

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)999/17-18
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

Panel on Housing

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 4 December 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 James TO Kun-sun
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
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 CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

Members attending : Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Tanya CHAN

Public Officers attending : Agenda Item IV

Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP
Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing

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

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

Ms Portia YIU
Chief Planning Officer (2)
Housing Department

Agenda Item V

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

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

Miss Sandra LAM
Assistant Director (Special Support)
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. Information papers issued since last meeting

Members noted that the following papers had been issued since last meeting –

LC Paper No. CB(1)197/17-18(01) — Land Registry Statistics for October 2017 provided by the Administration (press release)

LC Paper No. CB(1)262/17-18(01) — Letter dated 22 November 2017 from Hon SHIU Ka-chun requesting discussion of measures on transitional housing (Chinese version only)

LC Paper No. CB(1)268/17-18(01) — Letter dated 23 November 2017 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki requesting for holding a public hearing on issues relating to Link Asset Management Limited's disposal of its properties (Chinese version only)

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LC Paper No. CB(1)272/17-18(01) — Submission from a deputation (監察公營街市發展聯盟) dated 23 November 2017 on issues relating to Link Asset Management Limited's disposal of its properties (Chinese version only)

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 9 January 2018, at 4:30 pm –

- (a) Long Term Housing Strategy Annual Progress Report 2017; and
- (b) Review of the Interim Scheme to Extend the Home Ownership Scheme Secondary Market to White Form Buyers.

(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, an item "Creation of one permanent Government Engineer (D2) post and one permanent Chief Engineer (D1) post in Civil Engineering and Development Department" had been added to the agenda for the meeting on 9 January 2018. The notice of meeting and agenda were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)326/17-18 on 12 December 2017.)

3. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the Chairman should liaise with the Administration on the possible date of holding a meeting of the Panel to discuss and receive public views on issues relating to Link Asset Management Limited's disposal of its properties, i.e. item 27 of the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion (LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(02)) ("the List"). Mrs Regina IP and Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern about the impact of the Link Asset Management Limited's disposal of its properties in public housing estates on local communities, and suggested that the Panel discussed the subject as early as possible.

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(*Post-meeting note*: The Administration's response was issued to members vide paragraphs 19 to 35 of LC Paper No. CB(1)437/17-18(01) on 8 January 2018.)

4. The Panel noted that the Chairman and the Chairman of the Panel on Development ("DEV Panel") had agreed to hold a joint meeting to discuss with the Administration item 6 of the List, namely "Rehousing policy for residents affected by land resumption", and some DEV Panel members had suggested to hold a public hearing on the item. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the two Panels should discuss and receive public views on the item at a joint meeting.

III. Matter arising from the meeting on 6 November 2017

Head 711 project no. B780CL - Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long

(LC Paper No. CB(1)308/17-18(01) — Administration's paper on Public Works Programme Item No. B780CL – Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long (follow-up paper)

LC Paper No. CB(1)155/17-18(04) — Administration's paper on Public Works Programme Item No. B780CL – Site formation and infrastructure works for public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long

LC Paper No. CB(1)155/17-18(05) — Paper on public housing development at Wang Chau, Yuen Long prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)

[At 2:46 and 2:47 pm, the Chairman reminded members of the public in the public gallery not to make noise.]

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5. The Chairman said that the Panel had discussed the proposed project at the meeting on 6 November 2017, and members had expressed concerns on the compensation and rehousing arrangements to be provided for the households affected by the public housing development plan for Wang Chau and had suggested that a joint meeting of the Panel on Housing and DEV Panel should be held to discuss the matter. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the two Panels should discuss and receive public views on the proposed project, and the Panel on Housing would not make a decision whether it supported the Administration's submission of the funding proposal for the proposed project to the Public Works Subcommittee for consideration until the joint meeting was held. Mr Kenneth LAU and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed concern that the Administration might carry out land clearance at Wang Chau before the joint meeting was held. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that she would request the Administration to suspend any action to resume the land concerned in the interim.

