

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)679/19-20  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/HG/1

**Panel on Housing**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 9 March 2020, at 10:45 am**  
**in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH (Chairman)  
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP  
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 SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon SHIU Ka-chun  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS  
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

**Member attending** : Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

**Members absent** : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP  
Hon HO Kai-ming  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

**Public Officers attending** : Agenda Item III

Mr Michael HONG  
Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme)  
Housing Department

Mr Julian HO  
Chief Architect (1)  
Housing Department

Ms Eugenia CHUNG, JP  
Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2)  
Home Affairs Department

Mr Kenneth CHENG, JP  
District Officer (Kwai Tsing)  
Home Affairs Department

Dr Edmund FONG  
Principal Medical and Health Officer (Service and  
Manpower Planning)  
Department of Health

Dr CHING Wai-kuen  
Service Director (Primary & Community Health Care),  
Kowloon West Cluster  
Hospital Authority

Agenda Item IV

Mr Michael HONG  
Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme)  
Housing Department

Ms CHIM Sau-yi  
Chief Architect (5)  
Housing Department

Mr Rudolf LEE  
Chief Civil Engineer (1)  
Housing Department

Mrs Doris FOK  
Assistant Director (Leisure Services)1  
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr LAU Shing-cheong  
Chief Engineer/Land Drainage  
Drainage Services Department

Agenda Item V

Mr Donald TONG, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Mrs Alice CHEUNG, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)

Ms Ophelia LUI  
Acting Assistant Director (Strategic Planning)  
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)307/19-20(01) — Land Registry Statistics for December 2019 provided by the Administration (press release)

LC Paper No. CB(1)384/19-20(01) — Land Registry Statistics for January 2020 provided by the Administration (press release)

**II. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)418/19-20(01) — List of follow-up actions

LC Paper No. CB(1)418/19-20(02) — List of outstanding items for discussion)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, 30 March 2020, at 2:30 pm –

- (a) Measures to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents by the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA");
- (b) Progress of the Total Maintenance Scheme; and
- (c) Accelerating the sale of unsold Tenants Purchase Scheme flats.

*(Post-meeting note: The notice of meeting and agenda were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)438/19-20 on 4 March 2020. In view of the latest situation of the novel coronavirus infection, the Chairman has directed that the meeting originally scheduled for 30 March 2020 would be rescheduled to a later date. Members were informed accordingly vide LC Paper No. CB(1)502/19-20 on 26 March 2020.)*

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**III. Head 711 project no. B191GK — Community hall, general outpatient clinic and maternal and child health centre at Ching Hong Road, Tsing Yi**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)368/19-20(03) — Administration's paper on Public Works Programme Item No. B191GK – Community hall, general outpatient clinic and maternal and child health centre at Ching Hong Road, Tsing Yi)

3. With the aid of PowerPoint, Chief Civil Engineer (Public Works Programme), Housing Department ("CCE(PWP), HD") briefed members on the Administration's proposal in LC Paper No. CB(1)368/19-20(03) to upgrade Public Works Programme item no. B191GK to Category A to provide a community hall ("CH"), a general outpatient clinic ("GOPC") and a maternal and child health centre ("MCHC") at Ching Hong Road, Tsing Yi.

*(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)447/19-20(01)) for the item were issued to members on 10 March 2020 in electronic form.)*

4. The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP") of the Legislative Council ("LegCo"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to the subjects under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the subjects. He further drew members' attention to Rule 84 of the RoP on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

Operations of Tsing Yi Maternal and Child Health Centre and Tsing Yi Cheung Hong General Outpatient Clinic

5. Dr CHENG Chung-tai opined that there was only one MCHC in Tsing Yi currently, ie. Tsing Yi MCHC, and it was located in a commercial centre under tenancy. In view that the commercial centre had been sold by Link Properties Limited to another owner who might push up the rental level concerned or might not renew the tenancy with Tsing Yi MCHC in future, he expressed concern on whether Tsing Yi MCHC could continue its operation in the commercial centre before completion of the proposed works for constructing the new MCHC in 2029, and enquired about the tenancy arrangements for Tsing Yi MCHC in the coming ten years.

