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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 6 March 2017

**Background brief on measures to facilitate the mobility needs of
elderly residents taken by the Hong Kong Housing Authority
prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents taken by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA"), and gives a brief account of the views and concerns expressed by members on the subject during the relevant discussions at the Panel on Housing ("the Panel").

Background

2. HA has over the years adopted the concept of universal design in newly-built public rental housing ("PRH") units to cater for the needs of tenants of different age and physical conditions. Under this concept, HA has introduced various types of elderly-friendly designs, including widening the corridors, flat entrances, kitchen and bathroom doors, using safer materials such as non-slippery floor tiles, with a view to enabling tenants to reside in the same flat even at old age or when their mobility is impaired.

3. For eligible elderly tenants living in old PRH blocks, HA will modify the facilities inside their units to cater for their needs. For those PRH estates with more elderly tenants, HA plans to increase the provision of recreational facilities for the elderly, or modify the use or the design of public space in those estates in accordance with tenants' needs.

Barrier-free access facilities

4. HA has, since 2010, implemented a barrier-free access and facility improvement programme for premises under its management, covering PRH estates and commercial facilities to follow the requirements laid out in the Government's Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008 as far as practicable. The improvement works involve providing ramps, suitable handrails and tactile guide paths connecting main estate entrances to major facilities within estate area, entrances of domestic blocks, etc.¹

5. To support the universal accessibility policy of the Administration, and to enhance pedestrian access within PRH estates, HA has been implementing the Lift Addition Programme ("LAP") since 2008. Lifts are added in external common areas, in PRH blocks without lift services and next to existing footbridges within boundaries of PRH estates. LAP also provides barrier-free access, particularly for the elderly and disabled persons who are living in PRH estates built in hilly areas. HA launched Stage 1 and Stage 2 of LAP in 2008 and 2013 respectively. The two stages include the addition of 83 lifts, six escalators and 27 footbridges in 32 existing PRH estates.² In addition, HA has put in place a lift modernization programme ("LMP") for PRH estates to modernize lifts aged over 25 years and provide lift openings for floors currently without one, where the structure permits.

Deliberations by the Panel on Housing

6. The Panel receives the Administration's updates on the progress of its programmes for adding lifts, escalators and footbridges to PRH estates regularly.³ The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹ According to the Administration, the improvement works have been completed (<http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201512/16/P201512160361.htm>).

² Stage 1 of LAP involves the provision of 70 lifts, six escalators and 18 footbridges in 29 PRH estates. Stage 2 of LAP involves the provision of 13 lifts and nine footbridges in eight PRH estates. According to the Administration, all the projects in Stage 1 have been completed. For Stage 2, the construction works are expected to be completed in 2017.

³ In the fifth LegCo term, the Panel received the progress updates at the meetings on 15 April 2013, 7 April 2014 and 1 June 2015.

7. While supporting the implementation of LAP and LMP, members emphasized the need to reduce the inconvenience caused by the installation of lifts and shorten the time required for the installation or modernization works. Some members considered that HA should accord priority to aged estates in the addition of lifts, and should avoid recurrence of the situation that lifts in PRH estates due for redevelopment were demolished shortly after they were installed/modernized.

8. The Administration advised that both LAP and LMP were implemented on a rolling basis. Aged PRH estates most in need of lifts had been included in Stage 1 of LAP. In carrying out lift modernization, HA would give regard to factors such as redevelopment potential of the PRH estates concerned so as to ensure that lifts provided at estates would be used for at least six years.

9. Taking into consideration that there were some older estates where lift services were not available at certain floors, members questioned how HA would improve the situation. The Administration explained that lift services were mostly unavailable at the topmost floor where the machine room located and some other floors due to structural constraints. Tenants living on floors without lift services could apply for transfer if they were in need of such services for various reasons.

10. Some members suggested that for some PRH estates where there was a large level difference between the estate shopping malls and the domestic blocks uphill, HA should consider providing lifts in addition to escalators for the convenience of the elderly and the wheelchair users. The Administration advised that lifts had been added as far as practicable to estate shopping malls and in cases where it was technically infeasible to do so, ramps would be provided. HA would continue to improve the accessibility between domestic blocks and estate shopping malls.

11. Apart from barrier-free access, members were keen to ensure that the Administration would keep improving other estate facilities such as recreational facilities to cope with the changing needs of PRH tenants. In response to a question raised at the Council meeting of 10 June 2015 about the measures to ensure that contractors would complete the repair or replacement works for play equipment for the elderly and other residents in the playgrounds of PRH estates in a timely manner, the Administration advised that the Housing Department ("HD") conducted reviews on the performance of contractors on a quarterly basis. For contractors with unsatisfactory performance, HD would take regulatory measures, including issuing written warnings, conducting performance interviews, claiming liquidated damages and suspension of tender submissions.⁴

⁴ The Council question and the Administration's reply are hyperlinked in the Appendix.

Latest development

12. The Administration will brief the Panel on the measures taken by HA to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents at the Panel meeting on 6 March 2017.

Relevant papers

13. A list of relevant papers is set out in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
28 February 2017

**Measures to facilitate the mobility needs of
elderly residents taken by the Hong Kong Housing Authority**

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	15 April 2013	Administration's paper on "Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)826/12-13(05)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1638/12-13)
Panel on Housing	7 April 2014	Administration's paper on "Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1189/13-14(05)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1946/13-14)
Panel on Housing	1 June 2015	Administration's paper on "Progress Report on Addition of Lifts and Escalators to Existing Public Rental Housing Estates" (LC Paper No. CB(1)787/14-15(08)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1244/14-15)
Panel on Housing	6 February 2017	Administration's paper on Housing-related Initiatives in the 2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda (LC Paper No. CB(1)468/16-17(01))

Date	Council Question
10 June 2015	Council question raised by Hon WU Chi-wai
16 December 2015	Council question raised by Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip