢討入息限額既定機制，並納法定最低工資水平為參考，使基層市民能符合申請資格，並加建公屋盡快增加公屋供應量。

(Translation)

This Panel urges the Administration to review the established mechanism for arriving at the income limit by incorporating the level of statutory minimum wage into the mechanism as reference so that grass-roots people are eligible for public rental housing ("PRH") application, and that more PRH should be built to expeditiously increase PRH supply.

Action

25. The Chairman put to vote the motion moved by Mr SHIU Ka-chun. The majority of members present supported the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

(Post-meeting note: The wording of the motion passed was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)653/16-17(01) on 7 March 2017 and was provided to the Administration via the letter dated 7 March 2017.

In its letter (issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)709/16-17(01) on 21 March 2017), the Administration advised that members' views on the findings of the review of PRH income and asset limits for 2017-2018, and the motion passed at the meeting had been relayed to SHC. SHC endorsed on 17 March 2017 the new income and asset limits for 2017-2018, which came into effect on 1 April 2017.)

V. Measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority

(LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(05) — Administration's paper on measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority

LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(06) — Paper on measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents taken by the Hong Kong Housing Authority prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Housing (Development & Construction) ("DDH(D&C)") briefed members on the measures taken by HA for facilitating the mobility needs of elderly residents.

Action

Barrier-free access for residents

27. Mr Wilson OR enquired whether the HA's Lift Addition Programme ("LAP") covered the provision of barrier-free access for residents in Sau Mau Ping Estate to travel between the estate shopping malls and the domestic blocks. He was also concerned about the Administration's progress in improving the pedestrian accessibility in TPS estates. He referred to a long staircase currently used by residents of Tak Tin Estate, Lam Tin, which was one of the TPS estates, and asked whether the Administration would speed up the provision of adequate barrier-free access facilities for the residents. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that although some districts in Hong Kong such as Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan, Kwun Tong, and Sai Kung had joined the World Health Organization Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities, the barrier-free living environment in the districts were still subject to improvement. Some community groups had requested since 2009 for the Administration to provide barrier-free access facilities for Kwai Chung Estate, as residents travelling between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street currently had to walk up/down a long staircase with about 119 steps. The Chairman said that the Highways Department had obtained the relevant District Council's support to the proposal of constructing lift and pedestrian walkway system between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street, and was concerned about the lengthy time to complete the project.

28. DDH(D&C) replied that HA would continue to consider the needs of the elderly and other residents in the design of new PRH estates, and provide as far as practicable barrier-free access for residents of existing PRH estates. Assistant Director (Estate Management)(3), Housing Department ("AD(EM)3") advised that HA had since 2010 implemented a barrier-free access and facility improvement programme for premises under its management, including PRH estates, and the improvement works had been completed. In 2008 and 2013, HA launched Stage 1 and Stage 2 of LAP respectively, and the two stages involved the addition of 83 lifts, 27 footbridges and six escalators in 32 existing PRH estates. The site proposed for the addition of lifts in Sau Mau Ping Estate was a common area which was co-owned by Link Real Estate Investment Trust ("Link REIT") and HA, and HA had taken time to seek comment from Link REIT for the lift installation works. As the site was close to slopes, HA had commenced a feasibility study on slope stabilization works, which would be completed by 2017. As regards the provision of barrier-free access facilities for TPS estates, HA, as one of the TPS owners of sites where such facilities would be provided in the estate common areas, would pay for the portion of the cost for providing the facilities according to the shares held by HA.

Action

Facilities in public housing estates

29. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that there were some older PRH blocks such as those in Yau Oi Estate where lift services were not available at the topmost floor. He enquired how HA would address the mobility needs of the elderly tenants living there. AD(EM)3 replied that tenants of PRH estates living on floors where there was no lift service might apply for transfer to other units served by lift.