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6. CCE(PWP), HD replied that Tsing Yi MCHC had been operating in the commercial centre of Cheung Hong Estate for a long period, and the Administration would endeavour to continue the tenancy for the operation of the centre until the completion of the proposed project in 2029. Principal Medical and Health Officer (Service and Manpower Planning), Department of Health ("PMHO(S&MP), DH") replied that the owner of the Cheung Hong Estate's commercial centre had renewed the tenancy with the Administration for a three-year fixed term from 2019 to 2022 plus a three-year option term. The Government Property Agency would, on behalf of the Government, negotiate the renewal terms and rent with the owner of the commercial centre and would make reference to relevant rental transactions in the property market.

7. Dr CHENG Chung-tai said that the Administration needed to consider measures to ensure the continued operation of Tsing Yi MCHC until the commissioning of the new MCHC. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether there was a back-up of the Tsing Yi MCHC's operations. Ms Alice MAK opined that as the services of MCHC and GOPC in the commercial centre of Cheung Hong Estate could be affected by modification works undertaken by the owner for the commercial centre, suspension of the operation of the lifts for access to the facilities, the owner's refusal to renew tenancy, etc., the local community had suggested in earlier years that Tsing Yi MCHC should be reprovisioned or some of its services should be relocated to the existing Tsing Yi Town GOPC. She enquired whether and why the relevant authorities had not considered providing at Tsing Yi Town GOPC part of the services of MCHC/GOPC in the Cheung Hong Estate's commercial centre, when planning and implementing the renovation/modification works for Tsing Yi Town GOPC earlier on.

8. Service Director (Primary & Community Health Care), Kowloon West Cluster, Hospital Authority replied that to allow greater flexibility in operations, the Hospital Authority had increased the number of rooms in Tsing Yi Town GOPC when carrying out the renovation work last year. Nevertheless, the Hospital Authority considered it not practicable to relocate the existing services in Tsing Yi MCHC to Tsing Yi Town GOPC, having regard to the additional floor area required for the relocation. As the owner concerned would soon carry out modification works for the commercial centre of Cheung Hong Estate, the Hospital Authority would use the newly added rooms in Tsing Yi Town GOPC for temporarily relocating part of the services which were currently provided in the Tsing Yi Cheung Hong GOPC in the commercial centre. After the existing GOPC in Cheung Hong Estate's commercial centre had resumed operations upon completion of the

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modification works, the Hospital Authority would make appropriate use of the newly added rooms in Tsing Yi Town GOPC to cater for the changing demand for the GOPC services in Tsing Yi. He advised that the design of the proposed GOPC would take into account the long-term demand for their services. The completion of the construction in 2029 and the commissioning of the services would address the problems arising from the uncertainty in renewing tenancy with the owner of the commercial centre of Cheung Hong Estate.

Facilities under the proposed project

9. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan enquired about the design and measures to reduce risks of infection on users of the proposed MCHC in future, such as whether the proposed project would provide separate entrances/exits for the proposed MCHC and GOPC. She further asked about the queuing and waiting arrangements of the users of these facilities in future. PMHO(S&MP), DH replied that Tsing Yi MCHC and Tsing Yi Cheung Hong GOPC were currently located on the same floor in the Cheung Hong Estate's commercial centre, whereas the proposed MCHC and GOPC would be located on different floors in the same building. CCE(PWP), HD replied that the Administration had studied the issues mentioned by Ms YUNG during the project design stage. Apart from locating GOPC and MCHC in different floors, a total of five lifts would be provided in the building accommodating the proposed MCHC and GOPC, relevant government departments should be able to provide separate accesses for members of the public from the building's entrance to the two facilities through a flexible deployment of the lifts if necessary. In response to Ms YUNG's enquiries, CCE(PWP), HD advised that the proposed MCHC and GOPC would each operate a separate ventilation system and the Administration had no plan to use the proposed GOPC for designated clinic purpose.

