

LCQ18: Management measures upon dissolution of Estate Management Advisory Committees

Following is a question by the Hon Edward Leung and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Housing, Mr Victor Tai, in the Legislative Council today (June 21):

Question:

Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) established by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (the HA) for its public housing estates (PHEs) were responsible for using the funds allocated by the HA to carry out minor improvement works in the estates and improve the estate environment before they ceased operation last year. There are views pointing out that after the cessation of the operation of EMACs across the territory, the decision on the use of the funds concerned is left to the Housing Managers (HMs) of the estates, which may not reflect the wishes of the residents and meet their needs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether there are changes in the amount of funds allocated by the HA to various PHEs and in such funding mechanism upon the dissolution and cessation of operation of EMACs across the territory;

(2) of the balance of available funds of EMACs of various PHEs across the territory at the time of their dissolution, and the amount of such balance together with the amount of the new funds allocated to them since their dissolution, with a breakdown by District Council district and PHE;

(3) as the HA has indicated that HMs of PHEs will collect tenants' views through different communication channels, including expanding both the traditional and electronic means of communication, and take their opinions into consideration in drawing up proposals on the use of the funds at the beginning of the financial year, of the total number of estates which have set up electronic means for expression of views so far;

(4) of the respective numbers of residents' views on funding, minor improvement works in the estates and improvement of the estate environment received by HMs of various PHEs through different communication channels since January this year, with a breakdown by District Council district and PHE;

(5) given that in the past, EMACs could, based on residents' views, rate the performance of outsourced security or cleansing service contractors of the estates for deciding whether to renew the contracts with the contractors or replace them, how the Government ensures that residents can participate in the relevant decisions and express their views after the dissolution of

EMACs; and

(6) as there are views that in the past, EMACs could encourage residents to participate in estate management and reflect their views to the Housing Department so as to help improve the management of the estates, whether the Government will consider re-establishing EMACs through other channels, so that residents of PHEs can be more involved in the exchange of views on estate management matters?

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Edward Leung is as follows:

The Mutual Aid Committee (MAC) representatives formed the majority of the Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) membership of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (the HA). As the MAC Scheme of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau was terminated on January 1, 2023, the operation of EMACs in public rental housing (PRH) estates ceased correspondingly.

Upon the dissolution of EMACs, the HA has implemented a series of measures to maintain and optimise the original functions of EMAC.

As regards the Estate Funds, the HA will continue to allot funds to all PRH estates in accordance with the number of flats, i.e. estates with not more than 600 units will be allotted a total of \$80,000 per annum, estates with 601 to 1 000 units \$100,000 per annum, and the rest \$100 per unit per annum, for carrying out minor improvement works and organising estate activities, including community building functions, carnivals, partnering functions with non-governmental organisations, publication of Estate Newsletter, procuring calendars, red packets, and fai-chun for tenants, carrying out festive decoration and celebration, etc. Estate Housing Manager/Property Service Manager will continue to be the controlling officer of the funds. They will collect and consider tenants' opinions on specific projects or programmes through various channels in drawing up proposals on the use of the Estate Funds, so as to formulate the estate plan for the coming year.

To enhance the channels of communications, the HA has widened both traditional and electronic means for direct collection of opinions from PRH tenants. The Housing Department (HD) has placed suggestion boxes at the ground floor lobbies of domestic blocks in all estates. Apart from providing paper survey forms, QR code and hyperlink of the electronic survey form are printed on the notice for opinion collection to facilitate PRH tenants to complete electronic questionnaires. Since January 2023, HD has conducted Tenants' Opinion Survey by both electronic and paper forms for collecting tenants' opinions on estate management and environmental hygiene. The figures of the opinions on environmental hygiene and use of Estate Funds collected from stakeholders through different channels are set out at Annex.

To monitor and to evaluate the performance of service contractors, the HA has already established a structured appraisal system, including assessments made by HD staff and the regular conduct of Survey on Performance of Services Contractor and Routine Maintenance Contractors (the Survey) to collect tenants' opinions. The HA has enhanced the Survey in terms of the sampling size with a view to gathering opinions from more tenants on the performance of service contractors (including property service agents, works contractors, cleaning and security contractors in the estates) so as to improve the management service of the estates. For award or renewal of service contracts, the HA will assess the relevant working experience and the performance level of service delivery of all bidders in accordance with the current assessment mechanism so as to select suitable service contractors.

Estate staff will continue to maintain close liaison with local stakeholders and attend meetings of District Councils and Area Committees regularly to discuss and collect opinions from them on local estate matters and the HA's policies. We will also invite those who have served EMAC before and are interested in promoting estate activities to serve as project ambassadors, for example, environmental protection ambassadors and fire safety ambassadors, to assist in encouraging and driving tenants' participation. Tenants can continue to exchange views with HD's staff on estate management matters and performance of service contractors by visiting our Estate Management Offices in person and through telephone hotline or emails as usual.

The HA will strive to optimise the communication mechanism and measures with PRH tenants and provide multiple and convenient communication channels, in order to raise the management standard and build a harmonious community.