

LCQ13: Pilot Building Management Professional Service Scheme and Building Management Professional Advisory Scheme

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 18):

Question:

In collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Society and four property management professional bodies, the Government launched a one-year pilot scheme called the "Building Management Professional Service Scheme" (pilot scheme) in April 2010 to provide free professional advice and follow-up services on property management to about 1,600 owners of flat units in old buildings in five districts where more old buildings are located, and in November last year, it introduced the "Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme" (Advisory Scheme) which will last up to March 2014, so as to expand the pilot scheme. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) regarding the latest details of implementing the various services provided under the pilot scheme, of the number of home visits conducted by the authorities with a view to contacting owners direct and assisting them in forming Owners' Corporations (OCs); the number of buildings for which the authorities have prepared management audit reports for their common areas; the number of OC meetings attended by the authorities to provide professional advice and secretarial services, together with the number of the OCs concerned; the number of OCs which were assisted by the authorities in applying for various maintenance subsidy and loan schemes, as well as following up the repair works and tender procedures, etc.; the number of OCs which were assisted by the authorities in taking out third party risks insurance; and the number of building management training programmes or seminars, etc. provided to office-bearers of OCs and owners;

(b) among the first category of target buildings/clusters of buildings under the pilot scheme, i.e. those clusters of buildings (approximately 900 units in total) jointly selected by the participating organizations, of the number of clusters of buildings in which the Government conducted home visits, broken down by year and District Council district, and so far the number of buildings among them which subsequently formed an OC or reorganized their OCs; further, the number of cases of the Government assisting the owners in successfully coordinating building maintenance

and repair works;

(c) of the number of buildings under the second category of target buildings/clusters of buildings under the pilot scheme, i.e. those buildings identified through applications submitted by owners who were interested in joining the scheme, broken down by year and District Council district, and so far the number of buildings among them which formed an OC or reorganized their OCs after participating in the pilot scheme, and whether any of these buildings withdrew from the scheme; if so, of the details; further, the number of cases of the Government assisting the owners in successfully coordinating building maintenance and repair works;

(d) whether the Government has compiled statistics on the time normally needed to complete the follow-up action for a single case under the pilot scheme;

(e) given that the Government will implement the Advisory Scheme up to March 2014 and has awarded contracts through open tender to two property management companies for the provision of relevant services, and it has been learnt that the two property management companies are required by the Government under the contracts to form OCs for a designated number of buildings during the period of the Advisory Scheme, of the respective target numbers to be met by each company in each year, with a breakdown of such numbers by District Council district;

(f) given that the Advisory Scheme is implemented "on the basis of building clusters" to "encourage owners to learn from one another to tackle the problem of building neglect", of the relevant implementation details; the "clusters" which are currently covered under the Scheme;

(g) of the specific details of the service of "providing training on building management to office-bearers of OCs and owners" under the Advisory Scheme; whether all owners of the eligible buildings may enjoy this service; and

(h) as it has been learnt that the Government launched the "Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme" (Ambassador Scheme) at the same time in November last year to recruit owners or tenants aged 18 or above who live in "three nil" buildings of more than 30 years' old to participate in the scheme to assist government departments in contacting residents, whether the Government has compiled statistics on the total number of such residents participating in the Ambassador Scheme so far; if it has, of the number of such participants, broken down by District Council district; whether the

Government will regularly review the effectiveness of the Ambassador Scheme; and whether the Government will step up publicity when the response is not satisfactory; if it will, of the details?

Reply:

President,

To enhance support to owners of old buildings, the Home Affairs Bureau and the Home Affairs Department (HAD), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Housing Society and four professional property management bodies, launched a one-year pilot scheme called the "Building Management Professional Service Scheme" (pilot scheme) in April 2010. Expert teams comprising volunteers from professional property management bodies were formed to provide free professional advice and follow-up services on building management for owners of old buildings in five districts with a relatively large number of old buildings (i.e. Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City, Shum Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Central and Western). The pilot scheme enjoyed tremendous success and was well-received by owners and residents.