(Post-meeting note: At the meeting on 5 February 2018, members agreed that the Panel on Housing and DEV Panel should hold the joint meeting to discuss with the Administration and receive public views on "Rehousing policy for residents affected by land resumption" and the proposed project on 13 March 2018. At the request of the Administration and on the advice of the Chairmen of the two Panels, the aforesaid joint meeting was re-scheduled to a later date. Members of the two Panels were informed accordingly on 6 March 2018 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)665/17-18.)

IV. Public Housing Construction Programme 2017-18 to 2021-22 and Challenges and difficulties in taking forward public housing development projects

(LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(03) — Administration's paper on Public Housing Construction Programme 2017-18 to 2021-22

LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(04) — Administration's paper on challenges and difficulties in taking forward public housing development projects

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LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(05) — Paper on the Public Housing Construction Programme and challenges and difficulties in taking forward public housing development projects prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

6. The Panel noted that as agreed by members at the meeting on 6 November 2017, the discussion on the items "Public Housing Construction Programme 2017-18 to 2021-22" and "Challenges and difficulties in taking forward public housing development projects" would be combined.

7. Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing ("Atg STH") briefed members on the background and issues relating to the Public Housing Construction Programme ("PHCP"). With the aid of PowerPoint, Deputy Director of Housing (Development and Construction) ("DDH(D&C)") elaborated on the PHCP 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 and the challenges and difficulties faced by the Administration in taking forward public housing development projects.

(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials for the item were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)320/17-18(01) and CB(1)320/17-18(02) on 5 December 2017 in electronic form.)

Waiting time for public rental housing

8. Mr KWONG Chun-yu enquired about the Administration's estimated waiting time for public rental housing ("PRH") in the next few years. He opined that the existing income and asset limits for PRH applicants did not reflect the latest situation in the society and many needy households, including one-person households, were not eligible for PRH. Dr Fernando CHEUNG was concerned whether the Administration/the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") would not achieve its target of providing the first flat offer to general PRH applicants at about three years on average.

9. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("PS(H)") replied that HA reviewed the income and asset limits for PRH in accordance with the established mechanism every year. As set out in the Long Term Housing Strategy ("LTHS") promulgated in 2014, the Administration would continue to support HA in achieving the target of providing the first flat offer to general PRH applicants at around three years on average. The Policy Address announced in October 2017 had mentioned that the Government

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would strive to shorten the waiting time for PRH. As the number of new PRH applications varied every year and the pace of PRH production was not totally under HA's control, it was difficult for HA to provide an accurate estimate of the average waiting time ("AWT"). HA had posted on its website the waiting time distribution of general applicants housed to PRH.

10. Mr KWONG and the Chairman requested the Administration to provide, with copy of the relevant information, if any, posted on HA's website, the proportion of PRH applicants who were housed to PRH in the past few years and their waiting time was three years or less. The Chairman further requested the Administration to provide information on whether and when the Administration/HA would achieve its target of providing the first flat offer to general PRH applicants at three years on average.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)696/17-18(01) on 14 March 2018.)

11. Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired whether there would be adequate supply of PRH units to cater for applicants for PRH units in urban/extended urban districts, as they might have waited for PRH for more than five years. PS(H) replied that HA had been striving to increase the PRH supply including those in urban/extended urban districts. As the number of PRH applicants for these districts might continue to increase, it would not be practicable for the Administration/HA to ascertain whether or not the future PRH supply could cater for their demand.

