

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1263/20-21(02)

Ref. : CB1/PL/HG

Panel on Housing

Meeting on 6 September 2021

Updated background brief on Total Maintenance Scheme

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the progress of the Total Maintenance Scheme ("TMS") for public rental housing ("PRH") estates, and provides a summary of the major views and concerns expressed by members of the Panel on Housing ("the Panel") on the subject during relevant discussions in recent years.

Background

2. In early 2006, the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") launched a five-year TMS. Under TMS, HA proactively inspects in-flat conditions and provides comprehensive repair services for PRH units¹ aged 10 years or above. The objective of TMS is to provide customer-oriented maintenance services so as to meet the rising expectation of PRH tenants. TMS adopts a three-pronged approach, comprising proactive identification of maintenance problems, prompt response to tenants' requests and enhanced publicity and education.

3. In-flat Inspection Ambassadors have been recruited by HA to carry out inspections in PRH units, arrange one-stop repair services, and promote maintenance education. For less complicated cases, minor repairs are arranged by In-flat Inspection Ambassadors on the spot. For more complicated cases, In-flat Inspection Ambassadors will issue works orders to maintenance contractors for follow up actions.

¹ Including PRH units in Tenants Purchase Scheme and Buy or Rent Option Estates.

Progress of TMS

4. The first five-year period of TMS, involving 177 estates and 605 000 PRH units, was completed by the end of March 2011. In view of the positive response to the first five-year period, HA decided to implement TMS as a regular programme.

5. During the second five-year period of TMS (commenced in early 2011), HA had completed TMS in 120 estates involving about 376 000 PRH units. For the third five-year period which commenced immediately after the completion of the second five-year period in early 2016 and will end in 2021, HA had completed TMS in 62 estates with around 240 000 units.² Among the 62 estates with TMS completed, the overall access rate of in-flat inspections is maintained at about 80%. From the rolling out of TMS to the end of December 2019, HA has completed about 620 000 works orders.

TMS inspection frequency

6. To ensure timely maintenance, HA arranges in-flat inspections every 10 years for estates aged between 10 and 30 years. For estates aged over 30 years, inspection is carried out every five years.

Maintenance hotline service

7. HA sets up a TMS hotline and a service counter in each estate. The TMS hotline is handled by dedicated Public Relation Officers. Tenants may make enquiries, complaints, repair requests and inspection appointments via the hotline.

Customer satisfaction survey

8. HA has commissioned independent consultants to conduct surveys to collect tenants' views on the services delivered under TMS. During each quarter, tenants who have received the TMS services will be randomly selected on a pro-rata basis for a telephone customer survey. The survey covers the scope and workflow of In-flat Inspection Ambassadors, the standard of service, the workflow of the repair works, the satisfactory level on the in-flat repair works, tenants' awareness regarding their responsibility for the in-flat facilities, and tenants' expectation on TMS. From the rolling out of TMS to the third quarter of 2019, the survey result showed that the overall satisfaction rate of TMS was about 80%.

² According to LC Paper No. CB(1)491/19-20(05) submitted by the Administration to the Panel in March 2020.

Public relations and education

9. To maintain good communication with tenants and to provide appropriate education, HA set up Mobile Maintenance Education Booths in estates where TMS will soon be carried out. Information about the operation of TMS, as well as repair and maintenance knowledge will be introduced through specially designed display panels and pamphlet. To encourage tenants to participate in inspections and repairs, HA has enhanced the publicity of TMS since September 2018. Apart from the publicity efforts mentioned above, HA further promotes TMS through various channels, including electronic media, Estate Newsletters, delivery of promotional materials to tenants' mailboxes, etc.

Disturbance mitigation

10. To reduce inconvenience to tenants in carrying out TMS, HA requires the contractors to render assistance to the tenants in moving their furniture to facilitate inspection and repairs, particularly for households with elderly or disabled members. To mitigate nuisances during the progress of works, the contractors have also been required to provide enhanced protection by enclosing the works area and to take measures to protect the furniture and floor area.

Members' views and concerns

11. The major views and concerns expressed by members during relevant Panel discussions in recent years are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Access for in-flat inspections

12. In view that for the third five-year plan spanning from 2016 to 2021, HA had completed TMS in 62 estates, and the overall access rate of in-flat inspections among these estates was about 80%, members enquired about HA's measures to facilitate more tenants' participation in the inspections.

13. The Administration advised that to facilitate more tenants' participation in the in-flat inspections, HA had optimized the visit arrangement and appointment services. During the inspection, HA reviewed records of unsuccessful attempts from time to time and arranged visits at three different timeslots. In case of unsuccessful attempt, HA would leave notice to invite tenants to make appointments with the Public Relation Officers for maximizing the chance of successful visits. HA

conducted interim assessment as well. When the accessible rate of individual blocks was unsatisfactory, or some flats had not been inspected in the last cycle, HA would allocate resources and assign In-flat Inspection Ambassadors to call or visit tenants at non-office hours for arranging appointment.

