

(Translation)

**Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the  
Housing Affairs Committee (2021) of  
Kwai Tsing District Council**

Date : 7 June 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 1:04 p.m.

Venue: K&T DO Conference Room

<b><u>Attendee</u></b>	<b><u>Time of Arrival</u></b>	<b><u>Time of Departure</u></b>
Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Rayman (Chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr HON Chun-yin (Vice-chairman)	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr CHEUNG Man-lung	10:05 a.m.	End of Meeting
Mr HUI Kei-cheung	10:05 a.m.	End of Meeting
Mr KWOK Tsz-kin	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LAM Siu-fai	Start of Meeting	12:42 p.m.
Ms LAU Kwai-mui	Start of Meeting	12:42 p.m.
Miss LEUNG Ching-shan	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LEUNG Kam-wai	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Ms LEUNG Kar-ming	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr LEUNG Wing-kuen	10:56 a.m.	End of Meeting
Miss LO Yuen-ting	10:22 a.m.	End of Meeting
Mr NG Kim-sing	10:13 a.m.	End of Meeting
Mr TONG Ho-man	10:08 a.m.	End of Meeting
Mr TSUI Hiu-kit	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting
Mr WONG Bing-kuen	Start of Meeting	10:57 a.m.
Mr WONG Tin-yan	Start of Meeting	End of Meeting

## **In Attendance**

Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe	Senior Housing Manager (Kwai Chung), Housing Department
Ms Mak Siu-ling, Iris	Senior Property Service Manager (Kwai Chung), Housing Department
Mr WONG Wai-sing	Professional Officer 2-4/Joint Office 2, Joint Office of Buildings Department and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Ms LAW Yue-kwan	Senior Health Inspector (Joint Office) Kwai Tsing, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Ms Wu Mei-lin	Officer of Cleaning Workers Union
Ms Leung Tsz-yan	Officer of Cleaning Workers Union
Miss YIM Yik-huen, Bonnie	Assistant District Officer (Kwai Tsing), Kwai Tsing District Office
Miss CHANG Hiu-hung, Regin (Secretary)	Executive Officer (District Council) 2, Kwai Tsing District Office

## **Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of government departments to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Housing Affairs Committee (HAC) (2021) of Kwai Tsing District Council (K&T DC).

2. The Chairman welcomed Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe, Senior Housing Manager (Kwai Chung) of Housing Department (HD) to attend the meeting as a department representative.

## **Confirmation of Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting (2021) held on 7 April 2021**

3. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan moved a motion to confirm the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr HON Chun-yin. The Committee endorsed the said minutes unanimously.

## **Introduction Paper**

### **Housing Department's Work Plan in Kwai Tsing 2021/2022**

(Proposed by the Housing Department)

(HAC Paper No. 14/D/2021)

4. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) The emergency road at the Public Transport Interchange at Kwai Shing West Estate had been in a damaged condition for a long time. She hoped HD could resurface the said road as soon as practicable.
- (ii) HD had not yet provided a timetable for installing an additional booster pumping system at Block 5 of Kwai Shing West Estate.
- (iii) HD had commenced a study on the redevelopment of factory estates. She asked if HD would inform the progress of the redevelopment in future reports.

5. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) As per his request, HD would replace the safety matting in the recreational area next to Chui Kwai House. It was also noted that the safety matting in other parts of Kwai Chung Estate had started to wear out, including those

next to Pak Kwai House, Hop Kwai House, Hiu Kwai House and Ying Kwai House. He asked whether HD would replace those safe matting.

- (ii) The number of flats reserved for applicants by HD under Overcrowding Relief Exercise and Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme (“Transfer Scheme”) was reduced from approximately 2 000 to 1 000 each year. That caused difficulties in effecting transfers of certain households. Therefore, he hoped HD could increase the number of flats available for the said transfer scheme.
- (iii) In the previous year, HD made upward adjustment to the rent of Public Rental Housing (PRH). In view of the 4-year maximum period of rental assistance, the support to long-term low-income households was inadequate. Furthermore, as a result of some family members moving out of the flat, the living space of the remaining members of a PRH household might exceed the established allocation standards, which rendered them no longer eligible to apply for rental assistance. He hoped HD could remove the restrictions on rental assistance period and accommodation area.

6. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe, Senior Housing Manager (Kwai Chung) of HD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) He would liaise with the Estate Office to follow up on the progress of road resurfacing and installation of booster pumping system at Kwai Shing West Estate.
- (ii) HD had announced a compensation package in relation to the redevelopment of Kwai On Factory. HD would update the Committee about the redevelopment progress from time to time.
- (iii) Eligible PRH tenants could apply for transfer under the Overcrowding Relief Exercise and Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme. If the tenants faced difficulties in staying in the allocated flats due to special circumstances such as social or medical condition, they could also apply for transfer to another flat in the same or another PRH estate.
- (iv) As for Rental Assistance Scheme, although there was prescribed limit on living space, HD might exercise discretion when considering applications from tenants in particular hardship.

7. Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah pointed out that the two recreational facilities for children at Shek Lei (I) Estate were designed around 30 years ago. He had requested HD to keep up with the times and modernise the said facilities. HD replied that the owner of the shopping mall must be consulted before HD could make a decision as to whether those facilities should be redesigned. He hoped HD would redesign the recreational facilities for children at Shek Lei (I) Estate with a view to improving the utilisation rate and to provide leisure venue for parents and children living in the housing estate.

8. Mr WONG Bing-kuen pointed out that according to his understanding, rental assistance was subject to income test but not asset test. However, some Housing Officers required applicants to submit bank account records of the past year. The epidemic had caused some tenants to drastically lose income. To help applicants in need, he suggested that HD only review applicants' income proof within the past six months in order to accelerate reviewing and simplify the process.

9. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris, Senior Property Service Manager (Kwai Chung) of HD gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) If the recreational facilities were located at the common area of a divested PRH estate, consent from owners of common parts and their undertaking to share apportioned cost must first be obtained before renewing the facilities. HD would discuss with other owners with a view to reaching consensus as soon as possible. On the other hand, HD would also review the condition of the said facilities. If the facilities were still safe to use, priority would not be given to their replacement.
- (ii) The Rental Assistance Scheme of the Housing Authority aimed to assist PRH tenants in short-term financial hardship. Tenants in long-term financial hardship could submit applications for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) to Social Welfare Department (SWD). Generally speaking, a tenant was required to submit his/her own and each of his/her family members' income proof for the past three months when applying for the Rental Assistance Scheme. If there was no regular income, an average income of the past three months should be reported. As for annual remuneration (such as bonus, year-end bonus, commission and contract gratuities etc.), an average of the past 12 months could be used to assess the applicants' eligibility.
- (iii) Regarding Member's comment that the application process was cumbersome, she would pass on the comment to the relevant section.

(Post-meeting note: HD stated that the relevant comment had been passed on to the relevant section.)

10. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) He requested HD to disclose the number of successful rental assistance applications in Kwai Tsing District where the living space of tenants' PRH flats had exceeded the prescribed upper limit of allocation standard.

(Post-meeting note: HD informed that there were 153, 160 and 202 successful cases of rental assistance application in Kwai Tsing District in the years of 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively despite the fact that the living space of the relevant PRH flats had exceeded the prescribed allocation standard.)

- (ii) HD had not replied whether the number of flats allotted for the Transfer Scheme would be increased.

(Post-meeting note: HD stated that Member's comments had been passed on to the relevant section.)

- (iii) In the past, there were applicants who requested transfer but were not able to select their desired flats. He requested HD to, after the meeting, disclose the number of applicants who were still not able to transfer to another flat after three attempts.

(Post-meeting note: HD indicated that it had not retained any relevant information.)

11. Mr HUI Kei-cheung put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) HD had conducted an investigation on external walls at Tai Wo Hau Estate. He requested HD to provide Members with the relevant investigation report.

- (ii) The structural quality of Fu Kwok House and Fu Keung House was less satisfactory. There was serious spalling in the external walls. Given that HD would replace the canopies over the external walls of the two buildings, he hoped that HD could provide figures to illustrate the severity

of spalling in the external walls of the said two buildings. Furthermore, he also hoped that HD would accelerate the redevelopment of the two buildings.

- (iii) HD owned far more shares than other owners in divested PRH estates. He suggested that HD consider paying project expenditure with the Community Investment & Inclusion Fund so that the project would not be delayed by other owners who owned less shares.

12. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) In relation to the repair work of external walls at Tai Wo Hau Estate, she would later request the relevant housing staff to contact Mr HUI Kei-cheung for further discussion.

(Post-meeting note: HD informed that the relevant staff of Tai Wo Hau Estate had been asked to contact Mr HUI Kei-cheung to follow up on the matter.)

- (ii) The Housing Authority was one of the owners and the Deed of Mutual Covenant (“DMC”) manager of divested PRH estates. It was bound by the relevant regulations, DMC and terms of leases and so on in managing the common parts of the housing estates, including ensuring proper application of funds, in order to protect owners’ interest.

13. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) Tenants with elderly and disabled family members could be exempted from being required to move to flats with lower rent after receiving rental assistance for a period of four consecutive years. As long as they were still eligible, they could continue to apply for rental assistance.
- (ii) Quota of transfers was a departmental policy. He would pass on Members’ comments to the headquarters of HD.
- (iii) He would invite frontline staff of Kwai Chung Estate to discuss repair work and related issues with Mr LEUNG Kam-wai.

(Post-meeting note: HD informed that the relevant officer of Kwai Chung Estate had been asked to contact Mr LEUNG Kam-wai to follow up on

the matter.)

14. Mr HUI Kei-cheung enquired about the criteria set for determining the usage of Community Investment and Inclusion Fund and the priority of repair work.

15. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris replied that HD's works staff would make professional judgment. Generally speaking, safety would be the first and foremost consideration in prioritising repair works at PRH estates. For example, concrete spalling and water leakage would be given higher priority. She would remind frontline staff to strengthen communication with DC Members when prioritising repair work.

16. The Chairman put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) The collecting of recycling from three-colour waste separation bins and glass recycling bins at housing estates was not satisfactory. The recycling bins were always full but not emptied timely. The cleaning company only collected materials inside the bins upon request from DC Members. It showed that HD experienced difficulty in recycling.
- (ii) Parking contraventions were serious, reflecting that there was a shortfall of parking spaces within the District. He hoped that HD could provide more car parking spaces for various classes of vehicles, especially in new completed housing estates so as to accommodate the needs of residents.

### **Discussion Items**

**Motion: "The Housing Affairs Committee of the Kwai Tsing District Council Requests the Housing Department to Send Pest Control Teams to Help Residents in Tai Wo Hau Estate Tackle the Rodent Problem."**

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(Proposed by Mr HUI Kei-cheung and seconded by Mr WONG Bing-kuen)

(HAC Paper No. 15, 15a, 15b/D/2021)

17. Mr HUI Kei-cheung introduced the Paper.

18. Mr WONG Bing-kuen put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) He enquired the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) about rodents' reproductive capacity.
- (ii) He opined that rodent infestation might spread to other buildings of the

same housing estate.

- (iii) He supported the rodent control work in housing estates carried out by FEHD and HD. Nevertheless, rats and mice climbed up and down along the drainage pipes and entered flats on different floors, making residents at a loss as to what to do.
- (iv) FEHD and HD called on members of the public to eliminate three fundamental survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages. However, he was of the view that once rodents had already entered flats, the problem would become difficult to handle, causing nuisances to residents.

19. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris responded as follows:

- (i) HD would step up cleaning efforts in housing estates and remind cleansing contractors not to place miscellaneous items at refuse rooms so as to eliminate spots for rodents to live or hide.
- (ii) When HD received rodent infestation reports from PRH tenants, HD would supply rodent trapping devices such as rodent glue to those tenants. If needed, HD staff would inspect the affected flats and give advice on rodent prevention and control.
- (iii) HD would also promote information on rodent prevention and environmental hygiene to residents to raise their awareness and encourage them to actively participate in rodent prevention.