Supply of public housing

12. Mr Jeremy TAM said that the Chief Executive had been quoted saying in a press interview that she thought 800 000 PRH units might be sufficient to cater for the needs of grassroots families. In view that the sum of the total stock of HA's PRH units and the projected number of new PRH units in the next five-year period would exceed 800 000, he sought clarification whether the Administration/HA would continue to produce new PRH units to meet the target under LTHS. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that the public was concerned whether the Administration would put a cap on the PRH programme. He enquired whether regularizing the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme ("GSH") and the conversion of some 4 000 new PRH units in Fo Tan, Sha Tin into GSH units for sale as mentioned in the Policy Address would reduce the PRH supply so that the target of producing 200 000 PRH units for the next ten years under LTHS would not be achieved. Mrs Regina IP considered it important to maintain consistent housing policies, and queried

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whether the Administration would make a policy shift by limiting the number of PRH units to 800 000 and encouraging home ownership. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that a home-ownership-oriented housing policy could not resolve the prevailing housing problems. Mr Andrew WAN opined that HA had the primary responsibility to provide PRH to low-income families who could not afford private rental accommodations.

13. Atg STH replied that the Administration had not set any restriction on the number of PRH units, and would continue to focus on supply and step up the efforts in increasing supply of housing units based on LTHS. According to LTHS, apart from providing PRH, the Administration should also take forward the strategy of providing more subsidized sale flats and expanding the forms of subsidized home ownership in order to help low to middle-income households meet their home ownership aspirations. To provide more housing choices for households with Green Form status, HA introduced the GSH pilot project and had undertaken to conduct a review on it.

14. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung opined that the proposal to regularize GSH would reduce the number of new PRH units available for allocation to PRH applicants. It was discriminatory for HA to allocate to the waiting list ("WL") applicants the PRH units vacated by existing tenants whereas other Green Formers who could afford to purchase a GSH unit would be provided a new flat. Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr SHIU Ka-chun and Mr KWONG Chun-yu expressed concern that the waiting time for PRH would be lengthened if new PRH units were converted to GSH flats for sale. Dr CHEUNG said that to honour the pledge of providing the first flat offer to general PRH applicants at around three years on average, the Administration/HA should maximize the production of PRH units. Mr SHIU said that as advised by the Chief Secretary for Administration, PRH was an important poverty alleviation measure. The Administration/HA should focus their resources to produce more PRH units.

15. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that GSH would provide an alternative avenue for Green Form applicants to achieve home ownership, but the Administration should address the worries of the public that regularizing GSH would reduce the number of PRH units available for allocation. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that although GSH would give an option for home ownership, HA should study carefully the appropriate number of GSH units to be provided, taking into account Green Formers' preference and their ability to afford.

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16. Atg STH replied that according to the LTHS Annual Progress Report 2016, the Administration adopted 200 000 units as the total PRH supply target for the ten-year period from 2017-2018 to 2026-2027. Apart from new PRH units, units surrendered by PRH tenants were another source of supply in meeting PRH demand. After PRH tenants had purchased GSH flats, they were required to vacate their PRH units. Given this one-for-one arrangement, GSH would not reduce the supply of PRH but would help Green Formers meet their home ownership aspirations. PS(H) advised that the HA's Subsidised Housing Committee would review the GSH pilot project before deciding whether to regularize the scheme. In terms of the housing supply target, the Administration updated the long term housing demand projection and presented a rolling ten-year housing supply target annually. Mr Andrew WAN and Mr Jeremy TAM did not subscribe to the Administration's explanation that GSH would not affect the supply of PRH, given that the unit to be provided for sale under GSH could originally be used for providing PRH.

Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme

17. Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired why the Chief Executive had earlier on mentioned that the about 4 000 new PRH units in Fo Tan could be converted into GSH flats, if HA had yet to complete the review on the GSH pilot project and decide whether to regularize GSH. Dr CHENG Chung-tai enquired whether there were any changes in the role of HA in the development and implementation of the public housing programme since the current term Government took office. Mr Wilson OR and Mr Jeremy TAM enquired whether the about 4 000 new PRH units in Fo Tan were counted towards the projected supply of PRH or counted as that of subsidized sale flats. Mr Andrew WAN opined that the housing units sold under GSH should be counted towards the supply of subsidized sale flats under LTHS.

