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3 December 2019

Ms Sharon LO
Clerk to Panel on Financial Affairs
Panel on Financial Affairs
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax: 3529 2837)

Dear Sharon,

Panel on Financial Affairs
Follow-up to meeting on 4 November 2019

I refer to your letter dated 6 November 2019 to the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury on the above subject. In respect of the follow-up action for agenda item VI "electricity charges subsidy", the matter has been referred to the Environment Bureau for a reply.

Information on the progress of the assistance programmes of the two power companies for households in sub-divided units is at Annex for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Desmond Cheng', written over a horizontal line.

(Desmond CHENG)

for Secretary for the Environment

c.c. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Mr Kenneth Chan)

I. HK Electric Assistance for Tenants of Subdivided Units (SDU)

Under the 2019-2033 Scheme of Control Agreement, HK Electric establishes a “Smart Power Care Fund” to assist the households in need including tenants of SDU residing within HK Electric’s supply area to save energy and improve electrical safety. In collaboration with non-government organisations (NGOs), HK Electric has set up the following three programmes in 2019.

1. Energy Efficient Appliances Subsidy

Eligible households living in HK Electric’s supply area can apply for a one-off subsidy up to \$5,000 for replacing/installing energy efficient electrical appliances and conducting handy improvement works for safe use of electricity. HK Electric has commissioned St James’ Settlement to visit needy households, assist them in filing applications, ensure appliance delivery and installations are in order and teach beneficiaries especially the elderly to use the appliances. HK Electric vets and approves applications and arranges all the related logistics on delivery and improvement works. For efficient service, better customer experience and environmental protection, HK Electric has digitalised the whole application process and manages the process using a desktop or mobile application. As at end October 2019, HK Electric has received over 1 000 applications including 60 applications from tenants of SDU.

2. SDU Rewiring Subsidy

Eligible tenants of SDU living in HK Electric’s supply area may apply for a one-off subsidy for rewiring and installation of separate electricity tariff meters capped at \$15,000 per SDU (subject to an overall cap of \$45,000 for the flat before subdivision). As rewiring works involves all the SDUs in a flat and the electricity supply of the building, consent of all the SDU households in the flat, the landlord and owners’ corporations should be obtained beforehand, which is a major challenge for the programme. Despite this, through close cooperation with NGOs, frequent liaisons with landlords and owners’ corporations and provision of technical supports, HK Electric has successfully completed

rewiring and individual meter installation works for two flats involving seven SDUs in Aberdeen and Tin Wan.

3. SDU Electricity Charges Relief

For eligible SDU tenants who are not yet ready for rewiring subsidy application, they may apply for a subsidy of \$500 per household a year to pay for their electricity expenses. HK Electric collaborates with 13 NGO centres to receive and assess applications. As at end October 2019, around 140 SDU households applied for the subsidy.

HK Electric has been actively engaging stakeholders including NGOs and District Council members in promoting the Smart Power Care Fund programmes through different events and channels, such as briefings for District Councils, roadshows, volunteer service events, community talks, distribution of posters and leaflets, promotion via website, and the “Low Carbon App”, etc. As at end October 2019, over 50 stakeholder engagement events were conducted. HK Electric will continue to engage stakeholders, collect feedback from the community, keep reviewing the programme arrangement, and make adjustment when necessary.

II. CLP Power Hong Kong’s (CLP) Assistance for SDU Tenants

CLP Power Connect Programme

CLP launched the Power Connect programme in 2019 to encourage residential customers to reduce electricity use throughout the year and support the underprivileged including single elderly people and elderly couples, people with disabilities, low-income families and tenants of subdivided units. The programme offers an electricity subsidy of \$500 to 40 000 households in need as nominated by NGOs in 2019.

The programme also provides subsidies to SDU landlords nominated by NGOs for the rewiring works needed for the installation of individual electricity meters. Energy efficient appliances will be given to residents of community houses.

1. Electricity Subsidy

CLP has set aside \$5 million for electricity subsidy. A one-off electricity subsidy of \$500 will be given to 10 000 households living in SDUs to reduce their electricity expenses.

To better help the people living in SDUs, CLP invited 32 community partners to implement this programme together and they assisted in nomination and handling of applications.

Up to mid-November 2019, CLP has received about 9 000 applications and has disbursed the subsidy to 80% of the eligible applicants. With the support of community partners, CLP is confident that it will be able to disburse the subsidy to all eligible households who have been nominated by community partners this year.

2. Rewiring Works

CLP offers subsidies to SDU landlords to carry out rewiring works needed for the installation of individual electricity meters to improve home safety and the living conditions of SDU tenants.

Eligible SDU landlords must be nominated by and submit applications through CLP's community partners.

CLP will appoint a registered electrical contractor to arrange site inspection upon receipt of application. Upon approval by CLP, all the works will be handled by registered electrical contractors who will handle all works involved including rewiring, inspection of devices, and issuance of completion certificates for the installation of individual electricity meters.

CLP has completed the rewiring and installation of individual meters for eight cases (32 SDU households) so far in 2019.

3. Free Energy Efficient Appliances

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service and NGOs can apply for appropriate energy efficient appliances for the community houses they operate to help reduce the electricity consumption and related expenses of the residents.

CLP has donated energy efficient electrical appliances to about 100 families so far in 2019.

~ Ends ~