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Panel on Housing

Meeting on 4 May 2020

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
on performance of the environmental targets and initiatives of the
Hong Kong Housing Authority**

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the environmental targets and initiatives of the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and provides a summary of the major views and concerns expressed by members when the subject was discussed at the Panel on Housing ("the Panel") in recent years.

Background

2. To promote healthy living and a green environment, HA established an Environmental Policy in 1999. In addition to complying with environmental legislation and regulations, HA has developed a strategic framework and implemented environmental management strategies for the promotion of sustainable development on multiple fronts, including planning and construction of new housing estates, operation of existing estates and HA's own offices at work. To effectively manage the overall implementation of the Environmental Policy, HA establishes environmental targets and initiatives at the beginning of each fiscal year and the performance is reviewed quarterly.

Environmental targets and initiatives

3. HA set 41 environmental targets for the fiscal year 2017-2018 covering six aspects including energy efficiency, water conservation, greening, waste management, control of hazardous materials as well as enhancement of environmental awareness and participation in environmental protection initiatives.

4. According to HA, among the 41 environmental targets for the fiscal year 2017-2018, 40 of them were fully met, while a target on "recovery of used clothes in existing estates" was not fully met. Detailed performance of HA in respect of its environmental targets and initiatives in 2017-2018 are set out in Annex 1 to LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)1012/17-18\(01\)](#).

Deliberations by the Panel on Housing

5. The performance of HA in respect of its environmental targets and initiatives has been discussed by the Panel at its meetings, with the last time being 11 July 2017. The major views and concerns expressed by members at previous meetings are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Environmental targets and initiatives

6. Members enquired about the mechanism to review the inclusion of targets in HA's environmental policy, and the challenges that HA had encountered in implementing the environmental targets in its existing estates.

7. The Administration advised that HA established its Environmental Policy in 1999 and set annual environmental targets at the beginning of each fiscal year, taking into account the latest performance in respect of the targets and an assessment of the future situation. The number and types of the targets would be reviewed depending on a number of factors, such as the Government's prevalent environmental policies, research and development in the industry, and HA's latest environmental management strategies. HA had partnered with green groups and tenants in implementing the environmental targets in its existing estates.¹

Waste recovery and recycling

8. Members enquired whether HA received proceeds from the sale of recyclables recovered in public rental housing ("PRH") estates, such as waste paper, aluminium cans, plastic bottles, used clothes, etc., as part of its revenue and whether HA would broaden the types of recyclables to be recovered. The Administration advised that HA did not receive any proceeds from waste recovery and recycling. In considering the types of recyclables to be recovered in PRH estates, HA would take into account the relevant programmes and initiatives taken forward by the Environmental Protection Department ("EPD").²

¹ LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)492/15-16](#)

² LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)1425/16-17](#)

9. On the question about the preparatory work undertaken by the Administration/HA for the implementation of municipal solid waste ("MSW") charging in PRH estates, the Administration advised that to enable more stakeholders in PRH estates to try out MSW charging in actual settings in advance and help PRH residents to get prepared for the implementation of MSW charging, EPD and the Housing Department had jointly commenced trial projects in 10 PRH estates for a period of approximately six months each by batches in end 2018. EPD provided free dummy designated garbage bags to PRH residents for on-site trial and simulating MSW charging arrangements during the trial period. EPD also organized various publicity and public education activities to enrich participants' understanding of MSW charging, source separation of waste and clean recycling.³

Use of green materials and components

10. Members enquired about the adoption of green materials and components in HA's projects. The Administration advised that the introduction of green materials and components by HA in its projects involved five stages, including exploration, piloting, monitoring, reviewing and mass application. Materials that had proven environmental benefits and met cost and quality considerations would be applied to all new projects under HA. For instance, the use of recycled aggregates and recycled glass cullet for external concrete paving blocks; use of softwood and at least 50% of all timber from sustainable source for doors; and use of timber from sustainable source for temporary works during construction, etc. Besides, HA had reduced material consumption in various ways, including painting internal and external concrete walls without plastering; and adopting power float on fair-faced concrete floor without screeding.

Energy efficiency

11. When discussing HA's environmental initiatives at the meeting in July 2017, members asked whether HA would increase the use of solar photovoltaic ("PV") systems in PRH estates, given their proven energy efficiency. The Administration advised that HA would install solar PV systems on the roofs of all new PRH blocks, where they would not be shadowed by nearby structures/buildings and where sufficient space was available for installation, with a view to supplying 1.5% to 2.5% of electricity for the common areas of each block. The actual amount of electricity supplied for the common area would depend on the roof area available for installation of the PV systems.

³ The Administration's [press release](#) on "LCQ15: Implementation of municipal solid waste charging" issued on 19 June 2019.

Greening

12. In view that HA had set a green coverage target with respect to new public housing developments,⁴ members enquired whether this included green roofing and vertical greening. Some members opined that HA should consider increasing the green coverage in existing PRH estates. The Administration advised that the green coverage target included all forms of greening, including green roof and vertical greening. In considering whether the green coverage should be increased in existing PRH estates, HA had to take into account the space constraints and the views of Estate Management Advisory Committees. To enhance the quality of landscape and upgrade the existing landscape, HA had completed Landscape Improvement Programme in 20 PRH estates, and improved the appearance of 10 slopes at PRH estates by providing hydroseeding, stone pitching and toe planters.

Latest development

13. The Administration will brief the Panel on the performance of HA in respect of its environmental targets and initiatives in 2019-2020 at the Panel meeting on 4 May 2020.

Relevant papers

14. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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⁴ According to LC Paper No. [CB\(1\)1012/17-18\(01\)](#), HA set a target of at least 20% green coverage for new public housing developments.

**Performance of the environmental targets
and initiatives of the Hong Kong Housing Authority**

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	3 December 2012	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2011/12" (LC Paper No. CB(1)231/12-13(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)515/12-13)
Panel on Housing	3 June 2014	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2013/14" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1516/13-14(05)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)192/14-15)
Panel on Housing	7 December 2015	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2014-2015" (LC Paper No. CB(1)230/15-16(04)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)492/15-16) Administration's supplementary paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)752/15-16(01))
Panel on Housing	29 June 2016	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2015-16 " (LC Paper No. CB(1)1059/15-16(03)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1199/15-16)
Panel on Housing	11 July 2017	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2016-17" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1055/16-17(01)) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1425/16-17) Administration's supplementary paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1452/16-17(01))

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	-	Administration's paper on "Performance of Environmental Targets and Initiatives in 2017-18" (May 2018) (LC Paper No. CB(1)1012/17-18(01))