30. Mr Jeremy TAM enquired whether the lean benches at the lift lobbies of new PRH estates would be also provided on each floor of the domestic blocks. He further suggested that the same facilities should be provided in existing old PRH estates. DDH(D&C) replied that lean benches would be provided on each floor of new PRH blocks. AD(EM)3 advised that in planning the facilities that should be provided in existing PRH estates, HA would consider the needs of tenants, and seek the views of the Estate Management Advisory Committees ("EMACs"). Upon Mr TAM's suggestion, AD(EM)3 undertook to consult EMAC members as necessary on the provision of lean benches at the lift lobbies in existing PRH estates. Mr Wilson OR said that HA should take an active role in liaising with EMACs on how the facilities in PRH estates could be improved to meet the residents' needs. He requested the Administration to provide a list of the existing old PRH estates for which improvement works, such as works to add/improve the estate facilities, had been carried out in the past few years, and the details.

Admin

31. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that HA should ensure adequate provision of barrier-free access facilities when designing a new PRH estate, as adding such facilities only after the population intake would cause inconvenience to residents. Noting that HA planned to increase the provision of recreational facilities for the elderly at 100 PRH estates, he enquired whether any of these estates were those of the 22 aged PRH estates the redevelopment potential of which had been earlier on assessed by the Administration. He opined that as redevelopment of the 22 estates such as Wah Fu Estate would not commence within the coming decade, the Administration should also provide such recreational facilities in these estates.

Admin

AD(EM)3 replied that the Administration would provide a list of the 100 estates to address Mr KWOK's enquiry.

Action

In-flat modification

32. The Chairman said that to cater for the need of PRH tenants who were walking-aid users when taking a shower, HA should provide a foldable seat at the appropriate location in their shower rooms. She considered that just installing grab-rails in shower rooms would not help much. The Chairman further enquired whether HA would accept wheelchair or walking-aid users' requests for replacing the doors of their PRH units, such as those for kitchens and toilets compartments, to folding doors. AD(EM)3 replied that the entrance doors and most kitchen doors of PRH units were designed to have adequate fire resistance period, and they should not be removed or replaced. Nevertheless, tenants might apply for replacing toilet doors with folding doors. On the question whether HA would provide the replacement service free of charge, AD(EM)3 said that upon tenants' request and production of medical certificates, HA would seek the advice of the physiotherapist where appropriate and provide the replacement service.

33. Citing a case in Yau Oi Estate in which it took two years for HD to consider a PRH tenant's request for in-flat modification to meet the tenant's mobility needs, Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired about the time normally taken to carry out in-flat modification works in similar cases. AD(EM)3 responded that after HD staff received a tenant's request for in-flat modification due to mobility need, they would discuss with the physiotherapist or occupational therapist where appropriate on the feasibility of the suggestion. In general, it would take a few months to complete the modification works for a flat depending on the scope and complexity of the work. The Chairman suggested that Dr CHEUNG might follow up with HD on the case after the meeting.

34. Mr YIU Si-wing said that as it might take time for HD to modify a PRH unit, HD should consider making available certain vacant units suitable for elderly tenants with special needs so that they could be immediately allocated to needy households upon applications. AD(EM)3 replied that the suggestion might not be practicable as different applicants might have different needs. It was more appropriate for HD to seek the advice from the physiotherapist concerned about the applicant's need, and modify the flat in light of the advice. In response to Mr YIU's concern that not all elderly tenants could engage a physiotherapist to follow up their cases, AD(EM)3 advised that depending on the circumstances of the case, HD might, upon elderly tenants' requests, refer them to medical social workers of non-governmental organisations for follow-up services.

Action

35. Mr Jeremy TAM enquired whether the Administration would allocate a larger unit to a household which comprised a wheelchair or walking-aid user. AD(EM)3 replied that upon production of medical certificates, a PRH household member who required non-temporary indoor use of wheelchair would have one-grade-up in the calculation of household size and living density. For a two-person household, if the two members were wheelchair users, a 4-person unit could be allocated to them. Similar arrangement could be offered to those who were in need of continuous ambulatory peritoneal dialysis at home or suffering from hyperactivity disorder.

Motion

36. The Chairman referred members to the following motion, which she considered relevant to the agenda item –

Motion moved by Mr Wilson OR Chong-shing:

本委員會促請房屋署加快推展加裝升降機及扶手電梯計劃，縮短行政程序，並以專款專用方式加快工程，方便長者及有需要市民出入。

(Translation)

This Panel urges the Housing Department to expeditiously implement the programmes for adding lifts and escalators by streamlining the administrative procedures and making use of dedicated funds to expedite the progress of such works, so as to provide convenient access for the elderly and for people in need.