10. Ms Alice MAK opined that given its convenient location, Tsing Yi Town GOPC was more suitable than Tsing Yi Cheung Hong GOPC for providing evening clinic services. She enquired whether the proposed new GOPC would provide evening clinic services in future and whether the Administration would strengthen its transport accessibility. Service Director (Primary & Community Health Care), Kowloon West Cluster, Hospital Authority replied that upon the completion of the modification works of the commercial centre of Cheung Hong Estate, Tsing Yi Cheung Hong GOPC would resume its services in the commercial centre, including the evening clinic services. The Hospital Authority currently had no plan to provide evening clinic services in Tsing Yi Town GOPC. CCE(PWP), HD advised that according to the relevant traffic impact assessment ("TIA"), the proposed

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works would not cause adverse impacts on the traffic in the area concerned. The Administration would carry out appropriate road improvement works under the proposed project taking into account the TIA results.

11. Dr CHENG Chung-tai enquired whether the design of the proposed GOPC had taken into account the increasing ageing population in various public housing estates in Tsing Yi. CCE(PWP), HD replied that when planning the proposed project, the Administration had considered the changing needs of the local community in Tsing Yi.

12. Mr Vincent CHENG enquired whether to cater for different needs of the local community, the design of the proposed CH would allow more flexible use of its venues and facilities. CCE(PWP), HD replied that the proposed CH included various types of venues such as badminton courts and conference room. They could be flexibly partitioned into smaller venues which could cater for different uses.

Vehicular parking spaces

13. Mr Vincent CHENG asked whether the Administration would provide more vehicular parking spaces under the proposed project to alleviate the illegal parking problem in the district concerned. CCE(PWP), HD replied that under the proposed development, apart from increasing the parking spaces to the upper end of the standards stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, five additional parking spaces would be provided for each domestic block. Having consulted Transport Department, the public housing developments at the project sites would also provide more than a hundred parking spaces under the current proposal to address the local demand. Mr CHENG said that the Administration should follow the principle of "single site, multiple uses" to provide more parking spaces, and attach greater importance to resolving the shortage of parking spaces in districts when planning relevant projects.

Implementation of the proposed works

14. Mr SHIU Ka-fai opined that the proposal was a livelihood-related item and the Administration should carry out and complete the proposed works as quickly as possible. In view that the proposed project was anticipated to be completed in 2029, he asked whether the Administration could compress the timeframe of the project, such as the construction period for the proposed MCHC and GOPC. Mr Andrew WAN raised a similar enquiry. In view that the proposed CH was not a large-sized building and the relevant site was formed land, Mr WAN questioned why it would take as long



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as three years to construct the proposed CH. Ms Alice MAK said that the Administration should expedite the implementation of the proposed works.

15. CCE(PWP), HD replied that as the proposed MCHC and GOPC would be provided at the site of the existing Cheung Ching Estate Community Centre ("CCECC"), the Administration would complete the construction of the proposed CH to reprovide the facilities of CCECC before demolishing the CCECC building and commencing the construction of MCHC and GOPC. He advised that the implementation timetable for the proposed works was already a compressed one. As the proposed CH, MCHC and GOPC would be provided under the same project, the Administration could ensure that the GOPC and MCHC parts of the proposed works could commence immediately after completing the construction of the CH building. Chief Architect(1), Housing Department ("CA(1), HD") advised that the construction period of the proposed works was not exceptionally long. Same as other public works projects, the Administration would take forward the proposed works as quickly as possible. If the Finance Committee would approve the funding proposal within the 2019/2020 LegCo session, the Administration should be able to commence the superstructure works for the proposed CH by end-2020. Upon completion of the construction of the CH building and the podium on top of it, the relevant facilities in the existing CCECC would be moved to the proposed CH in 2023 and the construction of the proposed MCHC and GOPC would commence thereafter. As MCHC and GOPC comprised many installations, the construction works for them would take time. The Administration estimated that the proposed project would be completed in 2029. In response to Mr SHIU Ka-fai's enquiry, CCE(PWP), HD advised that the Administration had consulted the relevant committees of the Kwai Tsing District Council on the proposed works and the committees supported the proposed works. There was no plan to further consult the District Council and its committees.

Provision of other facilities at the proposed project site

16. Mr Andrew WAN enquired whether under the principle of "single site, multiple uses", the Administration would provide more facilities at the proposed project sites such as residential care services in order to help cater for the service demand in society. CCE(PWP), HD replied that apart from the proposed CH, MCHC and GOPC, the Administration would also provide other ancillary facilities as set out in Annex 4 to LC Paper No. CB(1)368/19-20(03). The project sites had been fully utilized under the current plan. CA(1), HD advised that the Administration had adopted the principle of "single site, multiple uses" when planning the developments at the project sites, which comprised domestic and non-domestic portions. In response to

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Mr Andrew WAN's enquiry, CCE(PWP), HD and CA(1), HD advised that the proposed podium gardens would be provided for enjoyment of residents of the two public housing blocks to be constructed on top of the podium.

17. Dr KWOK Ka-ki suggested that apart from the proposed facilities, the proposal should also include the provision of a district health centre and an elderly health centre at the project sites to meet the demand of Tsing Yi residents. He said that the existing district health centre in Kwai Tsing was operating in a commercial building in Kwai Chung, and its location was not desirable. CCE(PWP), HD replied that the Administration understood the demand for the facilities as mentioned by Dr KWOK and explained that the Administration had worked out the present proposal in consultation with the local community. The proposed project had fully utilized the plot ratio of two sites. In response to Dr KWOK's enquiry, Service Director (Primary & Community Health Care), Kowloon West Cluster, Hospital Authority advised that the Administration had commenced the planning of the proposed works before the Government had put in place the relevant policy regarding district health centres.

18. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the Administration should follow the policy direction of strengthening district-level primary healthcare services and make appropriate changes to the proposal in order to include the provision of a district health centre and an elderly health centre. He further enquired whether the Administration would provide the two facilities at other appropriate locations in Tsing Yi if they did not provide them at the proposed project sites. The Chairman said that the Administration should consider Dr KWOK's views. CCE(PWP), HD replied that the Administration would relay Dr KWOK's views to relevant government departments for consideration.

19. Ms Alice MAK sought clarification on whether the district health centre in Kwai Tsing comprised satellite centres in the Kwai Tsing sub-districts, including Tsing Yi. District officer (Kwai Tsing), Home Affairs Department replied that the provision of district health centres was under the purview of the Food and Health Bureau, and the Home Affairs Department had assisted in searching suitable locations for providing such centres. The Kwai Tsing District Health Centre had a core centre in Kwai Hing, and would have five satellite centres, one in each of the five areas of Kwai Tsing, including the two areas on Tsing Yi. Ms MAK opined that the satellite centres in the sub-districts of Kwai Tsing including Tsing Yi should be open for use by local residents as early as possible.

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20. The Chairman said that relevant government departments, including the Home Affairs Department, should take note of and appropriately follow up members' views at the meeting.

Concluding remarks

21. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members supported the submission of the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") for consideration.

**IV. Head 711 project no. B472RO – Water feature park and landscaped walk at Diamond Hill**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)368/19-20(04) — Administration's paper on Public Works Programme Item No. B472RO – Water feature park and landscaped walk at Diamond Hill)

22. With the aid of PowerPoint, CCE(PWP), HD briefed members on the Administration's proposal in LC Paper No. CB(1)368/19-20(04) to upgrade Public Works Programme item no. B472RO to Category A to carry out works for providing a water feature park and a landscaped walk at Diamond Hill.

*(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)447/19-20(02)) for the item were issued to members on 10 March 2020 in electronic form.)*

23. The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of RoP of LegCo, they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to the subjects under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the subjects. He further drew members' attention to Rule 84 of the RoP on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

Implementation of the proposed project

24. The Chairman declared that he was a member of HA. He said that he had all along been striving for the provision of the proposed facilities in a timely manner in order to cater for the local community demand and the population increase arising from the public housing development at the Diamond Hill Comprehensive Development Area. In view that the public housing development had commenced construction in 2016 for completion in

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phases from 2021, but the construction works for the two proposed facilities would commence in the fourth quarter of 2020 for completion in phases from 2023, the Chairman questioned why the implementation timetable for the proposed works did not tie in with the population intake of the public housing development.