Qualification requirements of In-flat Inspection Ambassadors

14. Members opined that many residents were concerned about the maintenance of drainage pipes inside their PRH units amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and enquired whether In-flat Inspection Ambassadors were qualified to handle and follow up improper alterations of drainage system in PRH. The Administration advised that the scope of TMS covered all standard facilities provided by HA in PRH units, including drainage system. The entry requirements for the post of In-flat Inspection Ambassadors were equivalent to those for the post of Works Supervisor II, including possession of a certificate in Building Studies or equivalent. HA had stepped up training of In-flat Inspection Ambassadors to equip them with the knowledge to cope with problems in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. When visiting a PRH unit, In-flat Inspection Ambassadors would inspect the in-flat conditions, and arrange follow-up works to repair defects, including drainage defects, if any.

Inspection of drainage pipes

15. Some members opined that apart from inspecting drainage pipes of individual PRH units upon tenants' requests, HA should proactively inspect the drainage pipes of all PRH units as early as possible to address residents' concern on the spread of COVID-19 due to defects of the drainage system in their buildings. In view that HA had launched an 18-month Drainage Inspection Programme for PRH, members enquired whether HA would put more resources to speed up the programme.

16. The Administration advised that in complementing the Government's efforts in fighting the pandemic, HA had stepped up cleaning and disinfection work at common areas and public facilities in housing estates. Technical staff had also been arranged to inspect the drainage facilities of PRH units which shared the same drainage system with units with confirmed cases. HA had also allocated additional resources for carrying out drainage inspection works under its TMS and Responsive In-flat Maintenance Services.³ HA launched the Drainage Inspection Programme in October 2020, and set up a dedicated inspection

³ Modelled on TMS, the Responsive In-flat Maintenance Services aim to provide enhanced and responsive in-flat maintenance services for all PRH tenants.

task force with additional manpower to implement the programme. During the proactive inspection of drain pipes, HA would carry out appropriate repairs as necessary. The programme involved a large number of PRH units. HA, on one hand, needed to make arrangements with tenants to enter their units for inspection and, on the other, carry out appropriate repairs. Depending on the actual need, HA would deploy additional resources to implement the programme with a view to completing the programme as soon as possible.

Quality of contractors' works

17. According to the audit in the in-flat maintenance of PRH units conducted by the Audit Commission in 2016,⁴ of the 133 PRH flats chosen for inspection by the HA's surprise check teams from February 2014 to March 2016, unsatisfactory repair works were found in 118 flats, and on average, about three items of repair works in each of these 118 flats required replacement/rectification works. Taking note of such findings of the Audit Commission, members asked about HA's measures to strengthen the monitoring and inspection of TMS contractors' works.

18. The Administration advised that HA attached great importance to the repair and maintenance service and monitored the performance of the contractors closely, including the conduct of routine inspections, surprise checks and regular assessments. In response to the recommendation of Report No. 67 of the Director of Audit ("the Audit Report"), HA had been conducting additional site inspections on a monthly basis in order to strengthen inspections and monitoring of contractors' repair works. Apart from routine inspections, HA had conducted a total of 34 times of surprise checks in the past three years (from April 2017 to April 2020). If irregularities from contractors' performance were found, whether in terms of materials or workmanship, HA would strictly enforce the contract requirements, and instruct the contractor to rectify the situation until the standards required by HA were met. HA would also step up the site checks, in particular for works by the contractor with persistent unsatisfactory performance. If the contractor still failed to make improvements, HA would issue warning letters to them according to individual circumstances, and reflect the situation in regular contract reviewing meetings.

⁴ The Audit Commission conducted an audit in the in-flat maintenance of PRH units in 2016, the scope of which includes the implementation of TMS, and submitted an Audit Report (i.e. Report No. 67) to the Public Accounts Committee ("PAC") in the same year. PAC published its supplemental report in April 2017, which set out among others its comments regarding TMS.

19. On the question about the contractors' performance since the issue of the Audit Report, the Administration advised that from the observation in the surprise checks in the past three years, about 4.95% of the total repair works items of the flats selected for checking needed to be further refined, which was lower than the 14% undesirable repair works items mentioned in the Audit Report, indicating that the overall quality of works had been improved.

Tendering arrangements

20. On members' enquiry about the tendering arrangements for contracts under TMS and the tender assessment criteria, the Administration advised that TMS was included in the work scope under the District Term Maintenance Contracts ("DTC"). HA had put in place established procurement policies to manage its contractors through list management. Under the Preferential Tendering Opportunities arrangement, eligible contractors would be invited to submit bids for DTC based on their past performance scores. Contractors with lower scores would be given less or even zero tendering opportunity. HA's tender evaluation covered assessments on technical, financial, performance, workload and contractual aspects. To encourage contractors to improve their performance, the DTC tender evaluation also adopted the Preferential Tender Award System, which used a 75:25 score weighting between tender price and non-price elements. Non-price elements included 17% performance score and 8% corporate score⁵ to assess the performance and capability of contractors systematically.

Latest development

21. The Administration will brief members on the latest progress of TMS at the Panel meeting on 6 September 2021.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 September 2021

⁵ The corporate score has taken into consideration the contractor's past conviction record, serious accident record and performance under the wage monitoring system.

Total Maintenance Scheme

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Housing	11 July 2017	Administration's paper Minutes of special meeting Administration's supplementary information (paragraphs 21 to 27)
Panel on Housing	12 February 2019	Administration's paper Minutes of meeting Administration's supplementary information
Panel on Housing	28 April 2020	Administration's paper Minutes of meeting Administration's supplementary information