To further strengthen support to owners of old buildings, HAD rolled out the "Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme" (Advisory Scheme) in November 2011 and commissioned two property management companies (PMCs) to provide professional advisory services to owners of 1,200 old buildings (about 18,000 flat units) in all 18 districts over the territory. The Advisory Scheme runs for over two years until March 2014.

My replies to the questions raised by Hon James To are as follows:

(a) to (c) The pilot scheme was completed in March 2011. Professional services were provided by the expert teams to over 1,600 owners of units in old buildings (including 26 owners of flat units in two buildings under the second category of buildings (note 1)), including paying home visits, attending meetings of owners (note 2), providing basic knowledge and information on building management, and assessing and producing building management audit reports to all participating buildings. Among them, the expert teams provided repair and maintenance recommendations to nine buildings (about 282 flat units), assisted the owners in applying for various maintenance subsidies and helped them co-ordinate building repair and maintenance works. In addition, the expert teams successfully formed 11 owners' corporations

(OCs) for 10 buildings (about 155 flat units) and assisted two OCs in re-electing their office bearers of the management committee so that the OCs could reactivate (figures broken down by district is at Annex 1). After formation of OCs, the expert teams also assisted six OCs in taking out/passing resolutions to take out third party risks insurance. None of the buildings concerned withdrew from the pilot scheme.

(d) The time required for follow-up actions varies as to the circumstances of each building. In general, it takes approximately one year from the time to pay home visits, prepare audit reports for the common areas of the building, assist the owners in forming an OC to the time to apply for relevant subsidies. The time required for the repair and maintenance works depends upon the scope of the repair items and the complexity of the projects.

(e) For the purpose of the Advisory Scheme, Hong Kong was divided into seven regions according to the number of old buildings in each district. Open tender exercises were invited separately in respective regions for commissioning suitable PMCs to provide services. The number of OCs to be established annually in each region under the contract terms of the Advisory Scheme is at Annex 2.

(f) The Advisory Scheme is implemented on the basis of "building clusters", i.e. formed by buildings on the same or nearby streets. We expect that the building clusters approach can enhance the cost-effectiveness of the Advisory Scheme and at the same time achieve modelling effect and mutual motivation among buildings in the adjacent area.

(g) Under the Advisory Scheme, the commissioned PMCs will, taken into account the circumstances and the needs of owners of the target buildings, organise suitable building management training programmes and seminars on issues such as formation and operation of OCs, building maintenance, various maintenance subsidy schemes etc. These training programmes or seminars are open to all owners of the buildings concerned under the Advisory Scheme.

(h) HAD launched the "Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme" (Ambassador Scheme) in November 2011 to recruit owners and tenants of "three nil" buildings of 30 years or above to assist Government departments in contacting residents and engaging them in discussion and handling of daily building management matters. The long-term objective of the Ambassador Scheme is to enhance the knowledge and interest of the residents in building management and, through this resident network, assist these

buildings in the formation of OCs to facilitate effective building management.

As at March 31, 2012, HAD had recruited a total of 632 "resident liaison ambassadors" (RLA), (the breakdown of the number of ambassadors by the seven regions under the Advisory Scheme is at Annex 3). District Offices have also successfully established seven OCs in Central and Western, Wan Chai, Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City and Wong Tai Sin through the RLA network. The Ambassador Scheme has started to bear fruit and the results have been encouraging. HAD will continue to promote the Ambassador Scheme to owners and tenants of target buildings in a pro-active manner in a bid to recruit more ambassadors, and will review its effectiveness from time to time.

Note 1: Under the pilot scheme, target buildings were divided into two categories. The first category included clusters of buildings jointly selected by the participatory organisations. The second category consisted of applications made by building owners.

Note 2: We do not maintain figures of the home visits paid, the OC meetings attended or seminars on building management arranged by the expert teams.

Ends/Wednesday, April 18, 2012

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