25. Chief Architect (5), Housing Department ("CA(5), HD") replied that a large portion of the proposed project site was previously the works area of the Shatin-to-Central Link ("SCL"), and it was not practicable for the Administration to commence the proposed works in 2016 and thereafter when works of the SCL was still in progress and the works area had yet been released by MTR Corporation Limited. Moreover, the District Council and the local community had keen interests in the design and details of the proposed project, and it had taken the Administration considerable time in the consultation process in response to the opinions received. Soon after the proposed project was upgraded to Category B+ in September 2019, the Administration had immediately submitted the proposal to LegCo. CCE/PWP, HD advised that the Administration had consulted Wong Tai Sin District Council on the proposed project at various meetings from January 2017 to January 2019.

26. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on whether the Administration could shorten the time required for implementing the proposed works, CCE/PWP, HD advised that the Administration had always examined ways to shorten the project implementation period, and considered that the proposed implementation timeframe had been optimized. The Administration would expedite the relevant tendering process as far as practicable to enable the early commencement of the works.

27. Mr Andrew WAN expressed concern about the time that had been taken by the Administration to formulate the development plan for the proposed project site which was part of the ex-Tai Hom Village site cleared and resumed by the Government about two decades ago. The Chairman expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's progress of handling the proposed project. He requested the Administration to provide a list of the preparatory tasks/advanced work that had been undertaken by the Administration for the proposed project and the time when such tasks/work had been carried out (such as their commencement and completion dates), details on how the Administration would ensure that the proposed project would be completed as scheduled, and whether and how the Administration would expedite the implementation of the proposed works.

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*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)568/19-20(01) on 27 April 2020.)*

Environmental impacts of Lung Cheung Road

28. In view that the proposed facilities were located close to Lung Cheung Road, the Chairman and Mr Andrew WAN enquired about the Administration's measures, including the tree planting arrangements of the two facilities, to mitigate the environmental impacts of the road, such as traffic noise and vehicle emissions, on the users of the proposed facilities and residents of the public housing development. CCE/PWP, HD replied that the results of the relevant environmental impact assessment showed that the existing roads would cause no adverse environmental impacts on the users of the proposed facilities, as well as future residents of the adjacent public housing buildings which were located some distance away from Lung Cheung Road. CA(5), HD advised that it was indicated in the perspective view of the LC Paper that a wide strip of vegetated slope was provided at the periphery of the proposed water feature park, separating the park from the nearby Lung Cheung Road and Po Kong Village Road. The trees planted on the slope would form a green buffer to mitigate the environmental impact of the roads on the park. At the proposed landscaped walk next to Lung Cheung Road, the ancillary facilities block which accommodated toilets and plant room, and the nearby MTR station entrance structure, would help mitigate the noise impacts. In addition, dense planting would be provided along the periphery of the landscaped walk.

29. Mr Andrew WAN requested the Administration to provide details of the tree planting arrangements of the proposed water feature park and landscaped walk (including choice of species, planting design and layout/locations/density, etc.); whether and how such arrangements would help mitigate the environmental impacts of nearby Lung Cheung Road (such as traffic noise, etc.) on users of the two proposed facilities and residents of the adjacent public housing development; and whether and how the Administration would enhance the planting arrangements/relevant measures having regard to members' concern on the environmental impacts of the road.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)568/19-20(01) on 27 April 2020.)*

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Management of the proposed facilities

30. In response to the Chairman's concern on whether there would be delay in the handover of the proposed facilities to relevant government departments for management upon the completion of the proposed works, CCE/PWP, HD advised that the Administration had confidence in ensuring that the completed facilities would be handed over to the government departments concerned for operation upon completion.

Reinstatement of historic buildings

31. Mr Andrew WAN enquired whether the Administration could preserve the buildings such as the Stone House and the Former Royal Air Force Hangar at their original locations in order to obviate the need for reinstating them as it was now proposed. CCE/PWP, HD replied that after taking into account the design of the proposed project and the works area of the SCL, the Administration considered that the in-situ preservation option as mentioned by Mr WAN was not feasible, and it was necessary to remove the historic buildings from their original locations before rebuilding/reinstating them at the proposed water feature park.