37. The Chairman put to vote the motion moved by Mr Wilson OR. The majority of members present supported the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

(Post-meeting note: The wording of the motion passed was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)653/16-17(02) on 7 March 2017 and was provided to the Administration via the letter dated 7 March 2017.)

38. The Chairman said that the Administration should expedite the programmes for adding lifts and escalators, as mentioned in the motion.

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VI. Construction materials used for public rental housing

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| (LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(07) | — Administration's paper on building materials used for public rental housing |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)617/16-17(08) | — Paper on construction materials used for public rental housing prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)) |

39. At the invitation of the Chairman, DDH(D&C) briefed members on the risk assessment of building materials used in the construction of new public housing developments undertaken by HA.

Quality assurance of construction materials

40. Mr Jeremy TAM enquired about how HA conducted the quality supervision of the production of pre-cast concrete components ("PCCs") in factories. Chief Architect (Development & Standards), Housing Department replied that HA had commissioned independent service providers in Hong Kong for management of factory supervision of PCCs, which were usually manufactured in Mainland. According to the service agreement, the service providers were required to deploy full time resident supervisors in factories to inspect the production, and engineers to carry out relevant audits to the factories at monthly intervals. DDH(D&C) added that the project's main contractor would pay visits once a month to each factory to review PCC quality issues. HA's central team, which was an in-house independent team, would also conduct quarterly factory visits to monitor the performance of the service providers.

41. Mr Andrew WAN enquired whether irregularities had been detected so far in the monitoring of the production of PCCs. He said that after the lead in drinking water incident, HA had conducted a review on quality assurance issues relating to fresh water supply of PRH estates which covered the quality control and supervision of off-site manufactured PCCs for use in HA's public housing developments. He enquired about the relevant results of the review. DDH(D&C) replied that, in general, as off-site manufactured PCCs were produced under a controlled environment inside factories, the quality assurance of their production could be more stringent than those produced at construction sites, and relevant quality assurance issues were near minimal. To facilitate the identification and

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tracking of PCCs produced in factories, radio-frequency identification technology was adopted. DDH(D&C) explained that the use of volumetric precast components incorporated with water pipes as a trial had been used in the construction of some of the PRH units in Kai Ching Estate, Kai Tak, and in light of the experience, HA had not used such approach in the production of other public housing units.

42. Dr YIU Chung-yim noted that the measures adopted by HA in response to the recommendations by the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead Found in Drinking water included requiring the main contractor to submit and implement a subcontractor management plan covering stringent supervision and on-site monitoring on plumbing subcontractor and licensed plumber, and mandating central procurement of soldering materials by the main contractor or first tier domestic subcontractors. He enquired about the materials other than soldering materials that were covered under these measures. DDH(D&C) replied that the materials covered under the measures mentioned by Dr YIU included some important components relating to plumbing works. Dr YIU requested the Administration to provide a list of the materials covered under these enhancement measures.

Admin

Disposal of in-flat items by public rental housing tenants

43. Mr WU Chi-wai said that there were cases where tenants of newly-completed PRH estates had disposed of in-flat items such as sinks after moving in, hence resulting in wastage. He enquired about the measures to deal with the situation. DDH(D&C) replied that HA all along attached importance to minimizing the chance of disposal and wastage when considering the in-flat items to be provided in new PRH units. Facilities such as bath tubs and kitchen cabinets were no longer provided in HA's public housing developments. Adjustable cooking benches were adopted for all new PRH projects so that it could be adjusted to appropriate height at tenants' request during intake. DDH(D&C) explained that as not all families newly moved-in could afford the cost of fitting-out and equipping their flats, HA considered it appropriate to provide some basic fixtures and fittings, such as sink units for new PRH units. In response to Mr WU's enquiry about the number of sink units that had been disposed of by PRH tenants so far, DDH(D&C) advised that the Administration had not compiled the statistics, and would consider conducting surveys in future to collect relevant information from residents who moved in recently. Mr WU remarked that the Administration should carry out surveys to collect such information in future.

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VII. Any other business

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:45 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
5 May 2017