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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 12 February 2019

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

Purpose

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

Background

2. HA has since 2002 implemented the concept of universal design in new public rental housing ("PRH") estates. Barrier-free facilities are provided in the residential buildings, flats and common areas. In line with the Government's policy of "Ageing in Place", HA takes into account the needs of the elderly and other residents with impaired mobility in the design, management and maintenance of PRH estates, with a view to providing a safe and convenient living environment.

3. HA has made reference to the requirements of the Buildings Department's "Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008", and has adopted universal design inside residential flats, including using safer materials such as non-slip-floor tiles, providing a sunken shower area, widening the flat entrance, etc., so that residents can continue to reside in the same flat even in their old age or when their mobility is impaired. For the convenience of the elderly, wheelchair users and others, ramps, tactile guide paths and handrails are provided at appropriate locations in common areas of PRH estates. HA also provides lean benches at the lift lobbies of new domestic floors for the elderly and people who need to rest temporarily while waiting for lift services.

4. For eligible elderly tenants living in old PRH blocks, HA will modify the facilities inside their units to cater for their needs. In around 100 PRH estates with a higher proportion of elderly residents, HA plans to gradually increase the provision of elderly recreational facilities, such as fitness equipment, pavilions and benches, etc. As at December 2017, HA has started installing such facilities in 94 PRH estates. According to the Administration, all the works are expected to be completed by March 2019.¹

Lift Addition Programme and Lift Modernisation Programme

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. According to the Administration, LAP involves the addition of 85 lifts, six escalators and 28 footbridges in 33 existing PRH estates.² In addition, HA has put in place the Lift Modernisation Programme ("LMP") for PRH estates. Under LMP, annual condition assessment and checking are conducted by HA for all lifts that have been operated for 25 years or more. Taking into account factors including the overall operating conditions of lifts, deployment of resources, etc., HA will formulate a timetable for renewing the lifts concerned.³

Members' views and concerns

6. The Panel has discussed with the Administration at its meetings measures taken by HA for facilitating the mobility needs of elderly residents. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

¹ LC Paper No. CB(1)529/17-18(03)

² According to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)19/17-18\(01\)](#)) provided to the Panel in October 2017, the majority of the projects under LAP had been completed while the remaining ones were expected to be completed by 2019.

³ According to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)529/17-18(03)) provided to the Panel in February 2018, since the 1990s, HA had completed modernization works for more than 1 000 aged lifts. HA replaced 107 aged lifts in 2016/2017, and planned to upgrade about 500 lifts in PRH blocks in the coming six to seven years.

Provision of elderly facilities

7. In view that the scope of the HA's plan to increase the provision of elderly recreational facilities would cover about 100 PRH estates with a higher proportion of elderly residents, members were concerned about the provision of elderly-friendly facilities in other PRH estates. Given that in existing PRH estates, HA would undertake home modification/adaptation works for elderly tenants in their units upon tenants' requests and as recommended by physiotherapists or medical officers, members enquired how HA would handle the situation where the elderly tenant concerned could not engage a physiotherapist or medical officer to follow up his/her case.

8. The Administration advised that the Housing Department ("HD") needed to seek the expertise advice of physiotherapists or medical officers in order to ensure that the home modification/adaptation works suited the special needs of the tenants. For simple cases such as addition of grab bars only, recommendations from physiotherapists or medical officers were not necessary. For other cases, HD might, upon elderly tenants' requests, refer them to medical social workers of non-governmental organizations for advice. .

9. Members were concerned whether it was commonly known among PRH tenants that they might request HA to carry out home modification/adaptation works in their units, and enquired about the number of tenants' applications for such works. The Administration advised that HA had not maintained relevant consolidated statistics regarding the number of applications for home modification/adaptation works. Nevertheless, HA had collected information on related topics in early 2017, and the findings showed that HA processed around 2 700 cases of home modification/adaptation works between July 2016 and January 2017.

Barrier-free access facilities in estates' common areas

10. Members expressed concern about the Administration's progress in providing/improving barrier-free access facilities in public housing estates' common areas jointly owned by HA and other owners, and enquired about the owners' responsibilities in this regard.

11. The Administration advised that as with private housing projects in general, in the public housing projects jointly owned by HA and other owners (including owners of the commercial facilities, owners of individual residential flats, etc.), the titles of the common areas were co-owned by the owners in accordance with the Deeds of Mutual Covenant ("DMCs"). Works relating to the installation of common facilities in the common areas were subject to the consent of the relevant owners. The costs of the works and future maintenance

were also shared by all owners according to the DMC or other agreements. If the proposed installation of common facilities involved changes to the land use or land lease conditions, approval from the Lands Department was required. Other owners of the lot were also required to give consent in the application process. Besides, when considering the installation of common facilities in these common areas, consideration should be given on the technical feasibility, topographical factors, social acceptance and compliance with the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) and related planning requirements.

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 12 February 2019.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
1 February 2019

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

List of relevant papers

Council/ 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 March 2017	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(05)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)900/16-17) Administration's supplementary paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1452/16-17(01))

Council/ Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	5 February 2018	Administration's paper on "Measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority" (LC Paper No. CB(1)529/17-18(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1031/17-18) Administration's supplementary paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1176/17-18(01))
Council	11 July 2018	Council question on retrofitting of public facilities in common areas of public rental housing estates