Provision of covered seating in the proposed facilities

32. The Chairman expressed concern about the feasibility of providing covered seating in the proposed water feature park and landscaped walk in future, and enquired whether the provision of such facilities would be subject to the plot ratio of the area concerned. CCE/PWP, HD replied that plot ratio restrictions would not have impacts on the feasibility of providing covered seating in the water feature park and landscaped walk. He further advised that the Administration would provide seats and shelters in the two proposed facilities.

Concluding remarks

33. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members supported the submission of the proposal to PWSC for consideration.

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**V. Review of income and asset limits for public rental housing for 2020-21**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)418/19-20(03) — Administration's paper on review of income and asset limits for public rental housing for 2020/21

LC Paper No. CB(1)418/19-20(04) — Paper on income and asset limits for public rental housing prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

34. With the aid of PowerPoint, Acting Assistant Director (Strategic Planning), Housing Department briefed members on the mechanism for the review of income and asset limits for public rental housing ("PRH"), and advised that the proposed income and asset limits for 2020-2021 would increase by an average of 5.4% and 3.4% respectively over those for 2019-2020.

*(Post-meeting note: Presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)447/19-20(03)) for the item were issued to members on 10 March 2020 in electronic form.)*

Income limit for two-person households

35. Ms Alice MAK said that for a two-person household with both working members earning statutory minimum wage ("SMW") and working for 12 hours a day, the monthly household income would exceed the proposed PRH income limit for two-person households. To meet the income limit, these two-person households might be forced to work less and earn less income, hence making it difficult for them to afford the private housing rent when waiting for PRH. She enquired whether the Administration/HA would consider appropriate adjustments under the review mechanism taking into account such situation.

36. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("PS(H)") replied that the actual monthly income of individual families with working members earning SMW varied due to various factors, such as working hours and working days per person, and therefore could not be generalized. In fact,

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following the implementation of SMW, HA's Subsidised Housing Committee ("SHC") had refined the review mechanism by introducing the change in nominal wage index as the income factor to reflect changes in income. Since 2013/2014, the non-housing costs had been determined with reference to the latest Household Expenditure Survey results, and adjusted by the latest movement in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (A) (excluding housing costs), or the change in the nominal wage index, whichever was higher. HA considered that the existing review mechanism was appropriate.

37. Ms Alice MAK opined that members of households would be discouraged to work more if their eligibility for PRH depended on the number of their working hours. In view that the proposed income limit for a two-person family was \$19,430 which was low, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen questioned whether the mechanism for setting the income limit was based on the assumption that only the husband would work full time. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok declared that he was a member of HA. In view that a two-person household with a monthly income of about \$20,000 might fall outside the PRH eligibility net, he expressed concern about the difficulties faced by these households in affording the rent of a private housing unit.

38. PS(H) replied that regardless of the level of income limits, there would always be households whose income would exceed the income limits. The proposed PRH income limit for two-person households was \$19,430, and would effectively be \$20,453 after taking into account the contribution under the Mandatory Provident Fund. Both were higher than the median household income of two-person non-owner occupier households in Hong Kong, i.e. \$17,800. The Administration understood the living burden of two-person families residing in private housing, and would continue to spare no efforts in increasing the supply of land and public housing through multi-pronged measures to cater for the community's housing needs.

39. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen considered that most same-sex married couples were two-person families and enquired whether HA would lodge an appeal in respect of a recent court decision that the HA's policy of excluding same-sex couples from applying for PRH as families was unconstitutional. PS(H) advised that HA was studying the court's judgment and would consider appropriate follow-up actions in due course .



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Mechanism for adjusting the income limits

40. The Chairman and Mr Andrew WAN opined that notwithstanding the enhancements to the mechanism of adjusting the PRH income and asset limits made by HA over the years having regard to actual circumstances, many non-elderly singletons and two-person families remained ineligible for PRH. They enquired whether the Administration/HA would further review the mechanism in light of this situation, including the various indices adopted under the mechanism. Mr WAN urged the Administration/HA to consider fine-tuning the relevant income limits so that the one-person and two-person households which were earning SMW would become eligible for PRH eligibility.

