

The Audit Commission (“Audit”) conducted a review of the work of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (“PolyU”) on the repair and maintenance of university premises.

2. Hon SHIU Ka-fai declared that he was a member of the Liberal Party, and he served as an unremunerated honorary adviser/an unremunerated member of some non-governmental organizations or trade associations upon their invitations. The organizations or trade associations concerned might have participated in the business of PolyU. Hon Louis LOONG Hon-biu declared that he was a Legislative Council Member representing the Real Estate and Construction Functional Constituency, and contractors in the sector might have carried out the projects concerned.

3. PolyU’s premises at its main campus of 102 300 square metres house a range of facilities. In 2022-2023, PolyU’s expenditure on repair and maintenance of university premises was \$146.8 million. From 2019-2020 to 2022-2023, the expenditure on the campus restoration and security enhancement work was \$235.8 million.

4. The Committee noted the following Audit’s findings:

Planned maintenance

- in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, for 69 (93%) of 74 lifts and all 10 escalators in PolyU, the total number of incidents occurred was 413 for the lifts and 134 for the escalators, involving total downtime of 2 523 hours and 648 hours respectively;
- PolyU did not issue any warning letter to a contractor who failed to comply with the required service availability of lift at not lower than 98.5% in one month during the period from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024;
- for 488 (54%) of the 903 completed normal works orders created from July 2022 to March 2024, contrary to PolyU’s requirements, the works had commenced 1 to 214 days (averaging 9 days) before obtaining Section Heads’ approvals;
- for 1 042 of the 1 054 works orders created from July 2022 to March 2024, the time taken for issuing certificates of completion ranged from 0 to 652 days (averaging 70 days) from the date of works completion;

- Audit examined the records of site inspections for 30 service contracts that were in effect as at 1 April 2024, and found that there were variations in the mode, frequency and timing, and the documentation of the results of site inspections. PolyU's Operation Manual did not specify the mode, frequency, timing and scope of site inspections, and the requirement to record the results;

On-request maintenance and other repair and maintenance work

- spot checks were only conducted for 720 (0.9%) of the 80 997 job orders for on-request corrective maintenance completed from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024. The percentage of these job orders with spot checks conducted decreased from 1.9% in 2021-2022 to 0.7% in 2023-2024. The types of job covered in the spot checks ranged from one in 2022-2023 to nine in 2021-2022. The results of all these spot checks conducted in the period were not documented;
- Audit examined 76 625 corrective maintenance and 2 676 emergency maintenance job orders created and completed from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 and found that the performance pledge for handling requests was not met for 6 080 (8%) corrective maintenance and 19 (1%) emergency maintenance job orders;
- from May 2021 to May 2024, for 1 163 (50%) of the 2 342 requests with cost estimates prepared, there were delays in the preparation of cost estimates by the quantity surveying consultant. The percentage of requests with delays in the preparation of cost estimates was the highest for urgent requests. Of the 471 urgent requests, there were delays (averaging 16 working days) in the preparation of cost estimates for 309 (66%) requests;
- for the processing of payment applications by the quantity surveying consultant from May 2021 to May 2024, there were delays in 1 950 (99%) of the 1 954 completed payment applications, ranging from 3 to 634 working days (averaging 117 working days);
- Audit reviewed the records of submissions of progress reports by the quantity surveying consultant in the 36-month period from May 2021 to May 2024 and found that, contrary to the contractual requirement, there was no record of the consultant's submission of progress reports for 27 (75%) of the 36 months;

Procurement of services

- Audit reviewed 60 tendering exercises for repair and maintenance service contracts conducted from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 and found that among the 25 (41%) exercises: (a) in each of 8 exercises, only 1 tender was received; and (b) in each of 17 exercises, 2 tenders were received;
- in 52 of the aforesaid 60 tendering exercises, notifications were issued to the unsuccessful tenderers. In 44 (85%) of these 52 tendering exercises, notifications to the unsuccessful tenderers were not issued in a timely manner after the acceptance of the successful tenders, with the delay of 257 days on average;
- for the above 60 tendering exercises, Audit found that the declaration and undertaking forms for one member of each tender evaluation team (involving a total of three staff members) could not be located in seven (12%) exercises;
- Audit reviewed the responses from the invited contractors for expressing interest for inclusion in the tenderer lists in four tendering exercises for repair and maintenance term contracts conducted in the period from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, and found that: (a) in each of the four tendering exercises, 65% to 84% (averaging 76%) of the invited contractors did not respond or expressed no interest for inclusion in the tenderer list; and (b) PolyU had not followed up with the invited contractors with no response or expressing no interest to ascertain the reasons behind;

Campus restoration and security enhancement work and other issues

- as at September 2024, access to PolyU campus was restricted to students, staff and authorized persons. Campus users should authenticate their identities using their access cards or access codes at the turnstiles at major campus access points;
- PolyU's guidelines did not set out the circumstances under which written warnings should be issued to the contractors with unacceptable health and safety performance. From 2019-2020 to 2023-2024, the written warnings were not issued in a consistent manner on some occasions;
- Audit examined the training records in the period from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 of the staff of the Campus Facilities and Sustainability Office involved in repair and maintenance work, and noted that the percentage

of staff who did not meet the annual training requirement ranged from 43% (in 2020-2021) to 96% (in 2019-2020) each year; and

- Audit examined the records of 14 accidents related to repair and maintenance of university premises occurred to three campus users, seven contractors and four staff of the Campus Facilities and Sustainability Office respectively in the period from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024. While the accidents involved minor injuries, Audit noted that in 10 (71%) of the above 14 accidents, contrary to the Health, Safety and Environment Management Manual, the accident report forms were submitted to the Health and Safety Office more than 72 hours after the respective accidents.

5. The Committee did not hold any public hearing on this subject. Instead, it asked for written responses to the issues raised by Audit. The replies from the **President, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University** are in *Appendix 16*.

6. The Committee wishes to be kept informed of the progress in implementing Audit's recommendations.