20. Mr YAU Sing-yin, Chief Health Inspector (Kwai Tsing)<sup>1</sup> of FEHD, responded as follows:

- (i) Adult female rodents could give birth to 40 to 50 baby rodents annually.
- (ii) If needed, FEHD would provide professional advice and technical support to HD as to rodent prevention and control in PRH estates.
- (iii) FEHD's pest control experts conducted field trips at Tai Wo Hau Estate in the previous year.

21. Mr HUI Kei-cheung put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Although FEHD and HD had started to tackle rodent infestation in Tai Wo Hau Estate since the previous year, the situation had deteriorated during the time. Initially, rodent infestation was only found on the first and second floors of buildings in the housing estate, now the fifth and sixth floors were also affected. It showed how pressing the problem was.
- (ii) In May that year, pest control staff of the Pest Control Section of FEHD conducted an inspection at Tai Wo Hau Estate with HD staff, stakeholders and DC Members. However, till now the problem still had not been solved. He hoped the relevant departments would take special measures to eliminate rodent infestation at the affected flats.

22. Mr WONG Bing-kuen put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) As far as he understood, FEHD did not advise using rodent glue to eliminate rodent infestation because the glue would cause live rodents to struggle, which would increase the risks of spreading diseases from their bodies. The captured rodents would also suffer unnecessarily during the struggle. Besides, rodent glue was only effective in capturing baby rodents but not so much in capturing adult rodents.
- (ii) Tenants found it hard to place rodent traps and rodent poison at their home.
- (iii) He hoped HD could set up a rodent control team to assist in eliminating rodent infestation.
- (iv) He hoped FEHD could distribute rodent prevention and control promotion leaflets to the residents through HD.

23. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) Apart from distributing traps such as rodent glue and rodent traps to residents in need, HD also placed rodent poison at the right locations.
- (ii) HD had distributed FEHD's rodent prevention and control leaflets to residents. She would work with the Housing Manager to monitor the situation. Where circumstances required, distribution of leaflets would be arranged again.

24. Mr HUI Kei-cheung asked whether HD could deploy manpower to conduct rodent control for the affected residents.

25. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris replied that she would ask the staff of the housing estate to contact Mr HUI Kei-cheung to follow up on the issue.

(Post-meeting note: HD informed that the relevant staff of Tai Wo Hau Estate had been asked to contact Mr HUI Kei-cheung to follow up on the matter.)

26. The Chairman put the motion to the vote. The Committee endorsed the motion unanimously.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat sent HD's reply to Members on 16 June 2021. Please refer to HAC Circulation Paper No. 18/2021 for details.)

**About Newly Installed Facilities in Public Rental Housing Units in Kwai Tsing District Being Inserted with Chips**

(Proposed by Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Rayman)

(HAC Paper No. 16, 16a/D/2021)

27. The Chairman introduced the Paper.

28. Mr NG Kim-sing put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) Specific information about the devices, including types of parts and whether they were available in the open market.
- (ii) The effectiveness of such devices in making tenants accountable.

29. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris responded as follows:

- (i) The relevant chips made use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), which was widely used in worldwide logistics facilities and toll collection systems. The chips stored manufacturing data, batch number and models, factories, installation dates and locations of building elements, facilitating better management of logistics and installation records of fixtures and reassuring that the quality of the fixtures had met all the standards required.
- (ii) When tenants removed, replaced or disposed of the fixtures without

permission, HD could obtain the original installation locations of the elements by reading the data in the chips and request the tenants to reinstate the fixtures at their own expenses.

- (iii) Before moving in, HD had clearly explained to the tenants and contractors that Landlord's fixtures such as entrance doors and kitchen doors were designed with fire resistance considerations; for the sake of safety, those fixtures must not be altered.
- (iv) The chips stored no personal data concerning the tenants, so there should be no privacy issue.

30. Mr NG Kim-sing put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) Whether the chips stored PRH unit number.
- (ii) Whether HD could provide the specific name of the chips or their manufacturers.
- (iii) Whether HD had succeeded in locating offending tenants and what the penalties were.

31. Miss LO Yuen-ting put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) Penalties for removal of Landlord's fixtures without permission.
- (ii) Whether HD had informed the tenants prior to their moving in that as stipulated in the tenancy agreement, tenants were prohibited from removing such fixtures.

32. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) The chips employed the RFID technology.
- (i) Before tenants moved in, HD had clearly informed the tenants that they were not allowed to remove Landlord's fixtures or equipment. Such restriction was also stipulated in the tenancy agreement.
- (ii) As to penalties, if HD found that a tenant had made unauthorised alterations in his/her flat, HD would demand the tenant to reinstate the

fixtures at his/her own expenses. If the tenant is uncooperative, HD would take enforcement actions, including issuing a Notice-to-Quit to terminate the tenancy agreement of the flat.

33. Mr CHEUNG Man-lung put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) Which part of the door the chips had been inserted in.
- (ii) Whether HD staff could detect any unauthorised alterations inside the flats by using scanners in the corridors.

34. Mr LAM Siu-fai put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) He believed that the chips did not contain tenants' personal information.
- (ii) Amid epidemic, HD should patrol more frequently to discover unauthorised alternations of fixtures, especially at the beginning of tenancy in an attempt to tackle the problem at source. That could also reduce HD's workload.
- (iii) HD should enhance enforcement of penalty and request tenants in breach of the prohibition to modify or reinstate the relevant fixtures at their own expenses.

35. The Chairman asked HD whether fixtures with chips would be deployed in renovated PRH units.

36. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) The chips inserted in building fixtures were small. Scanners must be put close to the chips in order to read data.
- (ii) HD posted up a classification list of Landlord's fixtures on PRH Estate Offices' notice boards to remind tenants. The list expressly categorised fixtures into groups of "no alteration is allowed", "prior approval from HD is required" and "prior approval from HD is not required".
- (iii) When renovating vacated PRH flats, the fixtures installed by HD were without RFID chips.