41. PS(H) replied that in accordance with the established practice for the annual review of the PRH income and asset limits, the Administration would relay members' views on the proposed limits and the review mechanism to HA's SHC for consideration. He explained that some 158 900 non-owner occupier households living in private housing might meet the proposed income limits. Given the limited PRH supply, the Administration/HA needed to focus the limited PRH resources on assisting households with the most pressing needs, such as families with members who were earning SMW and with relatively lower household income.

Applicants waiting for public rental housing

42. Ms Alice MAK opined that more households might fall within the PRH eligibility net if their working members lost their jobs or their income declined under the prevailing economic situation. She enquired about how the Administration/HA would deal with the problems resulting from the increasing number of PRH applicants. PS(H) replied that new PRH applications received by HA would be placed at the end of the queue, and hence would not affect the waiting time of those applicants who were already waiting for PRH allocation. To deal with the increase in the number of PRH applicants, the fundamental solution was to increase the supply of land and public housing. He advised that the estimated public housing production was about 100 000 units in the coming five years. It was expected that more units would be available in the second five years. To alleviate the hardship faced by families awaiting PRH and other inadequately housed households in short term, the Administration had launched various measures to support the implementation of transitional housing projects. Furthermore, the Chief Executive announced earlier that the Administration would provide cash allowance to eligible households who had been waiting for PRH for more than three years in order to alleviate their difficulties.

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43. Mr Vincent CHEUNG expressed concern about the implementation of cash allowance scheme and tenancy control on sub-divided units. In view that the Administration had mentioned about a study on introducing tenancy control some months ago, he enquired about the progress in this regard and whether a team would be set up to follow up the matter. PS(H) replied that the preparatory work for setting up a team to study tenancy control was underway, and the Transport and Housing Bureau had considered the team's membership and scope of the study. Subject to the approval of the Budget of this year, the Administration would set up the team in around mid-2020 and commission consultancy studies which were mainly fact-finding in nature and would take about one year to complete.

44. Mr Vincent CHENG was concerned that some grassroots families waiting for PRH might fall outside the PRH eligibility net if their family members received severance payments or long service payments upon termination of employment. He asked whether HA would exclude these payments from the calculation of assets of PRH applicants. PS(H) replied that the proposed asset limits for 2020/2021 would increase by an average of 3.4% over those for 2019/2020, and this should provide a buffer to cope with the payments received by PRH applicants as mentioned by Mr CHENG.

Households with income exceeding the income limits

45. Mr Tony TSE opined that a household might choose to work less or give up opportunities for pay rise in order to be eligible for PRH if the portion of the household monthly income exceeding the PRH income limit concerned was not sufficient to meet the extra cost that they had to pay for renting a private flat instead of a PRH unit. He urged the Administration to put in place targets with respect to the average proportions of household income that the families who fell outside the PRH eligibility net should set aside to pay for the costs of private housing and subsidized public housing, in order to devise appropriate policies and measures to ensure that the housing demand of these families could be met. He considered it necessary for the Government to formulate a holistic policy to address the housing problems. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of Mr TSE's views.

Measures to increase land and housing supply

46. Mr Tony TSE opined that although the top priority of the Government was to address housing issues, the Administration had over years made no obvious improvements to the problems arising from sub-divided units, increasing number of PRH applicants and high selling prices of private flats.

Action

Mr LEUNG Che-cheung opined that the Government's decision to cease the public housing production for a period in earlier years had resulted in the presently inadequate PRH supply to meet the demand of low-income households, such as those with working members earning SMW. Ir Dr LO Wai-ki expressed concern about the future housing supply given that the community had no consensus on the Government's land supply initiatives such as reclamation projects. The Chairman said that it was important to increase land supply for public housing in order to address the housing needs of PRH applicants, but the Administration's progress in this regard was not desirable. The Administration should consider how to expedite the work of the Housing Department's relevant team in respect of the design and construction of public housing.