18. PS(H) replied that there was no change in the role of HA since the current term Government took office. There were examples in the past that a policy address outlined ideas or directions for consideration by relevant bureaux or organizations. As mentioned in the Policy Address delivered in October 2017, the Chief Executive had put forward the suggestion to regularize GSH so as to offer more GSH units for sale. Whether to regularize GSH was a matter to be decided by HA. In the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(03)), some 4 000 PRH units in Fo Tan were counted towards the projected supply of PRH units. If HA decided to regularize GSH, it would further consider whether to convert these PRH units in Fo Tan into GSH flats. The Administration would also consider how to categorize GSH flats in the housing supply targets.

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19. Mr Jeremy TAM opined that the projected number of PRH units to be completed in 2019-2020 as set out in the Administration's paper might be no longer valid if HA decided to convert the PRH units in Fo Tan to GSH flats. The Administration should brief the Panel on the PHCP 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 only after the decision had been made. Dr CHENG Chung-tai enquired whether the GSH units provided in San Po Kong were subsidized sale flats or PRH units. He further asked about the scope covered by the term "PRH" and the factors of consideration for converting PRH units to subsidized sale flats.

20. PS(H) replied that PRH was a safety net for the grassroots and low-income families, and it was the Government's responsibilities to continue providing PRH units. Subject to HA's decision on the way forward of GSH, the Administration might consider whether the housing supply targets under LTHS should be adjusted. In response to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's and the Chairman's enquiry on whether HA could turn down the suggestions about GSH as mentioned in the Policy Address, Atg STH advised that the Administration would respect the decision made by HA on the matter when carrying out the review on the GSH pilot project in accordance with its established mechanism.

21. The Chairman said that when the Panel discussed the GSH pilot project at a meeting, she had expressed the views that the prices of GSH flats and the locations where such flats would be provided would have a significant bearing on its attractiveness. The Administration/HA should ensure that the scheme to provide GSH flats would not adversely affect the PRH supply and the waiting time of PRH applicants. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should consider adjusting the split between new public and private housing supply from the current ratio of 60:40 to 70:30 so that 10% of the new housing supply might be converted into GSH units in future with the current target for public housing units, which were not GSH units, maintained at 60% of the new housing supply. She requested the Administration to provide a written response to the suggestion.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)696/17-18(01) on 14 March 2018.)

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Redevelopment of public rental housing estates

22. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the Administration had identified 22 aged PRH estates for redevelopment for quite some time, and enquired when it would put in place the redevelopment programmes for these estates. Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired whether in view of the limited manpower of the Housing Department ("HD") to cope with the workload involved in developing public housing, HA would commission contractors or invite the Hong Kong Housing Society to undertake its PRH redevelopment projects. PS(H) replied that as concluded in the LTHS published in December 2014, it was not advisable to carry out massive redevelopment programme which would result in freezing a large number of PRH units that might otherwise be allocated to needy households, given the current high demand for PRH. The manpower supply in HD was not a factor behind the Administration's position regarding the subject.

Land supply for public housing

23. Mr SHIU Ka-chun sought clarification whether it was the Administration's policy to allocate spade-ready sites for private housing developments and other sites for providing public housing. Mr Andrew WAN was concerned that the Development Bureau ("DEVB") would continue to allocate fragmented land parcels to HA for providing public housing. He enquired whether in light of the community views about the use of brownfield sites, military sites and the Fanling Golf Course site for housing developments, the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") could take a more proactive role in liaising with DEVB to designate more suitable land plots for HA to provide public housing. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that instead of increasing land supply in a piecemeal approach, the Administration should undertake large-scale housing projects in order to effectively address the housing shortage.

24. Mr WU Chi-wai said that as private flat prices were unaffordable to most households and the permitted plot ratios for public housing sites were usually higher than those for private housing sites, the Administration should provide more spade-ready sites to HA for developing public housing. He enquired about the actions taken by THB to obtain such land sites from DEVB. Mr WU opined that the sites resumed by the Urban Renewal Authority ("URA") should be used for providing subsidized sale flats instead of private housing. Mr Wilson OR opined that the Administration/HA so far could not meet the public housing supply target under LTHS, and the AWT for PRH might increase to more than five years in future. He enquired whether part of the land plots that had originally been earmarked for private housing developments would be designated for HA to provide public housing.