**Motion: “The Housing Affairs Committee of the Kwai Tsing District Council Requests the Housing Department to Enhance the Security of Public Rental Housing in Kwai Tsing District, Such as the Possibility of Increasing the Number of Security Guards in Each Block and Installing Access Control System Using Octopus Cards or Other Means to Facilitate Identification of Strangers by Security Guards with a View to Enhancing the Security of the Housing Estates Effectively.”**

(Proposed by Mr CHOW Wai-hung and seconded by Mr HON Chun-yin)

(HAC Paper No. 17, 17a, 17b/D/2021)

37. The Chairman introduced the Paper and invited HD representatives to respond to the motion.

38. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe responded as follows:

- (i) HD was highly attentive to the security of PRH estates. HD reminded security guards to strictly enforce registration. Residents were required to use password to enter the buildings. Under normal circumstances, the guards were not allowed to on their own initiative open the entrance door to let residents or visitors in.
- (ii) HD would maintain close communication with the Police. At times of security breaches, HD would put in place more restrictive measures.

39. The Chairman put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) There were plenty of exits in the PRH buildings but security guards were not deployed at every exit. Some visitors managed to follow residents to enter the buildings. He deemed that a security loophole.
- (ii) He asked why HD did not adopt access control system at PRH estates, for example, using Octopus card for entry. Octopus card access control system had been in use in Po Lam Estate in Tseung Kwan O for better security since 10 years ago.
- (iii) He asked what effective access control system HD had deployed in PRH estates or Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) estates.

40. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) She hoped HD could strengthen the security of Kwai Shing West Estate.

- (ii) She asked if HD would increase funding allocation for hiring security guards.
- (iii) As to HD's statement that some residents had privacy concerns that an Octopus access control system might collect personal data, she suggested that Octopus card be replaced with smart cards specifically issued for those PRH estates.

41. Mr KWOK Tsz-kin put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Every building of PRH estates had two exits. Security guards might neglect one of the exits. He was of the view that the problem might be due to a lack of security personnel.
- (ii) The red-paint-splashing debt collection incident in Cheung Wang Estate in the previous year showed that the exiting security measures were not effective in stopping unknown intruders from entry. Worse still, in the past, a resident's personal information was disclosed after he had successfully blocked entry of an unknown intruder.
- (iii) He hoped HD could enhance security guards' professional training and ensure that security guidelines would be followed by the management companies.

42. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) Based on the established mechanism and actual condition of housing estates such as the number of buildings and patrolling area, HD designated a suitable number of security guards in each housing estate. Regardless of the age of housing estates, any additional allocation of manpower must be based on operational needs and contractual stipulation. The Housing Managers could make suitable deployment of manpower according to the condition of housing estates.
- (ii) Upon security breaches, HD would liaise with the Police and assist in the Police's investigation and operation.
- (iii) HD had not kept records about access control systems in PRH and HOS estates.

- (iv) HD would patrol more frequently and remind guards not to disclose personal information of residents.

43. Mr NG Kim-sing stated that the numbers of both burglary and illegal debt collection in 2020 had increased. He hoped the Police could provide more information and break down the information into 29 districts to enable DC Members to understand the condition of PRH estates in their constituencies.

44. Miss LO Yuen-ting put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Every building had two exits. When one guard was patrolling, there was only one remaining guard to watch over two exits. She doubted if one guard could look after both exits at the same time.
- (ii) Most people used Octopus cards. She was of the view that HD should modernise the security system rather than relying on manual control.
- (iii) As to residents' privacy concerns, she suggested that HD conduct a survey to find out whether residents would be willing to use an Octopus card access control system. She opined that Octopus card access control system and password door lock system could co-exist. Those unwilling to migrate to Octopus card access control system could continue to use password for entry.
- (iv) Many private estates adopted an Octopus card access control system. She was doubtful about the privacy concern raised by HD.

45. Mr NG Kim-sing put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) He requested the Police to provide information on that year's relevant number of crimes up to that day.
- (ii) He asked whether in view of the rising number of crimes, the Police had given any advice to HD and, if any, whether HD had adopted the advice given by the Police.

46. Mr HON Chun-yin put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Red-paint-splashing debt collection incidents were not uncommon in PRH

estates. There was an instance where an intruder sneaked in a building through the estate platform and committed suicide. In view of that, he suggested that HD keep up with the times and develop a new access control system.

- (ii) Amid epidemic, some residents were reluctant to touch the door handle. On the other hand, HD required residents to use passwords for entry but some residents could not remember passwords and were thus prevented from entry. They became grumpy because of that. Therefore, he hoped HD would seriously consider adopting that motion.

47. The Chairman put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) According to the paper provided by the Police, the numbers of burglaries, criminal damage, illegal debt collection or criminal damage unrelated to illegal debt collection had more than doubled from 2018 to 2020. He doubted whether HD's existing security measures were adequate in protecting residents from security risks.
- (ii) Enquired whether HD would deploy security guards at every exit of buildings and ensure that security guards would not let intruders in.
- (iii) He believed that some security guards were fear that complaints would be filed against them so they did not refuse residents or visitors' requests to open the door for them. Some security guards did not feel comfortable to request visitors to register. He opined that all those have led to burglaries, criminal damage and door-to-door selling of illicit cigarettes or drugs. He could not understand why HD was unwilling to deploy more security guards.
- (iv) In the abovementioned example of Po Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O, the residents registered their Octopus cards for entry voluntarily. Those who did not register their Octopus cards continued to use passwords for entry. He believed that after putting a similar access control system in place, security guards could have reasonable grounds to refuse residents' requests to open the doors for them.

48. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) Po Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O was not managed by HD. Therefore, HD

did not have any relevant records.

- (ii) Due to cost-effectiveness and residents' concerns about privacy breach, HD had ceased implementing any smart card access control system.
- (iii) HD had an established policy as to the number of security guards stationing in each building. For those areas out of the sight of security guards, other control measures such as CCTV could be adopted.
- (iv) As to door-to-door selling of illicit cigarettes etc., HD had issued guidelines to housing estates. If needed, housing staff would get in touch with the Customs and Excise Department.
- (v) HD would keep in touch with the Police and discuss better security measures based on the security situation of housing estates.

49. The Chairman put the motion to the vote. The Committee endorsed the motion unanimously.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat sent HD's reply to Members on 21 June 2021. Please refer to HAC Circulation Paper No. 20/2021 for details.)