47. PS(H) replied that the public housing production had stayed at a relatively low level over a period of time in the past and the Administration had proposed measures in recent years to increase the supply of land for public housing. Some land supply initiatives formulated by the Development Bureau such as the review of brownfield sites would help increase land supply for public housing. To expedite public housing production, HA had liaised with relevant bureaux and departments and had been carrying out design work in parallel with the planning process as far as practicable to shorten the lead-time at planning and design stage. Similar to private housing developments, it generally took four to four and a half years for HA to carry out the piling and building works at a public housing site. HA would continue to study on how to expedite public housing construction works, including the wider application of pre-fabrication technology.

Methodology under the existing mechanism

48. In view that the income limits for different household sizes were the respective sums of the housing and non-housing costs, plus a contingency provision of 5% of household expenditure, the Chairman opined that HA should consider adopting a higher percentage of household expenditure as the contingency provision. Mr Tony TSE considered that the contingency provision equivalent to 5% of household expenditure might not be sufficient. PS(H) replied that HA had reviewed and refined the review mechanism in the past. In February 2013, HA further refined the review mechanism by introducing the change in nominal wage index as a factor in assessing the non-housing expenditure. The Administration would relay members' views on contingency provision to HA's SHC.

Action

49. Mr Andrew WAN sought clarification on whether apart from unit rents of one-person and two-person private accommodations, HA would also make reference to the respective unit rents of private accommodations of three persons and above when assessing the housing expenditure under the existing mechanism. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) replied that prior to the review in 2002/2003, HA had adopted a single unit rent irrespective of household size in assessing the housing expenditure. When reviewing the PRH income and asset limits review mechanism in 2002/2003, HA considered that small households (particularly the singletons) had to bear higher per unit rental costs than households with more members. For this reason, in calculating the housing costs of one-person and two-person households, the respective differential unit rent or the overall average unit rent, whichever was higher, would be adopted. For households of three persons or above, the overall average unit rent would be adopted.

*[At 12:18 pm, the Chairman directed that the meeting be extended for 15 minutes]*

Well-off Tenants Policies

50. In view that PRH households whose income exceeding the prescribed income and asset limits might be required to vacate their flats under the HA's Well-off Tenants Policies ("WTP"), Mr LEUNG Che-cheung opined that WTP would force PRH households to apply for deletion of their younger working members from the tenancy, hence rendering them being unable to live with their parents. This would aggravate the ageing problem with the population in PRH estates. As these young people would apply for PRH after moving out from their parents' PRH units, the number of PRH applications would further increase and the shortfall of PRH units might be more serious. He considered this a policy mistake, and urged the Administration to address the problems arising from the policies.

51. PS(H) replied that given the limited PRH resources, HA had introduced WTP to stipulate which sitting PRH tenants were regarded as households who were capable of taking care of their housing needs and should surrender their units to HA for re-allocation to applicants on the waiting list. To help meet the housing needs of the tenants who would vacate their PRH units under WTP and the households that fell outside the PRH eligibility net, the Administration/HA had put in place various housing schemes, such as Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme, White Form Secondary Market Scheme, etc., to increase the supply of subsidized sale flats. In addition, the Administration would soon invite public tender for a private residential site for implementing the second Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents pilot project.

Action

52. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen opined that given Hong Kong's economic circumstances ahead, members of well-off households might be affected by salary cut or termination of employment and their household income might reduce. He asked whether WTP allowed flexibility to handle these households' requests for vacating their units later. PS(H) replied that a PRH household that was required to vacate its unit under WTP but had a temporary housing need might apply for a fixed-term licence to stay in the unit for a period of not more than 12 months. After the 12-month period, HA would require the household to surrender the unit for re-allocation to more needy families.

53. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the Administration should take note of members' views at the meeting for consideration and reflect them to HA's SHC where appropriate.

*(Post-meeting note: In its letter (issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)566/19-20(01) on 24 April 2020), the Administration advised that members' views on the findings of the review of PRH income and asset limits for 2020-2021 had been relayed to SHC. SHC endorsed on 10 March 2020 the new income and asset limits for 2020-2021, which came into effect on 1 April 2020.)*

**VI. Any other business**

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:50 pm.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
26 May 2020