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Mrs Regina IP raised the same enquiry. She said that the Administration should provide more public housing by adjusting the public/private split of 60:40 for the new housing supply and develop a strategy in this regard. The Administration should also consider providing public housing developments above newly built MTR/railway stations. The Chairman remarked that the Panel had previously passed a motion at a meeting urging the Administration to adjust the split between public and private housing supply to 70:30 or above.

25. Atg STH and PS(H) replied that since 2011, over ten sites originally earmarked for private housing developments had been re-allocated for public housing use. The Administration would provide the details in this regard. PS(H) explained that in considering the suggestion of adjusting the public/private split of 60:40 in new housing production, the Administration also had to pay due regard to the stable development of private residential market. While it would take time to avert the housing demand-supply imbalance, THB would continue to secure adequate housing sites to achieve the public housing supply target under LTHS. The Chairman said that the Administration had provided public housing developments above MTR/railway stations, but had stopped the practice afterwards. She had suggested since 2015 that the Administration should provide in collaboration with HA public housing at the spade-ready sites in urban areas resumed by URA. She requested the Administration to provide a written response to the suggestion.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)696/17-18(01) on 14 March 2018.)

26. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung opined that in view of the challenges arising from its resumption of private land for developing public housing, the Administration should provide special compensation and rehousing arrangements and devise a set of more relaxed PRH eligibility limits for the affected residents. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that the Administration should improve the existing clearance compensation and rehousing arrangements for the affected residents/squatter households. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the Administration's reluctance to rezone Village Type Development sites to Residential sites and resume the brownfield sites at Wang Chau for providing public housing had given rise to difficulties for it to meet the housing supply targets. PS(H) responded that the Administration/HA had to follow the established policies on clearance compensation and rehousing which was under the purview of DEVB. Atg STH advised that the public housing development at Wang Chau would be carried out in phases, and the Administration had been

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seeking the Panel's support for carrying out the site formation and infrastructure works at the site of Phase 1 development.

Delivery of public housing development projects

27. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the Administration had advised that HA could shorten the work process for providing public housing at a spade-ready site, and enquired how this could be achieved. Mr Andrew WAN asked whether the application of precast construction technology could help expedite the delivery of public housing. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that timely acquisition of adequate manpower was a factor affecting the prompt delivery of public housing flats, and enquired whether HD had increased their staffing resources.

28. PS(H) replied that the key to prompt delivery of public housing flats hinged on various factors, and whether the Administration/HA could secure spade-ready sites which had been zoned for residential use and were resumed, cleared and formed with appropriate provision of infrastructure was one of them. DDH(D&C) explained that the delivery process of public housing development projects at a spade-ready site could be condensed because it was possible for the Administration/HA to carry out the relevant feasibility study and project planning and design in parallel with the local consultation. Atg STH advised that if the project delivery processes concerned could be carried out in parallel, HA was generally able to shorten the work process to about five years (including one year for early planning and design works, half a year for tendering, and three and a half years for construction works), which generally took about seven years in the past, in order to expedite the construction of public housing. The use of precast construction components could also be helpful in expediting the public housing construction.

Provision of ancillary facilities in districts

29. Mr HO Kai-ming said that to secure the local support for its public housing development projects, HD should work closely with other relevant bureaux/departments to address the local communities' aspirations for provision of ancillary facilities, such as transport infrastructures, parking spaces, etc. He enquired about the role played by THB in spearheading inter-departmental efforts in improving districts' ancillary facilities to tie in with public housing developments. Mr Wilson OR raised similar enquiry and opined that the Administration's failure to plan for the provision of ancillary facilities in public housing projects had rendered it difficult to obtain local communities' support for the projects. Atg STH replied that THB had all along collaborated with relevant Government bureaux/departments in working out housing development plans to address local community's needs. In planning a

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public housing project, HA would make reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, consult relevant government departments, district councils and local organizations with a view to providing suitable ancillary facilities in the district concerned. The Chairman said that Kwai Tsing District Council had supported many HA's public housing projects. Some projects had encountered difficulties at the local consultation stage because the Administration could not address the local concerns on provision of supporting facilities to tie in with the public housing development concerned.

30. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that the Administration should maintain the provision of park-and-ride facilities in the New Territories so that motorists who needed to travel to urban areas could switch to public transport at convenient locations. He enquired about the progress of a proposal to provide park-and-ride facilities outside Sheung Shui railway station. PS(H) replied that the Administration had been following up the proposal.

Social workers in new public rental housing estates

31. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that HA should seriously consider establishing a team of social workers in new PRH estates and provide suitable indoor working places for them to provide support to new residents in adapting to the estate environment. The Chairman suggested that the Administration followed up with Mr SHIU on the matter after the meeting.

Motion

32. The Chairman referred members to the following motion moved by Mr Wilson OR, which she considered relevant to the agenda item –

"由於公營房屋供應量，自《長遠房屋策略》制定後從未達標，故本事務委員會要求當局考慮將部分已規劃或準備規劃作私人住宅的土地，轉撥予香港房屋協會或香港房屋委員會以作公營房屋項目發展。"

(Translation)

"Given that the supply of public housing has failed to meet the target since the formulation of the Long Term Housing Strategy, this Panel requests the authorities, regarding the sites which have been planned or will be planned for building private residential units, to consider allocating some of these sites to the Hong Kong Housing Society or the Hong Kong Housing Authority for public housing developments. "

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33. The Chairman put to vote the motion moved by Mr Wilson OR. All 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)322/17-18(01) on 5 December 2017 and was provided to the Administration via the letter dated 5 December 2017.)

(The Chairman left the meeting at 4:32 pm and the Deputy Chairman took over the chair.)

V. Testing of drinking water of public rental housing estates under the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme and the latest progress of the follow-up actions in respect of the excess-lead-in-water incident

(LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(06)

Administration's paper on testing of drinking water of public rental housing estates under the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme and the latest progress of the follow-up actions in respect of the excess-lead-in-water incident

LC Paper No. CB(1)284/17-18(07)

— Paper on testing of drinking water of public rental housing estates under the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme and the follow-up actions in respect of the excess-lead-in-water incident prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

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34. At the invitation of the Deputy Chairman, PS(H) briefed members on the arrangements for testing of drinking water in PRH estates under the Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme ("Enhanced Programme"), and the latest progress of the follow-up actions taken by HA in respect of the "excess-lead-in-water" incident in 2015.

(The Chairman resumed the chair at 4:36 pm.)

Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme

35. Mr SHIU Ka-chun queried whether the number of random samples to be collected annually by the Water Supplies Department ("WSD") from consumers' taps in around 670 public and private premises in Hong Kong under the Enhanced Programme would be too small given the large number of PRH units in Hong Kong. PS(H) responded that he was not in a position to advise on the scientific basis of the 670 samples, which was under the purview of DEVB. He said that the Enhanced Programme was part of DEVB's Action Plan for Enhancing Water Safety in Hong Kong and that to his understanding, WSD had taken into account the advice of the international experts commissioned by the department when considering the sample size. Further details could be sought from DEVB/WSD. The Chairman remarked that DEV Panel had scheduled to discuss an item relating to drinking water safety at a meeting and would invite all other Members to join the discussion.

Excess-lead-in-water incident

36. Dr Junius HO enquired about the results of the water sampling tests in 2015 that had been conducted for the PRH estates affected by the excess-lead-in-water incident, in particular details about the water samples with excess lead and the water samples which recorded the highest content of lead. PS(H) replied that the Administration would provide the relevant information after the meeting in response to Dr HO's enquiries.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)696/17-18(01) on 14 March 2018.)