### **To Discuss and Follow Up Matters Related to Refuse Chutes**

(Proposed by Mr CHOW Wai-hung, Rayman)

(HAC Paper No. 18, 18a, 18b/D/2021)

50. The Chairman welcomed Ms WU Mei-lin and Ms LEUNG Tsz-yan, Officers of Cleaning Workers Union (the Union), to attend the meeting to answer Members' enquiries.

51. Ms LEUNG Tsz-yan put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Straight-down refuse chutes were vulnerable to frequent blockage. In the past, refuse chute fatal accidents mostly occurred when workers accidentally fell into the chutes when clearing the chutes. Therefore, she remarked that the design of refuse chutes should be reviewed and improved to prevent similar accidents in future.
- (ii) Narrowing chute openings might not solve the blockage problem. In the contrary, it might make the waste dropping process more complicated for

workers.

- (iii) Straight-down refuse chutes would adversely affect cleansing workers' occupational safety and environmental hygiene of housing estates. Furthermore, the refuse chutes did not align with the environmentally-friendly recycling policies.
- (iv) She hoped HD could consider other means to dispose of waste in place of refuse chutes.

52. Ms WU Mei-lin put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) She opined that HD should attach great importance to occupational safety.
- (ii) She believed that using lifts to transport waste should be viable. For example, Shan King Estate, where a refuse chute accident had happened, managed to use lifts to transport waste.
- (iii) Certain private housing estates had adopted the means of "moving rubbish bins into the lifts" in collecting waste of the buildings.
- (iv) She hoped to understand the measures taken by HD in repairing and maintaining refuse chutes.
- (v) She hoped HD could provide clear guidelines to cleansing workers on appropriate steps to take in the event of refuse chute failures.

53. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan pointed out that HD had not fully answered the questions listed in Paper no. 18/D/2021. She hoped HD could give further elaboration.

54. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) The Committee had discussed the refuse chutes issue in February that year and moved a motion requesting HD to install safety belts and heighten hoardings at straight-down refuse chutes in PRH and HOS estates with a view to ensuring the safety of cleansing workers. He asked whether HD could provide any updated information for Members' reference.
- (ii) Whether HD would replace refuse chutes by using lifts to transport waste.

55. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) HD had not received any reports on injuries related to refuse chutes in the past three years.
- (ii) Since 2011, HD had improved the design of refuse chutes in accordance with the guidelines given by the Labour Department. Narrowing chute openings was one of the measures taken.
- (iii) HD did not have any information related to the distance between the refuse chute openings and the floor surface.
- (iv) Housing estates where refuse chute accidents had happened, including Shan King Estate and Kam Tai Court, were managed by the Owners' Corporations instead of HD.
- (v) HD staff would conduct inspections on refuse chutes and follow up on the maintenance issues.
- (vi) HD had issued guidelines to cleansing contractors to explain the requirement that cleansing workers must not clear refuse chutes unless under the supervision of foremen. Furthermore, HD had posted up notices next to refuse chutes to remind cleansing workers not to step on the raised dumping areas in front of the refuse chutes, and not to lean forward or put any part of their bodies into the chutes. Cleansing contractors would also provide training to cleansing workers on clearing blockage of a refuse chute.
- (vii) Members' requests to install safety belts and heighten hoardings at refuse chutes would be reflected to the headquarters of HD.

56. Ms WU Mei-lin put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) She believed that HD was responsible to tackle issues relating to refuse chutes in certain Tenants Purchase Scheme ("TPS") estates because HD owned the most undivided shares in those estates.
- (ii) Cleansing workers were asked to drop a large amount of waste within specified time. When refuse chutes were blocked, they could only clear the chutes with the company of foremen. They were worried that if they

failed to finish their work within the specified time, the cleansing contractors might be warned or penalised by HD.

- (iii) She opined that the design of the refuse chutes should be improved. The problem should be solved at its source.

57. The Chairman put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Citing Kwai Shing East Estate as an example, large rubbish bins could not be moved into refuse rooms because of their size. As a result, cleansing workers could only make use of smaller rubbish bins to transport waste to refuse chutes. It showed that the design of the refuse chutes caused inconvenience in waste dropping work and might also cause injuries to cleansing workers.
- (ii) Although HD had replaced the refuse chutes in Kwai Shing East Estate, the said replacement was merely replacing refuse chutes that would become rusty with stainless steel refuse chutes. The way of dropping waste had not changed.
- (iii) He hoped HD could adopt the suggestions made by Mr LEUNG Kam-wai, namely to use lifts to transport waste, or to collect waste with hanging rubbish bins. That could reduce time in dropping waste and also avoid the potential danger in using refuse chutes.
- (iv) He hoped HD could adopt a mechanical design when refurbishing refuse chutes.

58. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) HD staff served as one of the committee members in the Estate Management Advisory Committee of TPS estates on behalf of the Housing Authority. However, the authority to manage TPS estates belonged to the Owners' Corporations (OCs). The Housing Authority's representatives would voice opinions to the OCs from time to time.
- (ii) The safety officers of cleansing contractors could advise Housing Managers on better ways for cleansing workers to collect waste based on individual circumstances of different estates. Housing Managers would conduct viability study based on the advice.

- (iii) He would convey Members' comments on improving refuse chutes to the headquarters of HD.
- (iv) HD would not penalise contractors for delayed work caused by blockage of refuse chutes.

59. The Chairman put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) He hoped HD could consider the hardship in work suffered by frontline cleansing workers in a more humane manner.
- (ii) Although HD stated that it would not penalise contractors for any delay in work due to blockage of refuse chutes, contractors might still be in fear of losing the opportunity to renew contracts and would thus put pressure on cleansing workers.

60. Miss LO Yuen-ting put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Refuse chute openings at Cheung Hang Estate were too narrow, leading to many problems. She recommended HD to keep up with the times and enhance refuse chutes.
- (ii) She suggested that HD adopt a means which could enable cleansing workers to drop waste more effectively.
- (iii) She believed that HD staff should organise a field trip to inspect refuse chutes in order to understand the difficulties encountered by cleansing workers in dropping waste.

61. The Chairman hoped HD could consider ways to handle the problem from different angles.

**Motion: "The Kwai Tsing District Council Requests the Housing Department to Unconditionally Remove the Useless Drying Racks in the Unit for the Households in Need to Reduce the Nuisance Caused to the Residents."**

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(Proposed by Miss LO Yuen-ting and seconded by Ms LEUNG Kar-ming)

(HAC Paper No. 19, 19a/D/2021)

62. Miss LO Yuen-ting introduced the Paper.

63. Ms LEUNG Kar-ming put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) The quality of drying racks installed by HD was very poor. The clothesline broke easily. She asked if HD had considered quality when purchasing the racks.
- (ii) She was of the view that the installation location of drying racks was not suitable for hanging clothes. She hoped HD could actively seek to solve the problem.

64. Mr KWOK Tsz-kin cited Wang Yung House of Cheung Wang Estate as an example. Despite that it had only been more than ten years since Wang Yung House was first put in use in 2003, the drying racks had started to become rusty. He hoped HD could check the condition of drying racks regularly for the benefit of the residents.

65. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai pointed out that drying racks of Kwai Chung Estate was first installed at the external walls outside kitchens. However, for the reason that the racks were close to range hood exhausts, many residents did not use the drying racks. There were also objects thrown from a height in that location. Because of that, HD later installed drying racks at the external walls of living rooms instead for flats in Kwai Chung Estate. He asked whether HD would assist residents to remove the old drying racks at the external walls of kitchens.

66. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) Under the existing policy, drying racks at external walls of kitchens belonged to Category B Landlord's fixtures. If tenants wished to remove the racks, they could submit an application to the Estate Offices for approval. Upon approval, the tenants would be allowed to remove the drying racks at their own expenses and reinstate the fixtures when they moved out of the flats.
- (ii) If the drying racks worn out naturally, residents could report to HD for repair arrangements.
- (iii) Up to the present, HD did not have arrangements for regular check-up of drying racks. However, when Housing Officers conducted regular flat inspections, they would pay attention to the condition of drying racks.

- (iv) At present, HD had no plan to remove the drying racks at external walls of kitchens for residents. In the event of objects being thrown from height or hygiene problems, residents could report to the Estate Offices so that HD could formulate policies such as more frequent patrolling or installing CCTV systems and conducting investigations.

67. Mr LAM Siu-fai pointed out that because the residents of Shek Lei Estate did not utilise the drying racks at the external walls of kitchens, HD had installed new drying racks at the external walls of living rooms for them. However, HD had not helped the residents remove the unnecessary drying racks.

68. Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah pointed out that those drying racks installed at external walls could not be removed from inside the flat. Therefore, he suggested that HD consult the residents and remove all unnecessary drying racks once and for all according to residents' wills.

69. Mr HON Chun-yin put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Residents often complained to him that the clotheslines of drying racks had worn out but HD would not repair the racks for them because the racks were not completely broken. He did not hope to see that HD only took action to repair the racks for residents after the racks had already become hazardous.
- (ii) He believed that HD had undeniable responsibility in tackling the drying racks issue.

70. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) If residents noticed problems in relation to drying racks, they could report to the Estate Offices and HD would arrange repair.
- (ii) As to whether to consult on removal of drying racks, since that involved formulation of departmental policy, he would pass on Members' comments to the headquarters of HD.

71. The Chairman put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Certain residents had reported to the Estate Offices about broken clotheslines of drying racks and requested HD to arrange repair. HD staff

replied that residents should be responsible for any repair and HD would not remove the drying racks for them.

- (ii) He hoped HD could consult residents by means of questionnaires and remove unnecessary drying racks for the residents.

72. The Chairman put the motion to the vote. The Committee endorsed the motion unanimously.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretary sent HD's reply to Members on 21 June 2021. Please refer to HAC Circulation Paper No. 21/2021 for details.)

### **Information Paper**

#### **Hong Kong Housing Society's Statistical Returns and Progress Reports on Housing Affairs in the District (February 2021 to March 2021)**

(HAC Circulation Paper No. 14/2021)

73. Members noted the paper.

#### **Housing Department's Statistical Returns and Progress Reports on Housing Affairs in the District (February to March 2021)**

(HAC Circulation Paper No. 17/2021)

74. Mr WONG Tin-yan hoped to know about the situation of flats to let in each PRH estate in Kwai Tsing District and received a reply from the Housing Manager prior to the meeting.

75. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai put forth enquiries as follows:

- (i) In the past, there was a period of time in which objects were frequently thrown from a height and that caused salt water pipes to burst. He asked what the causes of the recent salt water pipe burst or their repair were.
- (ii) The progress of the judicial review proceedings in relation to the Tai Wo Hau Road public housing development project.

76. Mr HUI Kei-cheung put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) It was mentioned in Annex 4 that Tai Wo Hau Estate had recorded lift

failures in 18 occasions. However, P.5 of the same document only listed 11 records, out of which nine happened in Fu Tak House, Fu Yin House and Fu Tai House. He observed that the occurrence of lift failures in harmony blocks of PRH estates had become more frequent. Therefore, he hoped HD could supervise lift contractors' performance in maintenance and repair work of lifts in the said three estates.

- (ii) There was an incident where residents were trapped in a lift for nearly an hour. He believed that lift failures would cause discomfort to the elderly and children, and would even impose life-threatening danger to people suffering from Claustrophobia.

77. Miss LO Yuen-ting put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) HD only managed to submit reports for February and March in June. The reports failed to reveal the situation of housing estates in various aspects in a timely manner.
- (ii) The problem of the lift failures at Cheung Hang Estate had become very serious since March that year. In particular, the lift failures in the four buildings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 had lasted for more than 30 minutes each, causing physical discomfort to trapped residents.
- (iii) Retrofitting of lifts at Cheung Hang Estate had not been included in HD's Work Plan that year. She asked when HD would conduct the related work and whether HD could provide a timetable for such work.