37. Mr KWOK Wai-keung declared that he was a member of the HA's Review Committee on Quality Assurance Issues Relating to Fresh Water Supply of Public Housing Estates. He said that in the light of the limitations of HA's established system to assess the risk factor of building materials as reflected in the excess-lead-in-water incident, the Review Committee had put forward certain control measures. Apart from assuring the quality of building

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materials, HA should ensure that the tap water in public housing estates was safe by means of satisfactory water quality tests after completion. PS(H) replied that the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead Found in Drinking Water supported the various improvement measures recommended by the Review Committee, and HA had implemented such measures. HA had also proceeded further to review other buildings materials with a view to enhancing its quality assurance system. HA would continue with such work and keep Members informed.

38. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern that the Administration had yet to introduce amendments to the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) to regulate the contractors engaged in plumbing works. He enquired whether HA would stop using precast technology in public housing construction projects. He considered that if HA continued to apply the precast technology to its projects, it should put in place appropriate measures to ensure the safety of drinking water of public housing. PS(H) replied that the requirements under the Waterworks Ordinance were applicable to HA, including any future amendments to it, if enacted subsequently. HA had been using precast components for many years but the precast components with pre-installed water pipes were only adopted as a trial in the construction of some of the PRH units in Kai Ching Estate. However, it had reviewed the experience and decided against using the approach in the production of other public housing units. Whether such approach should be adopted again in future projects was subject to relevant factors, such as the future development of the relevant technology.

Residents affected by the excess-lead-in-water incident

39. Dr Helena WONG sought clarification whether residents of some PRH estates affected by the excess-lead-in-water incident, such as Hung Hom Estate Phase 2, were only allowed to take water from standpipes in the estate in two periods of time in a day, and whether residents were aware of the arrangements. PS(H) replied that residents of the 11 affected PRH estates might take water from their own units as filters had been installed for their drinking taps; the temporary water points provided on each floor of the PRH blocks as well as standpipes. As far as standpipes were concerned, the arrangements for managing standpipes varied from one estate to another, depending on the feedback of residents of the estate and actual needs. As HD had previously received complaints about abuse of water from standpipes for non-drinking purpose, it had consulted relevant stakeholders including the Estate Management Advisory Committees and had implemented measures to control access to the standpipes in some PRH estates, including Hung Hom Estate Phase 2. Despite the measures, residents might at any time during the day

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contact the security guards direct for gaining access to the standpipes. HA had also mentioned the above arrangement in response to recent media enquiries.

40. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that according to the Administration, the children living in the 11 affected PRH developments who had been found to have borderline raised blood lead levels and had been identified with mild developmental problems or developmental delay had been referred to appropriate rehabilitation services. He had met one of these children who so far had not received the services. In response, PS(H) said that the matter mentioned by Mr SHIU was related to health and suggested Mr SHIU to consider following up the matter with the Food and Health Bureau.

Rectification works inside PRH units

41. Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired about the HA's progress in replacing the non-compliant water pipes inside domestic units of the 11 affected PRH developments, and how HA would handle tenants' complaints or compensation claims for damages to their premises as a consequence of the works. Mr KWOK Wai-keung said that some PRH tenants wanted to opt out of the works, and to ensure the water was safe, they let the tap water flow for a while. WSD should explain its position in respect of the concern that such practice would cause wastage of water resources.

42. PS(H) replied that HA had requested the contractors to replace the non-compliant water pipes of all affected PRH units. In light of Members' views that HA should maintain good communication with the tenants and seek their consent before carrying out the rectification works inside their flats, HA had been spending a lot of time communicating with the tenants and trying to persuade them to consent. HA had not obtained the agreement of all the affected tenants yet and would continue to engage them. PS(H) further advised that for those tenants who had expressed unwillingness to have rectification works carried out inside their flats, HA would convey their views to WSD, which was the authority for enforcing the requirements under the Waterworks Ordinance, and discuss with the latter for taking follow-up actions at an appropriate juncture. HA had also asked the contractors to make good any damages to the furnishings as a consequence of the works and to handle tenants' compensation claims, if any.

43. Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the timeframe for completing the rectification works inside flats. PS(H) and DDH(D&C) replied that HA's contractors had completed the replacement of non-compliant water pipes inside flats in 46% of about 29 000 PRH units. HA had requested its contractors to rectify all the non-compliant pipes in the affected PRH developments in accordance with the contract. In response to Dr Junius HO's enquiry about the

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expenditure involved in the rectification works inside flats, DDH(D&C) advised that the cost was borne by the contractors. HA had not requested the contractors to provide the cost information.

44. Mr Wilson OR opined that HD staff had maintained good communications with its contractors and relevant stakeholders when carrying out the rectification works in Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, and considered it important for HA to maintain transparency in its works to be undertaken in other PRH estates. Dr Helena WONG said that residents were concerned whether the tap water was safe for drinking after the completion of the rectification works inside their flats. HA should inform the residents of the results of the water sampling tests conducted after completion of the works, including the content of the six heavy metals recorded in the samples. PS(H) thanked Mr Wilson OR for his recognition of HA's work. He agreed that it was important to maintain good communication with tenants throughout the rectification works and would take into account Members' views in considering how to further enhance communication with tenants.

Water sampling tests

45. Mr Wilson OR enquired about the details of the Water Authority ("WA")'s requirements according to which water samples would be tested when the rectification works inside flats were completed, and whether HA would carry out water tests for individual households upon their requests, such as those comprising family members who were suffering prolonged illness or having a baby. Dr Helena WONG opined that to save the need to conduct water tests for each household in the affected PRH estates, the Administration/HA should adopt appropriate sampling method in the water sampling tests. She enquired whether the WA's requirements included a systematic flushing and six-hour stagnation water sampling test, and whether there would be tests on the "initial draw-off" taken from the flats after the non-compliant pipes had been replaced.

46. DDH(D&C) and Assistant Director (Special Support), Housing Department ("AD(SS), HD") replied that the water sampling tests to be conducted after completion of the rectification works would follow the WSD's Circular Letter No. 10/2017 issued in October 2017 which set out the new commissioning requirements for plumbing works in occupied buildings and the six metal parameters that should be included in the water sampling tests. Pursuant to the Circular Letter, the contractors were required to adopt 30-minute stagnation water sampling tests. Subject to satisfactory water test results, form WWO46 Part V would be issued by WSD under the Waterworks Ordinance to certify completion. On the other hand, systematic flushing and

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six-hour stagnation water sampling tests would be applied to newly installed inside services for potable water purposes in unoccupied buildings in accordance with WSD's Circular Letter No.9/2017. PS(H) advised that WSD promulgated new requirements through its circulars from time to time and HA had to fully comply with WSD's requirements. Further details could be sought from WSD. As regards the suggestion for conducting water tests for individual households, experts from WSD and the Department of Health had previously advised that the Administration should introduce an appropriate water sampling protocol for Hong Kong. There was no need to conduct separate water tests for each household and practically the Government and the whole society would not be able to cope with the heavy workload.

47. Dr Helena WONG remained of the view that apart from the 30-minute stagnation water sampling tests, HA should also conduct systematic flushing and six-hour stagnation water sampling tests, and make comparisons between the results of the two tests for public reference. She enquired whether the water sampling tests would be conducted after part of the non-compliant water pipes in an estate had been replaced, and who would be responsible for the water charges incurred in the tests. She further enquired about the tests' sampling size, and the measures to ensure that the water samples would be collected according to relevant requirements. AD(SS), HD advised that HA's contractors would conduct water sampling tests for the affected PRH units that had completed rectification works by batches in accordance with WSD's requirements and the water samples taken would be representative of the water quality of the PRH block concerned. WSD would only certify completion of the works provided that the water sampling test results had met the relevant standards. DDH(D&C) advised that the number of water samples to be taken from a PRH block depended on the design of the inside services in the building. The laboratories to carry out the tests for the water samples were accredited.

VI. Any other business

48. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:17 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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