78. Ms LEUNG Kar-ming pointed out that failures involving lifts no. 15 and 16 of Hong Cheung House, Cheung Hong Estate frequently occurred and were very serious. Some residents were injured due to closing of the lift doors. She hoped HD would take note of the situation and speed up the repair of the said two lifts.

79. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan put forth enquiries and opinions as follows:

- (i) It was mentioned in the Paper that HD had received two complaints of objects being thrown from height at Kwai Shing West Estate in total. She doubted the accuracy of the number of complaints and asked how HD defined "objects being thrown from height".
- (ii) Kwai Shing West Estate was an old housing estate. She hoped HD could

check if the pipe joints of salt water pipes and drinking water pipes had showed any signs of aging. If any, she hoped HD could replace the relevant equipment.

80. Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah stated that Shek Kai House, Shek Lei (II) Estate had been in use for 27 years. In view of the persisting problem of lift failures, he believed that HD should proceed to modernise the lifts at Shek Kai House.

81. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) The lifts at Fu Tak House, Fu Yin House and Fu Tai House, Tai Wo Hau Estate were included in HD's Lift Modernisation Programme. The preliminary work was undergoing. It was expected that the installation work would, at the soonest, be commenced progressively in early 2022.
- (ii) HD was closely monitoring the relevant work conducted by lift contractors. If there were any broken parts, HD would request the contractors to replace them as soon as possible. HD would also discuss ways to improve the lifts with the contractors.
- (iii) There was a summary of the total number of lift failures on P.1 of Annex 4. The next page only showed those failures which lasted over an hour in different housing estates. Therefore, the numbers showed in these two pages might not be same.
- (iv) HD would closely monitor the condition of the lifts at Shek Kai House, Shek Lei (II) Estate. According to the current policy and guidelines, HD would conduct annual assessment on lifts in all PRH estates in Hong Kong based on their age and condition, in order to determine which lifts should be included in the Lift Modernisation Programme. HD would continue to monitor the situation of maintenance and repair of the relevant lifts with a view to providing safe and reliable lift services.

82. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) In respect of Tai Wo Hau Public Housing Development, the Court handed down the judgement of the judicial review in relation to Kwai Chung District on 27 May. The case was in the appeal period then.
- (ii) From February to March that year, salt water supply was suspended on 13

occasions, of which five were related to replacement of salt water valves, seven were related to replacement of water pipes and one was related to general repair work.

- (iii) As to the number of objects being thrown from height at Kwai Shing West Estate, it included all those complaints received by HD and those discovered by HD staff.

83. The Chairman urged HD to instruct all frontline security guards of housing estates to fulfil their duties. He believed that because the security guards had not kept records of all cases, the records of objects being thrown from height were inaccurate and incomplete. Therefore, the records failed to reflect the actual situations.

84. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan opined that HD should reflect the actual circumstances of objects being thrown from height.

85. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) HD conducted annual assessment on lifts in PRH estates based on the lifts' age and condition to decide which lifts to include in the Lift Modernisation Programme. At the same time, HD observed whether the lift failures were caused by human or mechanical factors. If the failures were caused by lift shafts being blocked by waste, more intensive cleansing would be arranged.
- (ii) HD would remind all frontline staff of housing estates to record all complaints in relation to objects being thrown from height.

86. Mr HUI Kei-cheung put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) He insisted that HD must accurately present all numbers to illustrate the significance of the problem.
- (ii) Although Tai Wo Hau Estate Lift Modernisation Programme was approved the year before, the actual work could only commence early next year. During the time in between, problem of lift failures in Tai Wo Hau Estate would deteriorate. Therefore, he hoped HD would take up responsibilities and urge the contractors to deal with the problem.

87. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai asked about the cause of urgent repair of salt water pipes.

88. Miss LO Yuen-ting put forth opinions and enquiries as follows:

- (i) She hoped the Chairman would invite the Housing Manager of Tsing Yi District to attend the next meeting so that they could answer Members' enquiries.
- (ii) She asked for the timetable of replacement of lifts. She observed that the lifts at housing estates in Tsing Yi District, especially lifts no. 3 and 5 of Hang Chui House, Cheung Hang Estate encountered frequent failures. For that reason, HD should proceed with lift improvement work as soon as practicable.

89. Mr KWOK Tsz-kin shared that DC Members made complaints to Estates Offices by way of phone calls, emails or written correspondence in relation to objects being thrown from height. However, HD staff responded that certain objects were too small and failed to be captured by the CCTV. He hoped HD could take steps to solve the issue.

90. The Chairman pointed out that the PRH Development at Lai King Hill Road would be completed in July that year. He asked what the time would be for HD to allocate PRH applicants to move into the newly completed housing estate built under the Development and whether HD would allow residents from neighbouring PRH estates, like under-occupation households or overcrowded households, to rehouse to the said estate.

91. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (i) The repair of salt water pipes at Kwai Chung Estate was for general maintenance such as replacing salt water valves and pipes.
- (ii) The lift failures at Hang Chui House were mainly caused by parts failure. HD would review the situation and decide whether to give those lifts higher priority for retrofitting.
- (iii) HD staff would inspect the scenes upon receiving complaints of objects being thrown from height and install CCTV in the housing estates where necessary. In addition, HD's Special Operation Teams against Throwing Objects from Height would patrol more often and investigate relevant cases.

- (iv) HD's Central Allocation Section was responsible for allocating PRH flats. HD would announce the relevant details in due course.

92. Mr WONG Tin-yan stated that according to his understanding, the newly completed housing estate at Lai King would not be used for rehousing. All flats would be allocated to applicants on the waiting list.

93. Mr LEUNG Kam-wai enquired about the causes of the salt water pipe burst at Kwai Chung Estate. If HD would not be able to respond during the meeting, he hoped HD could ask the Housing Manager to explain the causes to him.

94. Mr LAM Siu-fai stated that Shek Lei Interim Housing would soon be redeveloped. Some residents in the interim housing hoped to move into newly completed PRH flats. In view of that, he hoped that HD could reserve some relatively newer flats to rehouse residents of interim housing.

95. Miss LO Yuen-ting asked whether HD could provide a timetable of the Lift Modernisation Programme and whether it could arrange the Housing Manager of Tsing Yi District to attend the next meeting.

96. Mr CHAN Tsz-kim, Joe replied that he would provide more information on the causes of salt water suspension in Kwai Chung District and the timetable of lift replacement at Cheung Hang Estate after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: HD indicated that it had requested the relevant staff of Kwai Chung Estate to contact Mr LEUNG Kam-wai to explain the causes. Besides, six blocks of Cheung Hang Estate had been included in the Lift Modernisation Programme, among which Hang Chui House, Hang Chi House, Hang Yip House and Hang Lai House were undergoing design and pre-construction preparatory work. It was expected that the work would commence progressively soonest from the third quarter of 2023.)

97. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris replied that she would pass on Member's comments in respect of reserving newly completed PRH flats for interim housing residents to HD's Redevelopment Sub-Section.

(Post-meeting note: HD indicated that Member's comments had been conveyed to the relevant section.)

98. Mr KWOK Tsz-kin stated that Members had requested HD to send District Manager of Tsing Yi District to attend Committee's meeting during earlier meetings.

99. Ms MAK Siu-ling, Iris responded that she had passed on Members' comments to the relevant section. They indicated that they would attend meetings where necessary. In view of Members' reiterated requests, she would pass on Members' comments to the relevant section again.

(Post-meeting note: HD stated that Member's comments had been conveyed to the relevant section.)

## **Report Items**

### **Reports of Working Groups**

#### **Public Housing Affairs Working Group**

(HAC Paper No. 20/R/2021)

100. Members unanimously endorsed the above report and budget plan.

#### **Private Housing Affairs Working Group**

(HAC Paper No. 21/R/2021)

101. Members unanimously endorsed the above report and budget plan.

### **Interim and Sub-divided Housing Affairs Working Group**

102. The Chairman stated that the former Chairman of the Working Group had quit. Therefore, a new Chairman should be elected.

103. The Chairman invited nominations for Chairman of the Interim and Sub-divided Housing Affairs Working Group.

104. Mr HON Chun-yin nominated Mr CHOW Wai-hung, which was seconded by Mr NG Kim-sing. Mr CHOW Wai-hung accepted the nomination.

105. As there was only one candidate, the Chairman announced that he himself was elected the Chairman of the Interim and Sub-divided Housing Affairs Working Group.

### **Any Other Business**

106. The Chairman received the following extempore motion:

**Extempore Motion: Strongly Requests the Housing Department to Install Aluminum Windows on the Metal Grilles in Old Public Rental Housing Estates**

(Proposed by Mr HUI Kei-cheung, seconded by Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah, Mr LEUNG Wing-kuen, Ms LEUNG Ching-shan, Mr WONG Tin-yan, Mr CHEUNG Man-lung, Mr HON Chun-yin, Mr LEUNG Kam-wai and Mr KWOK Tsz-kin)

107. Mr HUI Kei-cheung introduced the extempore motion.

108. The Chairman put the above extempore motion to the vote for acceptance. The Committee unanimously accepted the above extempore motion for discussion.

109. Mr LEUNG Kwok-wah pointed out that the smoke resulting from the cargo ship fire which broke out in Ngong Shuen Chau on 22 June had a big impact on the residents of Shek Lei (I) Estate. Metal grills did not only cause smoke problem but also caused other problems such as bringing cigarette smell and rainwater into the flats. Therefore, he hoped that HD could seriously consider converting metal grills into aluminum windows.

110. Miss LEUNG Ching-shan put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) The Ngong Shuen Chau fire incident caused poisonous smoke to fill some of the buildings in Kwai Shing West Estate and adversely affected the health of the residents.
- (ii) In windy seasons, the metal grills were also prone to causing water leakage. She hoped that HD would install aluminum windows at the metal grills to improve residents' living environment.

111. Mr WONG Tin-yan put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) Metal grills were a potential source of danger. Whenever a fire broke out, the smoke would enter the flats due to the lack of aluminum windows. He deems those fixtures obsolete.
- (ii) The lack of aluminum windows also caused noise problem which impaired the hearing of some residents. Although the relevant Government departments stated that they were unable to install aluminum windows at metal grills, Block 8 of Lai King Estate, which was newly completed, had aluminum windows installed at soundproof balconies. For such reason,

he doubted the validity of the statement that aluminum windows could not be installed at aged buildings in the housing estate.

112. Mr NG Kim-sing stated that many residents told him that they felt unwell after inhaling smoke of the fire. He believed that the smoke caused greater harm to those residents living in flats with bare metal grills. HD should conduct improvement work in those flats.

113. Mr CHEUNG Man-lung put forth opinions as follows:

- (i) The problems brought by metal grills had lasted for many years. As the fixtures were installed very long time ago, there would be difficulty in repairing them. He hoped HD would formulate a plan to install aluminum windows for the residents.
- (ii) HD had replaced iron windows with aluminum windows in renovated Trident PRH flats. He therefore doubted why HD could not install aluminum windows for flats in old-style housing estates.

114. Mr HON Chun-yin pointed out that the Twin Tower PRH flats were also affected by smoke from the fire and inflow of rainwater. Given that HD had no plan to redevelop that type of old housing estates and was not prepared to rehouse residents of those estates, he opined that HD should conduct related improvement work to provide a safe and pleasant living environment for the residents.

115. The Chairman pointed out that the metal grills in Lai King Estate and Kwai Shing West Estate were designed 40-50 years ago. During windy seasons, residents put up PVC screens to block rainwater from flowing into the flats. However, at times of super typhoon, PVC screens were not effective. As a result, residents applied iron bars to lend strength to the PVC screens. However, those iron bars might not be strong enough to withstand strong wind and might be blown into the flats. It was very dangerous for elderly residents. Therefore, he opined that it was necessary for HD to install aluminum windows at the metal grills of aged PRH flats.

116. The Chairman put the above extempore motion to the vote. The Committee unanimously endorsed the extempore motion.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat sent HD's reply to Members on 16 June 2021. Please refer to HAC Circulation Paper No. 19/2021.)

### **Date of Next Meeting**

117. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 2 August 2021 (Monday).

Kwai Tsing District Council Secretariat

July 2021